

The Swedish Sections response to ICSD consultation pack 2

First of all the Swedish Section would like to thank the International Committee for Strengthening Democracy (ICSD) for the work that they have put into consultation pack 2 and in their efforts to create an effective democratic governance model for AI. In our response we will focus on two main points; *the need for a strong democracy* and the issue of *rights holders (RHs) in decision-making*.

AI:s need of for *strong* democracy

We share the ICSD:s view that the current democratic governance system is in need of strengthening. The proposal put forward by the ICSD would certainly lead to a more *professional* and *effective* democracy where, in essence, fewer people would be making decisions about fewer issues. Although we feel that this is vital, we feel that the most central issue for the ICSD – that of creating a *stronger* democracy within AI – has not been fully addressed. We fear that the proposed model would in fact weaken AI:s democracy in the sense that it would become harder for our members to take part in the decision-making. For example, if only one person could represent each section or structure at the Global AGM this would lessen the diversity in our decision-making by, in effect, excluding young members and members without extensive experience of AI. Likewise, the suggested Global Forum, while potentially a good way to increase participation, does not include more people in the actual decision-making. This might be beneficial if effectiveness is our primary concern, but we feel that there is a distinct risk that including fewer members in the decision-making – especially if they aren't representative of the diversity within the movement – will leave members feeling out of touch with the decision-makers. This would be a massive concern at any time in AI:s history, but given the huge amount of changes taking place within Amnesty at the moment, it is perhaps even more so.

Concretely, we would like to make two suggestions that we feel would strengthen AI:s democracy:

1. We believe that the Chairs' Forum (CF) serves a very important democratic purpose and should be kept in some form. Rather than removing it we would like to explore the possibility of expanding the CF's role within AI:s democracy.
2. We would also like the ICSD to explore the possibility of compensation for the highest positions in AI:s decision-making. We believe that this would increase and diversify recruiting by including members with more diverse backgrounds and employment situations.

Rights holders in decision-making

We welcome that AI in the future will work closer together with RH:s and partners. However, the term *rights holders* is still largely undefined and problematic in several ways. By definition, every single human being is a *rights holder* and singeling out certain *rights holders* instead of others – or deciding upon criteria for such a distinction – could be seen as excluding or as reinforcing colonial roles.

Likewise, although we do believe that we have to move towards working "with" rights holders rather than "for" them, we see many problems with making non-members of AI formal decision-makers. Where would they get their democratic legitimacy? Should they represent all rights holders, some rights holders or just themselves? Who would we include in the term "rights holders"? What would their role be? Would they have the same status as those elected

from the movement? At the moment we feel that there are just far too many unanswered questions regarding rights holders.

Lastly, we would again like to thank the ICSD and also ask that in the future the issues of formal decision-making and participation be treated separately. In the consultation packs so far they have often been intertwined which has only served to further complicate two already complicated issues.