



## MINUTES

### WITSA Board of Directors Meeting

**07:00 – 09:00 EST**

November 17, 2020

Virtual Meeting (via GoToMeeting)

Yvonne Chiu, Chairman

V3



## FINAL WITSA Board of Directors Meeting

TERM 2018-2020

**07:00-09:00 EDT**

November 17, 2020

Venue: Go To Meeting (Online)

### BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

	Country	Name	Organization
1	Taiwan	Ms. Yvonne Chiu	CISA
2.	Argentina	Mr. Alberto Patron	CESSI
3.	Armenia	Mr. Alex Yesayan	UATE
4.	Bangladesh	Mr. Shahid Ul Munir	BCS
5.	Belarus	Dr. Boris Komrakov	INFOPARK
6.	Bermuda	Mr. John Kyle	Bermuda Chamber of Commerce
7.	Costa Rica	Mr. Paul Fervoy	CAMTIC
8.	Egypt	Eng. Tarek Abd-elmonem Taha	EITESAL
9.	Greece	Mr. Yannis Sirros	SEPE
10.	Malaysia	Mr. Sean Seah	PIKOM
11.	Mexico	Mr. Santiago Gutierrez	CANIETI
12.	Nepal	Mr. Hemant Kumar Chaurasia	CAN Federation
13.	Romania	Dr. Vasile Baltac	ATIC
14.	Hong Kong	Mr. Francis Fong	HKITF
15.	Spain	Antonio Cimorra	AMETIC

## IN ATTENDANCE

	Country	Name	Organization
1.	Malaysia	Mr. Dan Khoo	PIKOM
2.	Canada	Ms. Angela Mondou	TECHNATION
3.	Canada	Ms. Michel Lajeunesse	TECHNATION
4.	Costa Rica	Mr. Alexander Mora-Delgado	CAMTIC
5.	Nigeria	Mr. Matthias Ifiesieh	ITAN
6.	United Kingdom	Dominikas Broga	techUK
6.	Ukraine	Ms. Yulia Malich	IT Ukraine
8.	Malaysia	Ms. Ngai Yuen Low	PIKOM
9.	Kenya	Mr. Waudu Sigana	CSK
10.	Myanmar	Mr. Kelvin Khine	MCIA
11.	South Korea	Mr. Grant Son	FKII
12.	USA	Dr. James Poisant	WITSA
13.	USA	Mr. Anders Halvorsen	WITSA
14.	USA	Ms. Alicia Standridge	WITSA
15..	USA	Ms. Molly Waldron Poisant	WITSA

## BOARD MEMBER REGRETS

	Country	Name	Organization
1.	United Kingdom	Mr. Julian David	techUK
2.	Brazil	Dr. Raul Colcher	ASSESPRO
3.	Republic of S. Korea	Ms. Min-Hee Choi	FKII
4.	Nigeria	Mr. Olutayo Adeniyi	ITAN
4.	Japan	Mr. Toshio Iwamoto	JISA

## INTRODUCTIONS/CALL TO ORDER

1. **Chairman's Remarks**  
Chairman Yvonne Chiu welcomed the Board to the last meeting of the 2018-2020 term. Chairman Chiu thanked the Board for the past four years and thanked the Taiwan government who provided financial support so that she could travel to over 40 countries in her capacity as WITSA Chairman. Ms. Chiu recognized Dr. Poisant for his hard work, experience and support. In 2019, she travelled to 25 countries, including three trips to Armenia. She also thanked Chairman Emeritus Santiago Gutierrez for his support over the years. She shared details of Taiwan's response to the pandemic. She spoke about her businesses that she will focus on after her tenure with WITSA.
2. **Roll Call**  
Mr. Anders Halvorsen proceeded with the Roll Call.  
*Please see Roll Call at the front of this document.*
3. **Call to Order / Approval of Minutes**  
Dr. Poisant called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the Minutes from the Spring Virtual Board Meeting. Mr. Tarek Taha motioned; Mr. Yannis Sirros seconded the motion.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

4. **Treasurer's Report**  
Mr. Taha showed the balance sheet. Current assets: \$588,648.61; Total Liabilities: \$47,565.70. Total Equity: \$541,089. Total Liabilities & Equity: \$588,648.61. Next, he shared the Changes in Net Assets, showing WITSA is under budget by \$3,601.48. Mr. Taha said WITSA currently has approximately \$561,000 cash in the bank. There is still a balance of \$375,000 due 60 days before the WCIT 2022 event in Malaysia. He said WITSA has reduced fixed monthly bills to \$35K monthly balance which means WITSA can cover fixed costs through the end of 2021. Also, this limited \$35K monthly is with minimum expenses due to lack of activities. When there are events and travel, costs can be as high at \$75K per month, Taha said. Taha said the current cash will only cover the minimum costs, without activities, through 2021. If WITSA doesn't increase sales in 2021, it will enter 2022 with almost no cash so it's important to be aggressive, Taha said.
5. **Licensing Fee Update**  
Dr. Poisant said Bangladesh has paid their 2021 licensing fee in full. Dr. Poisant thanked Munir for his support. He also shared that the Secretary General's office was working with Malaysia to see if some of the \$375,000 can be paid earlier than 60 days in advance.  
  
Mr. Santiago Gutierrez asked for a projected cash flow through 2023 for the December 1, 2020 meeting. Mr. Khoo reiterated the request for the Secretariat's office to come up with not only projections, but new income opportunities/revenue streams for the next three years. *[ACTION]*

## DISCUSSION BLOCK

### 6. WCIT Status Reports

#### **Road-to-WCIT Malaysia (2020)**

Mr. Sean Seah said that the Road-to-WCIT was beginning in less than twelve hours as a virtual event due to the pandemic. Last minute preparations are underway for the virtual and live TV broadcast 3,000 virtual delegates will participate online and the national TV broadcast will go to 700K-1Mil viewers in southeast Asia. The 2020 Global ICT Excellence Awards will be held November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Poisant talked about how the model PIKOM has been developed and will assist WITSA programming moving forward. The hybrid platform, Online Exhibitions, and B2B can be used by other WITSA members after some additional enhancements.

Mr. Seah suggested WITSA host a de-brief with the WCIT Malaysia team post-event. Dr. Poisant asked WITSA Board Members to take notes on how the platform could be enhanced for future use.  
[ACTION]

#### **World Congress on IT Bangladesh (2021)**

Md. Shahid-UI-Munir shared the WCIT 2021 logo and theme for “*The Great Equalizer*” which will be held 11-14 November 2021. The event is being organized as a hybrid due to the pandemic. The physical location is the Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The registration portal will open at the conclusion of the Road-to-Malaysia event. Mr. Munir thanked the Board for their support.

#### **World Congress on IT Malaysia (2022)**

Mr. Sean Seah said the WCIT 2022 will take place in June 2022 in Penang. Further details will be forthcoming after the Road-to-WCIT concludes.

#### **WCIT Nigeria Update (2022)**

Mr. Matthew Ifesieh thanked WITSA for their support and said that the Federal Government in Nigeria does not have the funding source set and ready, as of today. Dr. Poisant said this is more likely to happen in 2023 or beyond once there is further development on the ICT efforts in Nigeria; he will continue to work with Mr. Ifesieh and the Nigerian government.

### 7. Standing Committee Update

Finance Committee Chairman Mr. Sean Seah shared that the total cash on hand is \$588,641 cash. He’s working closely with his government to see if they can pay part of the \$375K licensing fee to WITSA early – perhaps the last quarter of 2021.

#### **Global Policy Action Committee**

Mr. Anders Halvorsen shared the following update on GPAC. New Draft Paper Circulated: Member Edits and Input Requested: Anders mentioned that a draft WITSA policy papers entitled “**The Role of Government in Connecting the World - an Industry Perceptive**” had been circulated for review and comment. The paper made the case that, in a Digitally driven world economy, the need to fully join the Digital Age is no longer just a smart thing to do, -it is required for a nations’ future.

It is up to governments, in partnership with industry and other stakeholders to shape e-commerce and the digital economy by adopting rules that favor the adoption of ICTs and economic growth. In many developing countries, this is an enormous challenge that will involve reforming existing policies, laws and regulations in many areas. Unfortunately, the digital economy is still relatively uncharted territory in many emerging countries around the world, and policies and regulations are failing to keep pace with the ever-accelerating digital transformations taking place. It is imperative that government leaders, in cooperation and partnership with the private sector embraces and employees the use of Digital technologies. ICT must be at the core all of decision made by government leaders. Members were asked to provide edits by November 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Updating WITSA Papers: Input Requested:**

Anders mentioned that, over the last few years, WITSA had addressed a number of important policy issues, including -most recently- the burgeoning “techlash” and how best to regain trust on the Internet. Recently, WITSA also called for new digital trade rules at the World Trade Organization (WTO)[1] and developed an accompanying action plan. WITSA has also challenged misconceptions and threats to the multilateral trading system and called for a principled approach to privacy, security and data protection to balance fundamental information privacy rights with the equally important policy objectives of national security and data protection while maintaining the economic and social capability of digital information.

From time to time, WITSA reviews past statements in order to ensure that they remain relevant in the rapidly changing regulatory environments. We have concluded that there currently are two such papers that should be reassessed, as referenced below. We would greatly appreciate any input from members about areas that need updating in these two papers:

### **Updating WITSA papers on Information Security, Data Protection and Privacy, while enhancing the Supporting and Protecting Encryption**

<https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Privacy-Security-Data-Protection-final-1.pdf>

Security and privacy were listed as one of the top policy issues in our 2020 membership survey. In our September 2017 Statement of Policy on Privacy, Security and Data Protection[2], WITSA opposed a weakening the security of technology products and services, stating that robust cybersecurity and data protection are essential to trust in technology products, services, and systems, and robust encryption is fundamental to building such trustworthy and reliable technology products, services, and systems. Governments must recognize the importance of strong encryption. In light of the new challenges to privacy, security and encryption due to the ongoing fight against the SARS CoV-2 virus, an update of WITSA’s paper is necessary.

### **Updating WITSA Cross-Border Data Flows Paper**

[https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cross-border-Data-Flows\\_final.pdf](https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cross-border-Data-Flows_final.pdf)

The 2016 WITSA paper[3] advocates a principled policy approach which recognizes that data regulations must be simple, transparent and harmonized with other legislative requirements and takes a strong stance against forced localization of data requirements as these interrupt the free flow of data that underpins the complex online networks connecting the globe in ways that threaten the cultural and economic growth potential of the Internet and Internet-based technologies.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital technologies in general, but also several vulnerabilities across the world. The resulting experiences and lessons are relevant to various discussions in the WTO, including those on electronic commerce, which could benefit from looking at greater international cooperation to facilitate the cross-border movement of goods and services, narrow the digital divide, and level the playing field for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

An update of the WITSA paper, taking account the new realities and developments affecting cross-border data flows is recommended.

Halvorsen asked that any suggestions as regards areas that need updating would be most welcome and that suggestions, edits or thoughts should be sent no later than Friday, November 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Digital Trade Network Update**

Anders informed the meeting that negotiations on e-commerce continue, eyeing a consolidated text by the end of the year. As a member of the Digital Trade Network (DTN), WITSA is actively monitoring the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) e-commerce negotiations in Geneva. WTO members participating in the negotiation of rules on e-commerce shared updates on the work done to streamline the negotiating text at a plenary meeting on 23 October. The co-conveners, Australia, Japan and Singapore, encouraged members to propose constructive solutions and show flexibility in an effort to deliver a consolidated negotiating text by December this year. Facilitators of small group discussions reported on the work done in between plenary meetings to further streamline text proposals in the areas of spam, source code, open government data, trade facilitation in goods, services market access, electronic signatures and authentication, and online consumer protection. Participants also re-engaged on topics that had been scheduled for consideration in the postponed March and April-May negotiating rounds, namely protection of personal information/data.

COVID-19 has increased the urgency of developing global rules on digital trade and that these negotiations are seen as a key test for the WTO to respond to modern commercial realities. The participating members are only two months away from the deadline for delivering a consolidated negotiating text and the consolidated text are expected to include "clean text" on e-signatures, authentication, spam and online consumer protection. Due to the worsening situation in Geneva officials announced many types of businesses are to close and prohibited most meetings. WTO meetings are apparently going entirely virtual as a consequence. Additional information is available here.

### **WITSA Mourns the Passing of Marilyn Cade**

Anders finally mentioned that WITSA had circulated a press release in the wake of the passing of Ms. Marilyn Cade, one of the foremost experts on Internet governance and a dedicated and trusted ally of the World Information Technology and Services Alliance. Ms. Cade worked with and advised WITSA and its member associations around the world for more than twenty years, helping raise awareness to important issues, especially with respect to The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the U.N. Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Marilyn's staunch support of the multistakeholder approach to Internet governance and her advocacy for inclusion of all stakeholders and regions left an indelible impact. Her relationships with the WITSA community went

beyond the professional. Her warmth, dedication and enthusiasm resulted in many friendships and she will be greatly missed.

Mr. Khoo asked Mr. Halvorsen to ask all members for the top three issues that are impacting the world and tie those elements into the WITSA papers to make them even more relevant. *[ACTION]*

Mr. Halvorsen reminded the Board that this can be incorporated into the Membership Survey for policy priorities. The survey will be coming out again in December. Dr. Poisant asked everyone to please study these policy papers before they go out to the world.

#### **Committee on Education, Training & Human Resources**

Dr. Boris Komrakov shared updates on the construction of the WITSA European main building, which is 1,500 square meters and located in Minsk, near the airport. It is now officially registered as Stonebridge. Right now, there are 10,000 in Belarus using the program online. They are preparing for the next steps, post-pandemic.

#### **8.. Membership/Member Payment Status**

Ms. Alicia Standridge confirmed collection of 30 country associations dues in 2020, which is only 1 less than 2019, totaling \$30,539 as of November 16, 2020. There are 10 members WITSA is working with members to collect dues from for 2020. At present, there are 54 associate members. She closed by thanking everyone for their payments.

Dr. Poisant said WITSA has kept membership dues very low to encourage participations but should revisit this in early 2021 *[ACTION]*

#### **9. Overview of WITSA BOD Meeting Schedule**

WITSA's next Board Meeting will be held virtually on December 1, 2020 at 8am to elect the new officers. The Spring 2021 Board Meeting will be held virtually. The next in-person Board meeting will be held in November 2021 in Dhaka, Bangladesh before the WCIT event.

#### **10. OPEN DISCUSSION**

Mr. Taha asked about the possibility of profit-sharing on the hybrid events using the platform developed in Malaysia. Ms. Seah said the PIKOM digital platform can be shared with WITSA hosts. Physical event can only accommodate 3-5K, Seah said. A digital platform can reach millions. Mr. Seah suggested WITSA host a meeting on this topic. Focus would be on how to monetize the digital asset that WITSA has. Mr. Seah said the business matching component should be reviewed as well. *[ACTION]*

Dr. Poisant sees a three-way split – PIKOM, the event host and WITSA. He asked for the Board to observe the Road-to-WCIT event very closely for the next few days then look at this for other WITSA events, regional events, etc. WITSA needs to bolster the database in the meantime. *[ACTION]*

Mr. Taha thanked Sean and Jim and believes this platform can bring more money to WITSA, over the next three years. He reminded the Board that preparations are needed to legally copyright, and execute a signed agreement with PIKOM, before such a platform can be utilized. *[ACTION]*

	<p>Mr. Gutierrez thanked Chairman Chiu for her leadership and tireless work over the past 4 years.</p> <p>The Chairman requested a group photo.</p>
11.	<p><b>THANK YOU TO 2018-2020 BOARD</b></p> <p>Dr. Jim Poisant and Chairman Chiu thanked the Board for their service during the 2018-2020 term.</p>
12.	<p><b>ADJOURNMENT OF BOARD MEETING</b></p> <p>Chairman Chiu adjourned the Board Meeting and asked everyone to reconnect by 9:15am EST for the General Assembly Meeting.</p>