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**Opinion on the final report on the UBC's organizational development
"UBC Final Report of the Task Force on Development of the Organization"
25.2.2013**

The proposed revision by the Swedish municipalities of the UBC's regulations has now resulted in a final report from the special joint working group. The proposals take up large and small, and most of it is in line with what the Swedish representative of the UBC Board made over the years. In the following the Municipality of Karlskrona gives its comments for each division and each item in the statutes and internal rules.

1. UBC working methods

The Board

It is obvious and necessary for the UBC Board continuously and clearly justifies its existence and to what benefit cities and municipalities shall be and become members. This is of greater importance than building up relations with other international organisations. Cities are often by their various reasons, members of several of these.

The General Secretariat

Gdańsk has for many years been the host and funder of the secretariat. It is not like that the resources have been strengthened over the years. Mostly, they have managed the work of the Board and produced the UBC Bulletin. There are strong reasons to steer up office work and also reasons to integrate the strategy coordination, which is now made by an official in Turku, as well as the increased demands on marketing and communications. The organization, however, has a financial problem to develop this then competition between municipalities to take on these tasks is almost non-existent.

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The Commissions

The Working Group's proposals in seven points is seen of the Municipality of Karlskrona as positive. However, we would like to further point out that the number of commissions must be reduced and that cooperation between them must be increased. They must also have requirements to better use EU funds in its work.

The General Conference

The Working Group's proposals in six points are interesting but not obviously simple. In order to get politicians involved, the organization's work is developed and made more interesting and valuable to the municipalities. For the conference's best, this is more important than to engage external partners. There should be a sufficient number of qualified people and interesting local subjects among all the current member cities to fill the agenda of the general conference.

Moreover, it is high time to take hold of the planned annual forums if the municipality shall find reasons to remain as a member. English is the language of the organization and resources for interpreters at the meetings should be removed.

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure and nomination of candidates of the Presidium has been an issue that has long been discussed. Today, there is no control of how the nomination is to be made. The principle that each member municipality can nominate candidate is obvious, but how the nominee must bring their campaign for the elections in the general conference is unclear. Any nomination committee that initialises or prepares the election does not exist. The Municipality of Karlskrona, see it as self-evident that an establishment of a special Nomination Committee who prepares the elections is going to be established.

This will ensure that it really proposes candidates for the various posts and, not least, to ensure that it becomes a good gender balance among the nominees. An important task is also to ensure that the member cities in each country have a functioning and democratic order to appoint a member of the Board.

Furthermore, we propose that the increased rotation of the Board becomes a limitation of eligibility to three consecutive terms of office, maximum six years.

The Vision

The municipality would like to highlight the importance of that UBC has clear tasks and targets in the long-term strategy. Because a new strategy shall be laid down by the general conference 2015 must this year's general conference in Mariehamn give a mission and appoint a joint working group who should work through the UBC Strategy 2016-2020.

Communication and marketing

All information should be given in English to keep down the costs. The ability to implement the strategy for communication and marketing requires redistribution of budget or new opportunities for funding.

2. Recommendations for amendments in the UBC Constitution

Article 1

The municipality has no comments on the proposed changes.

Article 2

The municipality has no comments on the proposed changes, but believe that the UBC first must give priority to their own organization before we engage us too much in cooperation with different networks.

Article 3

UBC has its base in 10 countries. Only cities in those countries will be able to be members. Thus, there shall be no associated members. If UBC choose to take in more countries in their organization also cities from those countries can be members.

Association, company or institution will be able to become a partner with UBC for some time, at e.g. a project, if it involves substantial financial or other advantage for UBC. The article must be changed according to our views. The Board's rules for when any city should be able to be excluded should be clarified and applied more rigorously.

Article 4

The municipality is proposing that the article adds a new paragraph about the Nominating Committee and nomination of candidates. Preparation can consist of three persons and shall have the General Secretariat as administrative support.

Article 5

The municipality recommend a time limit so that the President and vice-Presidents can be selected at a maximum of three consecutive terms of office.
Even the Board representatives of the countries should like hereby hold office for a maximum of three periods.

Article 6-9A

The municipality has no comments on the proposed changes.

New article 10

The municipality is proposing that a new article is added to the statutes concerning a Nominating Committee and nomination of candidates. The General Conference shall appoint a group of three people to prepare for elections to the Board, and audit. The General Secretariat shall be the administrative support.

3. Recommendations regarding the UBCs internal rules

The municipality propose the following changes in the internal rules with some comments.

Point 2.1

A city's/municipality's Board appointment is supposed to be held by politicians. However, it has been shown that it is often represented by a civil servant. It is unclear what right he or she can make proposals to the Board as well as to participate in the decisions. Because there's never been any call for attendance at the meetings it has also never made clear what right the currently representative has to represent their city. It is necessary to clarify whether and how an officer can represent their city at the meetings of the Board and, if they can be included in order to constitute a quorum.

Point 2.3

Certain decisions of the general conference require approval from a specific number of member cities. It is then important that the Conference clearly clarifies who represents their city and that it also becomes clear that enough cities are present to enable a decision to be taken. It should be the Secretary General's task to ensure that this supervision is carried out.

The Nominating Committee's mandate shall be included in the internal rules and the Board shall not give any recommendations on candidates.

MUNICIPALITY OF KARLSKRONA

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