

Report of the Team Reviewing Voting Procedures for GWI January 4, 2016

Introduction

In September 2015, a team was constituted to consider the voting rules for GWI and potentially to prepare an amendment to be presented by CFUW to the GWI Triennium in August 2016.

The issue arose because at the CFUW AGM in Quebec City in June 2015, there was concern that Canada with 8293 members had only 10 votes for any GWI decision and the Netherlands with less than half the number of members (3624) had 9 votes. The CFUW Board presented this situation as unfair to Canada.

At a meeting in July, 2015 with CFUW President, Doris Mae Oulton, and CFUW Executive Director, Robin Jackson, Dorothy Phillips and Fran Manning offered to prepare a proposed amendment to the GWI constitution; the offer was well received and noted in the minutes of that meeting.

A team of CFUW members was constituted which consisted of Carol Hare, Mary Hall and Dorothy Phillips.

The Voting Team defined its own mandate as:

- to consider whether some other voting rules would be more fair in this situation.
- to present the proposed amendment to the CFUW Board, which, if approved, would be forwarded to GWI for consideration at the August 2016 Triennium.
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CFUW rules for submitting resolutions to GWI: While other NFAs have submitted constitutional amendments to IFUW in the last decade, the committee could not locate an example of CFUW submitting an amendment. There are no bylaws in the CFUW constitutional documents that deal with such a situation. The only parallel situation is the procedure for submission of CFUW resolutions to IFUW, however, using this procedure for GWI constitutional decisions would be difficult as the resolutions procedure requires a long time line.

The GWI constitution states that proposed amendments must reach the GWI board in Geneva at least six months before the next Triennium. To be considered at the August 2016 Triennium, the proposed amendment would need to reach Geneva by February 2016. Thus time is short.

The voting rules that are now part of the GWI constitution are attached in Appendix A. In Appendix B the current NFAs with their membership numbers (as given to CFUW for the June 2015 AGM) are listed along with the number of votes for each and the current percentage of membership and votes based on these current numbers. Note that there are 6 board members who have individual votes.

After the Voting Team began deliberations, the Netherlands decided to withdraw from GWI. The NFA with the next largest membership is Finland with over 1000. Turkey too has just over 1000 members and Japan has 800. So Canada is still by far the largest NFA in terms of membership numbers. And before the final report was completed, we understand that Germany has withdrawn but apparently both the Netherlands and Germany plan virtual organizations on the model of Women Graduates USA.

We are aware that several countries are still considering membership and some that may not pay their dues so that membership numbers may change dramatically in the near term.

The Process of Review

Through meetings by Skype and emails, the voting team considered several possible voting patterns. During the discussions, the team developed criteria by which to judge what would be good voting rules for GWI.

The Criteria:

- the rules should be simple and easy to understand
- the rules should appear fair to a broad membership of GWI
- since decision votes making changes in GWI (resolutions, amendments etc.) require a 2/3 majority, no NFA should have more than 1/3 of the votes, (ie. No NFA should have a veto);
- it would be preferable if each NFAs had substantially less than 1/3 of the votes;
- to be a member of GWI, an NFA must have at least 20 members (current GWI rule)
- the voting system should provide balance on important issues between NFAs with large membership and those with smaller membership.

Possible Means of Defining New Rules

Mathematical formulas:

We are aware that GWI uses a natural log formula to calculate dues for each NFA; this formula considers two factors that are independent (number of members and ability to pay dues). It was agreed that both factors can be measured. However, the committee believed that ability to pay should not influence voting entitlement. In the decision as to voting entitlement, there is really only one factor that could influence that entitlement: number of members.

The basic “entitlement chart “(Appendix A) is believed to have been in effect for at least 30 years. The membership numbers for 2013 were listed as 142,693 full members and 360 associate members * for a total approximately of 143,053 (* some associate members were groups estimated as 20/group). The 2004 data, prior to the AAUW withdrawal from IFUW, show that AAUW with 112,334 members in 2004 had 17 votes while Canada with 9,650 had 10; thus, the ratio of membership was over 10 to 1 while the voting ratio was 1.7 to 1. Thus, in the past there was recognition that countries with larger numbers of members should not dominate the international organization to the detriment of those with smaller numbers.

To date we have been unable to create a new chart for voting entitlement using a mathematical formula that meets all of the criteria listed above which we believe are needed to support fairness for all NFAs.

The other choice for assigning votes might be based on a per cent of membership in GWI, which could leave GWI serving the needs of a few larger NFAs. This too does not meet with the mission statement to help all women or the criteria above. (Appendix B shows the percentages).

For these reasons, the committee abandoned the idea of using a mathematical formula to create voting rules.

The Council Approach

Previous to the Triennial in 2013 there was a council in IFUW. The council together with the Board carried out the business of the organization between Triennials. The council voting system was one vote per NFA. The council elected the committee conveners and members. In contrast, at the triennial conference, voting entitlement depended on the membership of the NFAs as in Appendix A. Using both the council and the conference voting systems balanced the rights of the small and large NFAs. The Council idea was abandoned in 2013 with the changes in IFUW which were voted on and approved at that meeting.

The Double Majority

In an organization such as GWI that has a large size difference among members it is wise to provide an article in the constitution that provides balance on important issues. This balance could be achieved in GWI by a double majority voting method. This would require a majority of votes and a majority of NFAs to pass important issues. Some votes in GWI require a two-thirds majority to pass. The double majority could be used in this situation as well with 2/3 of the votes and 2/3 of the NFAs. This method might be workable, but is a bit complex, especially regarding the definition of double majority issues.

Voting Rules used by Other Organizations:

The United Nations

The United Nations Assembly has one vote per country, but the United Nations also has a Security Council with 5 permanent members who have a veto and 10 non-permanent members elected for a two year term.

Veto power is something the committee rejected for GWI.

CFUW AGM rules for voting

CFUW rules for voting at the AGM depend on the number of members in each club. While the steps are equal in size there are still problems e.g., Why does a club of 185 have one less vote than one with 188? CFUW also has over 30 members (the board, RDs and past presidents) with personal votes while the GWI had 6.

Preferential Ballotting

Other organizations use proportional or preferential balloting. The committee considered several options and thought they were rather complex. The committee did not believe such a system would be successful for GWI as none of them met our criterion of simplicity.

Conclusion

None of these models or ideas for a change in voting rules for GWI presented a good fit. with the possible exception of the double majority.

The committee looked again at the rules currently in place. Considered against our criteria:

- These current voting rules appear to be fair to all NFAs with the possible exception of Canada
- They are simple and easy to understand
- No NFA has more than 1/3 of the votes and thus does not have a veto
- all countries have at least 20 members
- the current voting system provides balance among large and small NFAs. Canada's larger numbers could be enhanced by having members on the board who also have a vote.

The double majority considered above, (a majority of votes plus a majority of NFAs) could be used for important votes, however, GWI already requires a 2/3 majority for important issues. Currently, adding the double majority would not change anything substantial.

At this point, the committee also heard that there is some possibility that China will become a member of GWI. Reportedly China will bring a large membership, perhaps as many as 100,000. Under the current rules, that would give China 16 or 17 votes, still less than 1/3 of the total votes, so it too would not have a veto. The team concluded that the present system of allocating votes to NFAs is the best for the present. At some future time there may be interest in establishing a more complex set of rules.

Appendix A

Current GWI Voting Rules

Number of Members	Voting Delegates	Number of Members	Voting Delegates
20 - 200	1	1 501 – 2 000	7
201 - 400	2	2 001 – 2 500	8
401 - 600	3	2 501 – 5 000	9
601 - 800	4	5 001 – 10 000	10
801 - 1 000	5	10 001 - 15 000	11
1 001 - 1 500	6	15 001 – 20 000	12

Appendix B Current NFAs and membership numbers (as given to CFUW in June 2015)

MEMBER COUNTRIES	NUMBER IN EACH	# votes	% votes	% members
Canada	8293	10	9.5	43.6
Finland	1053	6	5.7	5.5
Turkey	1017	6	5.7	5.4
Japan`	800	4	3.8	4.2
Switzerland	658	4	3.8	3.5
India	605	4	3.8	3.2
New Zealand	585	3	2.9	3.1
Australia	581	3	2.9	3.1
Germany	520	3	2.9	2.7
Great Britain	397	2	1.9	2.1
France	377	2	1.9	2.0
Austria	346	2	1.9	1.8
Ireland	277	2	1.9	1.5
Nigeria	208	2	1.9	1.1
Italy	200	1	1.0	1.1
USA	167	1	1.0	0.9
Korea	150	1	1.0	0.8
Sweden	150	1	1.0	0.8
Rwanda	146	1	1.0	0.8
ARGENTINA	130	1	1.0	0.7
Spain	122	1	1.0	0.6
Uganda	120	1	1.0	0.6
Thailand	116	1	1.0	0.6
Bangladesh	110	1	1.0	0.6
Mexico	110	1	1.0	0.6
Scotland	109	1	1.0	0.6
Cameroon	105	1	1.0	0.6
Egypt	105	1	1.0	0.6
Hong Kong	101	1	1.0	0.5
Cyprus	95	1	1.0	0.5

Israel	93	1	1.0	0.5
Armenia	85	1	1.0	0.4
Kithuania	85	1	1.0	0.4
Bolivia	80	1	1.0	0.4
Iceland	64	1	1.0	0.3
Sierra Leone	62	1	1.0	0.3
Pakistan	60	1	1.0	0.3
Slovenia	60	1	1.0	0.3
Singapore	56	1	1.0	0.3
Fiji	50	1	1.0	0.3
Zambia	50	1	1.0	0.3
Tajikstan	48	1	1.0	0.3
Samoa	46	1	1.0	0.2
Nepal	36	1	1.0	0.2
Tonga	35	1	1.0	0.2
South Africa	31	1	1.0	0.2
El Salvador	30	1	1.0	0.2
Romania	26	1	1.0	0.1
Greece	25	1	1.0	0.1
Panama	25	1	1.0	0.1
Bulgaria	20	1	1.0	0.1
Casmbodia	20	1	1.0	0.1
Croatia	20	1	1.0	0.1
Georgia	20	1	1.0	0.1
INdonesia	20	1	1.0	0.1
Kenya	20	1	1.0	0.1
Moldova	20	1	1.0	0.1
Niger	20	1	1.0	0.1
Russia	20	1	1.0	0.1
Togo	20	1	1.0	0.1
GWl Board	6	6	5.7	0.0
Total	19006	105		100.0

GWI Voting Rules - Final Report to CFUW
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Signed by Dorothy Phillips for the others.