



Jan., 30h 2022

Answer to your letter Dec 31, 2021 to the me and Secretary General Interim Camilla Wagner
&

**Invitation Zoom meeting on this coming
Sunday, 6. Feb at 17:30 pm CET - 16:30 pm GMT - 11:30 am EST**

Dear Samira,
dear group of signatories

In the name of the Executive Committee I cordially invite you to a Zoom meeting on the coming Sunday, 6. Feb at 17:30 pm CET or 16:30 pm GMT which is EST 11:30 am
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89576641008?pwd=T2lQVURvRlVkQ0Z0YkxwUEYvL1pNdz09>

We carefully read the cover letter and the open letter of Samira Yassni in your name and also the various emails in which Samira additionally commented on your opinions expressed in the open letter, Dec. 31.

Please read below my reply to the letter Samira had written in the names of all of you.

I hope we can have an open dialogue on Sunday, because we are all curious how you all came to the opinions expressed. I am very open for all kinds of dialogue as long we keep adhering to our Constitution and a feminist, values-based, friendly tone without accusation.

We wish to have a dialogue with you about your perception of how things developed so unfortunately after Congress and under the disruptive leadership of the elected President, Cheryl Hayles. The whole year 2021 the Executive Committee as the governing body between the Board meetings and Congress was occupied in mediating accusations by the former President against honorable members and function bearers (appointed officers). The Executive, including me as an elected Vice President, had always intended to find a conflict solution and smooth the way for Cheryl to continue on and find her way into her leadership role without aggressive or regressive behavior against one another.

It appeared to be successful several times and we thought it would all improve. Only a few weeks, or a month later, it was started all over again by Cheryl. Repeatedly she left meetings before they were finished or repudiated decisions she had agreed upon in the Executive Committee meetings with us and later called them 'invalid'. The remaining Executive Committee members always felt they needed to go on fulfilling their duty, delivering the required work and followed the carefully studied

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Constitution and By-laws accordingly and twice involved the whole Extended Board (July 31st, 2021 and Nov 27, 2021) so as to not to incur any doubt about our accountability.

Yes, the Executive Committee could have decided alone, but with an Additional Board Meeting in July and a regular Board Meeting in November, to which Cheryl agreed both times, but later disappeared or decided to turn against the joint decisions, the Executive Committee wanted to ensure that IAW's fate is in the hand of bigger and wiser decision making body. The Board members voted, always by a large majority. The two Board Meetings had a Quorum and were legitimate. The Executive Committee guaranteed that a governing body of highest possible participation of members was dealing with our problems. What else can you expect from your elected Executive? And, in the Board, thanks to the Constitutional provisions already provided by our foremothers, a Constitutional quota guarantees full representation of women of all regions of our membership.

There was no "plot" and there was no wrong doing, neither on my part nor from Camilla (we did not act alone, how could we before such a large number of Board members?) nor from any other person.

IAW is governed by the Swiss Law and its own Constitution which is covered by the Swiss law: None of the provisions allow simple presidential governance by one officer acting alone.

The Executive Committee has to govern, decide and act together, and, when there is a Board meeting, the Executive Committee including the President must follow the decisions voted for by the Board.

I really suggest, before our dialogue on Sunday, you will read the Constitution, the by-laws and the minutes of the two mentioned Board meetings (*login on our Webpage menu bar in the membership section, create an account and find it all*).

During the Board meeting Nov 27th it was obvious to all voting and most of the other participating members of IAW that our governance, the work we need to deliver, our mandate and reputation was endangered by a president who was unreliable.

I write this with very deep regret, then and even now. I had loved to work with Cheryl, I had no plan to function in another position and add to the work load I had already. But we, the Executive Committee and the Board, needed to act.

It was Manju Kak, Vice President, who suggested, as the Constitution foresees it for such a situation, that I as one of the two Vice Presidents would serve as Acting President. Manju had her reasons not to do it herself. The Board supported her suggestion and voted in majority for it. I accepted the decision in full responsibility towards our membership and assumed the duties.

The same happened in July 31st, when we finally had to face the fact that Secretary General Olufunmi Oluyede had not only been sick, and we had worried about her, but never had sent any notice to the

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Executive Committee. Only in May 2021 did Cheryl report that Funmi had had surgery and would be in rehabilitation for longer. Cheryl discussed the need to have a person for the job as interim Secretary General, but she did not act. The other members of the Executive Committee took up responsibility to inform the Board which asked who would be able to serve in this function until Funmi would return (!) fully healthy. When Camilla Wagner was suggested, the Board was satisfied, voted for the option and Camilla accepted, despite her own heavy work load. Since that day, she has proven her efficiency in dealing with the work and we all know how much an organization depends on having its work be done quickly, completely and permanently.

We understand with sympathies and regrets that this can happen. Funmi could not work when her health was seriously affected; but the President should not have let 5 months pass before informing us nor allow the Secretary General's duties remain undone all that time.

In the July Board Meeting, unfortunately and again without showing reliable leadership, she left when this was discussed, even though she had been informed and agreed about this step to find someone before in the Executive Committee planning meetings for the Board Meeting. For two weeks she accepted the decision, then started to say, Camilla was appointed to harm Funmi, to only work together with Camilla two days later.

Please note, according to the constitution the Executive or the Board is obliged to look for an interim person. No one had the intention to act against Funmi.

Please, read the minutes of the Additional Board Meeting July 31st and November 27th: it was meant for a short time until Cheryl would have answered finally the Chair of the Constitution Committee her question on an optional 'New organisation'. I had hoped as everyone since months that Cheryl would reply and create transparency about that issue. Yes, our members can establish as many new organisations, but not, when it absorbs our IAW leaderships and officers capacities, uses our constitution, reputation. I do not say that this is proven, but the obvious optional conflict the Chair of the Constitution Committee wanted to clarify to prevent a lack of transparency and a conflicting process was never answered and by this proven non existing by Cheryl.

The Board on Nov. 27th had opened a way for her after months of silence from her side again to just respond, to write a brief email explaining the situation about a competing NGO in a new time frame. No door was closed. But she never wrote and answered the Chair of the Constitution Committee.

This is one issue, the other was and still is that Cheryl constantly calls for parallel meetings excluding the elected Executive members and ignoring the legitimate Boards decision. I wonder if you would justify this.

You cannot sit with only a few non-elected, non-voting members of the Extended Board and friends in the style of an unconstitutional presidential governance. This needs to come to an end. Also the spreading personal accusations must end.

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None of the utmost regrettable situations happened by discrimination or racism. We are inclusive and IAW cannot afford fully professional interpretation in the rooms – in full respect to each other we had managed to bridge the language divide. We have always felt proud about the diversity of our members and there is no change in this. We respect and admire all members' work knowing this work is tireless, devoted, showing high expertise invested solely for the cause of the establishing *de facto* Gender Equality, Peace, Justice globally.

It is sad, it is a pity and I assume the President must not feel comfortable with having created this situation within IAW.

We do our best to stay focused on a constitutional way. We have no more energy for another year of confusion. This was also underlined yesterday in the open hour with the Executive Committee strongly by all participants (while it was no Board meeting, just an exchange, it showed a picture of how members are thinking).

Unfortunately Cheryl let this time to reconcile with the rest of the Executive Committee pass and we then gave extra time. At the very latest, with the beginning of this new year 2022, there was no way to wait longer since our organisation's requirements did not allow any more time passing without its work being done.

None of the Executive Committee, including me, is happy with this, but we need to look ahead.

I am looking forward to a dialogue with you on Saturday!

I hope we can to work through the past. I hope we can as well look ahead and find a constructive means of collaboration.

Kindest regards to you all

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