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September 2013

FIT Executive Committee meeting August 2013

The FIT Executive Committee and the Executive Director met in Penang, Malaysia, on 26 August at the invitation of the Malaysian Translators Association (MTA). The meeting took place just prior to the Seventh FIT Asian Translators' Forum, held between 27 and 29 August and was attended by four observers, from Malaysia, Australia, China and Germany.

Strategic planning

Almost half of the meeting was devoted to planning for FIT's future. This was done also taking into account the initial results of the survey undertaken by FIT's Organisational Development Committee, looking at how FIT might be restructured to make it more flexible and able to meet the demands of members, as the work of this committee clearly has a strong bearing on FIT's strategic planning. Efforts are being made to streamline FIT's operation and provide improved levels of service to members. As part of this exercise, the EC considered what FIT's vision and mission are and where it should be focusing its efforts. Discussions were wide-ranging, considering the strategic plan presented to members at the 2008 congress, developments and action taken since then and the precise areas the Federation should focus on to support and enhance the efforts of members at local and regional levels.

The outcome of the discussions will be distilled into three to five focus areas, with major lines of action identified for each. After approval by the full Council, these will be presented to the Congress in 2014 for acceptance as a guide to future FIT Councils. Future Councils can then identify specific tasks to further the action in the various focus areas during their mandate.

Among the points made at the meeting was that in view of its limited resources it is important for FIT to prioritise its work to a few items but with concrete outcomes that benefit the membership and enhance the status and visibility of the profession in general. Growing the membership will help FIT's financial position, but the benefits of membership would have to be clearly outlined to prospective members. The EC noted that the regional centres and committees are integral in achieving FIT's mission.

Restructuring

FIT members have provided useful feedback through the Organisational Development Committee survey, largely confirming the ideas of the committee. The results indicate a desire for a more streamlined administrative structure, with strengthening of the regional centres and more use of short-term task forces than permanent committees. Once the full results are available, the committee will prepare a report for members and enter the next round of consultation and planning.

The work of the committees was discussed briefly. Some committees are making admirable progress, while others are experiencing organisational problems and have not yet advanced very far with their mandates. Means of facilitating the work of the committees was discussed.

2014 Congress

The second half of the meeting was devoted to the 2014 congress in Berlin. A representative of the host organisation, the BDÜ, attended the meeting and gave extensive information on the progress made and the ongoing planning, as well as consulting the EC on certain aspects of the organisation. There has been an overwhelming response to the call for papers and to enhance the overall experience of the delegates, persons planning to attend the congress will have an opportunity to indicate which of over 300 proposals they feel should be included in the programme next month. This will further help the organisers, who can only accommodate some 100-130 presentations!

The congress will see other innovations especially in format and organisation and promises to be an exciting event, geared as much to the practitioner as to the academic. The programme will be released in December and registrations open in January 2014. Road shows around Germany and other parts of Europe will help promote the congress. FIT Members are strongly encouraged to use the media pack to promote the Berlin Congress with their respective locales and regions.

Seventh FIT Asian Translators' Forum

Another successful Forum brought together translators, interpreters and terminologists from the Asian region to share knowledge and debate relevant global and regional issues over three days in Penang. This was also the occasion to celebrate FIT's 60th anniversary, which was marked at the conference dinner with a video message from FIT's longest-serving office-bearer, René Haeseryn, and the cutting of a birthday cake. FIT was glad to be able to share this celebration with so many practitioners from Asia, and is grateful to the Malaysian Translators' Association and their partners for organising the event.



Prof. Abdullah Hassan, Malaysian Translators' Association and Dr. Henry Liu, New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters, Vice President, FIT

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