

Report on the “horizontal” countries

A report was presented to the World Committee (WCom) by Mario Sica on those countries which file a “horizontal” census, namely a census that, year after year, presents the same figures, which are obviously unreal. This issue is very significant, because it involves about 20 NSGFs out of 60, or one third of the total. This means that one country out of three **does not report a real census**.

The countries involved are the following:

	2005	2006	2007
<u>Africa</u>			
Benin	135	135	135
Gambia	139	139	139
Ghana	130	130	130
Nigeria	205	202	202
Senegal	419	419	419
Uganda	200	200	200
<u>Western Hemisphere</u>			
Mexico	125	120	120
<u>Arab Region</u>			
Algeria	480	480	480
Bahrain	200	200	200
Egypt	125	125	125
Lebanon	250	250	250
Saudi Arabia	125	125	125
Tunisia	1.400	1.400	1.400
<u>Asia-Pacific</u>			
Bangladesh	125	125	130
India	750	750	750
Indonesia	450	450	450
Pakistan	125	125	125
Sri Lanka	125	125	125
<u>Europe</u>			
Lithuania (Associate Member)	58	58	58
Slovakia	125	125	125

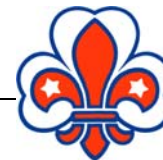
Clearly there are two categories: the minimalists (registering 125 members, or about this figure, which is the minimum required for Full Membership), and the others.

All are in breach of the ISGF Constitution, which asks for a real census, and all contribute to impairing the whole census operation, on which most of the ISGF resources are based.

One difficulty may be common to all these countries: **they are unable to carry out a real census for want of the human or organisational resources.**

The minimalists may fall in one of these two groups:

- They may in fact have many more members, but do not want to pay extra fees. So they interpret “125” as a kind of minimum membership card fee.



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- Some may be less numerous than 125, but declare 125 (or near figure), because they are afraid to lose their membership if they openly declare they have lost this key condition.

Obviously **neither of these two attitudes can be accepted**. The first group has to accept they cannot be on board the ISGF without paying the fees for all their members. If they have a difficulty in this respect they have to declare it openly, and in any case do their best to overcome it. The second group has to realise that the WCom, although it has the power to suspend a Member which no longer fulfils the criteria and conditions for membership, in fact has also the role of assisting Members to recover these criteria and conditions. It does not seem to be scout/guide-like to hide the reality: it would be much preferable to make a clean breast of it and seek help.

What can be done:

1. The World Bureau (WB) and the WCom (through its Regional Teams) should ascertain the situation of these countries, and in particular which group they belong to.
2. An enquiry could be carried out on the ways in which the countries concerned carry out their census, and perhaps more user-friendly census modalities could be suggested.

A different case is the countries declaring **a decreasing membership**, well below the constitutional requirement:

Haiti	125	125	75
Netherlands Antilles	125	85	85
Panama	91	91	91
Hungary	125	56	77

Here again the WB and the WCom (through its Regional Teams) should verify the real situation, find out what the problems are and draw up a plan of action with the NSGF concerned which may help it recover the constitutional requirement within an agreed deadline.

A last point concerns **the support that we ought to offer the new Members**. Very often after the applause and the presentation of the membership certificate the new NSGF is left alone. The ISGF takes it for granted that the new Member will work well. Often this is not the case, and for instance the new Member quickly drops under the minimum membership figure. One could perhaps think of linking the new Member with a long-standing, well-working Member in a sort of twinning, for a definite introductory period (e.g. three year).