



WESTERN OUTREACH (WESO) MINISTRY

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THE REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON, NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) AND THE SECRETARIAT-2023/2024

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the *National Executive Committee (NEC)*, formerly GEC and the *Secretariat*, I would like to thank our Almighty God for guiding us through this ending spiritual year 2023/2024. I also wish to extend out regards to all the members of this great ministry of WESO. Indeed, for all we have done and achieved have been courtesy of God's grace. This report captures key areas of our operations and activities in the ending spiritual year 2023/2024.

KEY AREAS

WESO file at the Registrar of Societies' office

This has been one of the most problematic issues we have had to address as the current leadership of WESO. It dawned on us, as far as the registrar's office is concerned, that the ministry's file had been dormant since 2004. We were informed that we had not been filing our returns since then and this affected the status of our file at their office. Since we did not have any receipts and documents showing that indeed we had been filing them, we accepted their verdict.

The realization that we had not been filing our returns marked a very long journey of trying to regularize the status of our file. This process started in the previous spiritual year 2022/2023. As National Executive Committee and BOT, we designated our Treasurer, Bernard Simiyu, to work with the state law office to regularize it. Though armed with a letter of introduction from NEC, he wasn't given audience because the only names in the scanty file were those of the GEC chairperson, Treasurer and General Secretary back then in 2004. The Registrar's office was very careful not to legitimize what they termed illegal changes in the ministry as witnessed elsewhere.

We were forced to reach out to the officials back then for the process to go forward. Luckily, they were available and within reach. Though tedious, God helped us to get the entire process to its logical conclusion. In this regard, as NEC, BOT and the Advisory Committee, we wish to thank Brother Bernard Simiyu for his dedication and unwavering determination to see this process fully concluded. We also wish to thank the Leadership for its sacrifice and raising the required amount to enable the ministry to file the returns. Filing returns for 20 years was not a walk in the park!

Going forward, the ministry leadership shall endeavor to expediently file the returns so that we do not run into such difficulties in future.

Bank Account

This has been another area of concern in this ending spiritual year 2023/2024. As mentioned already on our WESO whatsapp page, we ran into logistical challenges running the previous bank account at KCB. Though it was a joint account being run by our former General Secretary and Finance Chairperson, we were informed that it was not necessarily a WESO account. Our attempt to change the signatories hit a dead end when we were told we could not do so because it was not wholesomely a WESO account. As NEC/BOT, we jointly resolved to close the account so that we start afresh. This resolution and its execution again opened us up to another difficulty encounter. When the bank did a search of our file at the registrar's office to ascertain our present status, it was found inactive. This realization also affected our fellowships which wanted to open their accounts. However, we thank God now that we have the file regularized and active, the leadership shall open a new bank account for WESO after this year's (2024) AGM.

Students' fellowships' relationship and interaction with the Secretariat/National Executive Committee

Through the office of Fellowships coordinator, we have been able to reach out and interact with most fellowships across the country. Due to logistical realities, we agreed to divide ourselves into two groups. The NEC and BOT officials around Nairobi reached out to fellowships around it. The other NEC and BOT officials in Rift Valley and Western, reached out to fellowships in those regions. Positively, good reports filtered in: presiding over fellowships' AGMs and new leaders commissioning, trainings/inductions and elders dances.

Though a few fellowships presented us with challenges, to a large scale, the interaction was good. I wish to appreciate the leaders because of sacrificing their own finances to visit the fellowships. Since we came into the office, to a large extent, **leaders have been forced to spend their finances to travel to the respective fellowships and execute their mandate.** This sacrifice was made in order to correct the feeling amongst the student fellowships that the secretariat/ National Executive Committee had abandoned them as witnessed previously.

There are two cases of fellowships that the leadership is still addressing in order to restore harmony with the secretariat. It is important to note, our desire is not to ban any fellowship from doing ministry work; ours is to guide, counsel and show direction in reference to the ministry's constitution. If a fellowship chooses to abide, it will be pleasant.

The Associates' Question

This has been a bone of contention in the ministry for quite some time. An associate is defined as someone who has completed studies at a given college. Using this understanding, it is viable, therefore, for one to refer to themselves as an associate of Harvard University, for example. From the experiences we have had as we visited fellowships, we encountered brothers and sisters who are non student members of WESO but associates of particular campuses and universities. They told us that they associate with particular campuses or university fellowships but are non student members of WESO. Their roles have mainly been supporting their particular Alma Maters in missions and mentorship. It is on this basis, that the Membership and Welfare Committee has addressed this issue.

On the other hand, we have had isolated reports of how some associates have stood in the way of WESO national leadership and its desire to have harmonious working relationships with student fellowships. Admittedly, during one's time as a fellowship leader you may have felt neglected by the national leadership. However, this report has explained some of the challenges that the ministry had been going through then. Therefore, I appeal to associates of particular campuses and universities to appreciate that the ministry leadership is working so hard to be visible in all fellowships, be it RCC, NSF and SF.

Fellowships' Caretakers/Patrons

Though this position is not provided for in the constitution, the office of the Fellowships' Coordinator is aware of this arrangement. Most of the fellowships are reported to have caretakers/patrons. However, their appointment and working terms are not clearly stated. Though they could be doing a good job, there is need for harmony and being made accountable to the Secretariat and the National leadership.

Ministry Finances

As mentioned above, the ministry financial situation is not good. As indicated, this has been forcing leaders to spend their finances to run the ministry activities and programmes. This has left most executive leaders fatigued and drained. Despite this, we have not abandoned our ministry call and constitutional mandates. Bravo to them!

Regional Coordinating Committees and Non Student Fellowships

This is an area that admittedly as the leadership, we haven't done well. Through the office of the Fellowships' Coordinator, there has been a lot of focus on the student fellowships. As mentioned above, the relationship between students and national leadership was not warm and felt. Therefore, a lot of focus was placed on reviving this relationship because we appreciate the fact that students play a very significant role in carrying out our mandate as a ministry. However, we agreed that in the new spiritual year, we shall focus on reviving RCCs and NSF across the country. Thus I call upon members in the various regions to gear up for this important task ahead of us.

The Position of the General Secretary and the Secretariat

We appreciate the fact that this is a very important organ of our ministry because constitutionally, the holder of this office is the executive officer/ the chief spokesperson. In the last AGM, our long serving General Secretary retired. As the leadership, we agreed that we shall pool resources in order to give him a send off package. I am afraid to mention that we are yet to do so. I call upon this year's AGM to help the leaders in actualizing this target.

Secondly, as the leadership, we have not been able to appoint someone to the office because the structures that we anticipated to put in place are yet to be operationalized. Since the constitution dictates that the General Secretary is contracted and remunerated, it has been untenable to hire someone whom we are not able to pay as a ministry. Failure to pay one would attract litigations which won't be good for the ministry. As the leadership, we are looking forward to the members of the ministry and other well wishers to join hands in pooling resources in order to keep it afloat.

In the absence of the General Secretary, our Assistant Secretary, Mercy Namasaka, has been handling the clerical functions whereas as the NEC chairperson, I have been presiding over the administrative/field roles in collaboration with other leaders.

Membership and Welfare Guidelines

In line with emerging needs and realities, the Membership and Welfare Committee held several meetings and drafted proposals that would guide the operations of the ministry. The proposals were presented in Special General Meeting as provided for in the constitution (**02/09/2023, REF: WESO SGM/08/2023**). Since the meeting was virtually held, there were some technical challenges that the committee chairperson experienced. Members made suggestions to be considered in order to fine-tune the document. Regrettably, the document was not implemented mainly due to the issue of data protection.

As the leadership, we would also wish to inform everyone that it is a requirement at the Registrar of Societies' office for members to be registered and records deposited with them. Therefore, this is a very important and legal obligation that all members need to abide by. As the leadership, we call upon members to view this exercise positively. Furthermore, the need for members to register with a stated fee is both constitutional and good practice. Though we may be called to do missions, we also need to own the call and carry it by giving our finances. As much as one will be required to submit their annual subscription, it will not limit them from making their other contributions when called upon during special activities and events, like it has been done before.

As stated earlier, members' registration, subscriptions and contributions will make the ministry financially stable, and thus help the leaders find it easier to serve. I urge members to benchmark with other ministries and learn some contemporary and working practices. There are people outside WESO who respect us so much. Therefore, when they hear that we are making frantic calls, writing short and whatsapp messages asking members to contribute towards an AGM, it raises eyebrows. So let us join hands and make WESO great and self-reliant.

Construction of the Secretariat and acquisition of spacious land

It is regrettable that no construction has gone on, on the secretariat building since 2022. This has been partly due to the many areas that needed the attention of the leadership. Meanwhile, there has been a general feeling amongst some members that the location and size of our current land is not viable for future expansion. As a result, our brother Steve Obok proposed the need for us to think, strategize and acquire a bigger piece of land that will accommodate a state of the art secretariat. Members are therefore, invited to give their views (with the guidance of the BOT) what then should be done on the *current land and the assets on it, where to buy the proposed land, how to raise the finances and when to commence the dream project.*

Missions

We appreciate the missions committee for the work well done despite the financial challenges they have encountered. As agreed in the previous AGM, the WESO national missions shall be done biennially; once every two years. Thus, this ending spiritual year we have not had a mission. However, we would like to appreciate student fellowships for the various missions that they carried out in various

parties of our country and Western. Bravo! We also agreed in the last year's AGM that when have our national mission, all fellowships shall attend. Furthermore, fellowships shall not schedule their missions the same time as the national one. Therefore, fellowships are advised to abide by this resolution.

The New Constitution

The new constitution was passed in the last year's AGM (1/6/2023). However, we were forced to resort to the previous constitution when we were told by the Registrar of Societies office that since we had not filed our returns since 2004, their legal assumption was that we have not had any leadership transitions or Annual General Meetings. Had we been filing our returns, they would have been receiving AGM notices, leadership transition forms and AGM resolutions such as a new constitution. So we were instructed to revert to the previous constitution until we have properly done an AGM that will endorse it. Therefore, this AGM (1/6/2024) and leadership transition have been done with reference to the previous constitution.

Furthermore, this year's AGM (1/6/2024), will officially endorse the new constitution, and forward it to the Registrar of Societies office for review. Since it has been in circulation since last year (June, 2023), should there be any issue that needs to be relooked into, then this is a good opportunity for us to do so. Once it is accepted, we will be given the green light to go ahead and start implementing it. Should there be any reservations, they will respond accordingly.

CONCLUSION

As the NEC, we would like to thank all the members who supported us in the execution of our mandate in the ending spiritual year 2023/2024. It has not been easy for most of us but God's grace has remained sufficient. As we start the new spiritual year 2024/2025, we pray that we shall experience a turning point in our ministry. God bless WESO!

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Secretariat through the office of the Fellowships' Coordinator should be properly financed to carry out proper inductions/trainings for new leaders.
2. Associates' Leaders should reach out to the National Officials/Secretariat to address any issues of concern than giving fellowships instructions that seem to cause disharmony.
3. Let the members of WESO own the ministry so that its running doesn't become a burden to the leaders.
4. Let members respond to calls towards specific courses by the leaders whenever needed.

5. Let members in various regions avail themselves as the leadership embarks on the revival of regional and non student fellowships.
6. Adopt the membership and welfare proposed guidelines to transform WESO into a vibrant ministry that responds to the needs of the members.
7. Re-define the position and terms of the General Secretary before appointing one.
8. Let NEC form committees and BOT second a member to each committee to play the role of the assistant patron. (This is a just a working formula because it is not in the constitution)
9. NEC to officially appoint and designate caretakers/patrons to each fellowship in order to enhance accountability and harmony.
10. Have rotational venues for AGMs in Western Kenya.

Report Compiled by,



Job Sinino Wekesa,

National Executive Chairperson.

RCC: Regional Coordinating Committee

NSF: Non Student Fellowships

SF: Student Fellowships