

# 3

## The Historical Background

### 3.1 Background to Thessaloniki

The adoption of the strategy in Thessaloniki was possible because of work undertaken since the World Scout Conference in Melbourne (1988).

An overview of the process and achievement and an indication of the future work required is set out below.

### 3.2 Melbourne Conference

In the mid eighties, the World Committee and World Bureau devoted much time and resources to the subject of strategic review and planning, both at the level of National Scout Organizations and at their own level. The result of this work was the adoption of *"Towards a Strategy for Scouting"* by the World Scout Conference in Melbourne in January 1988.

*"Towards a Strategy for Scouting"* basically did the following:

- It explained the changes in society in the closing years of the 20th century, the impact of these changes on young people, and the implications for Scouting's ability to continue to fulfil its role.
- It identified six main issues – mission, youth programme, adult leadership, management, finance, public relations & communication – which were seen as obstacles to the development of Scouting in many parts of the world, and defined each issue in detail.
- It emphasised that the solution to these obstacles must be found by each NSO, through a systematic planning process adapted to their specific environment. The role of world bodies is not the same as that of an NSO – they cannot, for example, aim at increasing the number of Scouts, which can only be done by the NSOs themselves; they have a supportive, service function, which is to assist NSOs.
- It identified four strategic areas which should be the priorities of the world bodies in support to NSOs: *Youth Programme, Adult Leadership, Management and WOSM's own financial resources.*

Two important aspects of the work of the Melbourne Conference were the following:

- The approach adopted by the Conference was, deliberately, not a strategy, but one of working *"Towards a Strategy..."*
- The priorities selected by the world bodies were, again, of a very general nature, touching upon broad sectors such as youth programme or adult leadership, rather than setting precise targets.

Both of these key aspects were selected as a starting point, in order to provide the necessary foundation for the adoption, at a later stage, of a true strategy with precise objectives.

### 3.3 Melbourne to Oslo

Building on the foundation established at the Melbourne Conference, work began at world, regional and national levels on the priorities which had been agreed at that event.

In the field of *Youth Programme*, the first ever World Programme Policy was developed and approved at the Paris Conference in 1990. This policy included a standard definition of Youth Programme, and outlined the responsibilities of National Scout Organizations and WOSM in the areas of programme development and delivery. A series of new programme tools were to follow for use by NSOs.

The same Conference approved a set of principles for the management of *Adult Resources* in the Movement. And a new, fifth, priority, the *Growth of the Movement* – adding a quantitative dimension to the work on the strategy – was added.

The main focus of the World Conference in Bangkok in 1993 was on *Adults in Scouting and Management*. Based on the principles accepted in Paris three years earlier, the World Adult Resources Policy, proposing steps to be taken during all stages of the lifecycle of adults in the Movement, was adopted. New tools for use by NSOs in implementing the policy were also introduced later.

In the lead up to the Oslo Conference in 1996, work progressed on two fronts. A new, more equitable, registration fee system was developed, involving extensive consultation with a large number of NSOs, with a view to stabilising this source of *WOSM's own financial resources*. The system was adopted unanimously in Oslo.

Parallel to this, an evaluation was conducted of the impact of the work on the strategy to date. While it was recognised that much had been accomplished under each of the priorities, it was also felt that something was still missing: a clear understanding of what Scouting was meant to achieve in society – its mission. While "*mission*" had been identified in 1988 as one of the original six issues in "*Towards a Strategy for Scouting*", it had been felt at that time that the issue would be overcome through work on the other priorities; clearly this had not been the case. The agenda of the Oslo Conference therefore focussed on two key questions: "*Scouting for what? and Scouting for whom?*". Based on these discussions, the Conference called on the World Scout Committee to begin work on the development of a mission statement for the Movement.

### 3.4 Oslo to Durban

Following the Oslo Conference, a process began that was designed to lead every National Scout Organization from Oslo to Durban, where it was expected that a mission statement for the Movement as a whole would be adopted. Because of the success of the Oslo Conference group discussions, the World Scout Bureau published *"Scouting for what? Scouting for whom?"* as a tool for use by NSOs at their own level.

A Strategy Task Force, which had been appointed by the World Scout Committee after Oslo, designed the process that would eventually lead to the drafting and adoption of a mission statement.

At the Durban Conference, delegates and observers broke into discussion groups. Their inputs were used to produce a draft statement, which was refined by a Select Committee and finally adopted by the Conference.

The mission statement is based on the Constitution of WOSM and reaffirms Scouting's role in today's world. It should foster a sense of unity, direction and commitment in World Scouting.

### 3.5 Durban to Thessaloniki

The adoption of the mission statement in Durban marked a major milestone in the work towards developing and adopting a strategy for Scouting. Work has continued within NSOs, supported by the world bodies, to help all members of the Movement become familiar with the mission statement and understand it. A document entitled *"A Strategy for Scouting... from Durban to Thessaloniki - 1. Understanding the Mission Statement"* was published.

But approving a mission statement – and gaining an effective understanding of it – was only one step in the next phase of work on the strategy. Conference participants in Durban also identified a number of challenges that would need to be overcome if the mission was to be achieved. These include:

- **Relevance:** meeting the needs and aspirations of young people.
- **Complementary nature:** making a distinctive contribution to the education of young people, in particular through the Scout Method.
- **Membership:** reaching out to more young people.
- **Adults:** attracting and retaining the adults we need.
- **Relationships and Partnerships:** working with others to better serve young people.
- **Unity:** pursuing a common purpose at all levels.

These six challenges have set the current agenda for work in NSOs and at world level. The second of two documents published by the World Scout Bureau under the title "*A Strategy for Scouting... from Durban to Thessaloniki - 2. Achieving the Mission of Scouting*" presents the six challenges, expands on the key points and provides a list of issues which need to be addressed to achieve the mission.

For Scouting to successfully achieve its mission, it is important that National Scout Organizations recognise that these challenges are permanent and ongoing. Through the Regional Conferences in 2001, NSOs have been encouraged to develop their understanding of the mission and respond to the key challenges that need to be overcome.

The proposed new strategy for Scouting therefore builds on the mission and these six key challenges.

### **3.6 At Thessaloniki**

At the World Scout Conference in Thessaloniki the concept and content of a Strategy for Scouting was presented to delegates and observers. The overall concept and the text of the vision, the strategic areas and the strategic priorities were accepted unanimously by the delegates on the second day of the Conference.

This provided the delegates and observers with an opportunity to discuss each of the strategic priorities in detail, to help formulate the outcomes of each of the priorities and to choose the three priorities to be a focus for WOSM in the next triennium.

Each delegate and observer was invited to join a facilitated discussion on one of the strategic priorities. The discussions considered the following questions:

- What is the ideal situation in associations in relation to the strategic priority?
- What are the obstacles that associations face and prevent them from achieving the ideal situation?
- What support and tools are needed by associations to help them to overcome the challenges that they face?

The results of the 35 discussion groups were presented to the Conference the following day. The report, which is available on the website [www.scout.org](http://www.scout.org) provides useful ideas for associations to move forward in each of the strategic priorities. The results of the discussion groups are also instrumental in identifying the outcomes to be achieved and the support that associations require from WOSM to achieve the results.

The discussions and results were also the basis on which the Conference delegates voted to identify the three priorities which should be a focus for WOSM in the next triennium. The priorities selected were:

- **Youth Involvement** – revitalising the Scout method.
- **Volunteers in Scouting** – developing new approaches to broaden the base of adult support.
- **Scouting's Profile** – strengthening communications, partnerships and resources.

### 3.7 Post Thessaloniki

It is the responsibility of the World Scout Committee to take the decisions of the Conference forward and to report on progress at the next World Scout Conference in Tunisia in 2005. The World Scout Committee met in October 2002. At this first meeting of the new Committee, the structure of the Committee was reviewed and changed to facilitate the delivery of the strategy. The organisation of the budget has also been brought in line with the strategy.

At the meeting of the World Scout Committee in April 2003 and based on the discussions in Thessaloniki, the expected results and WOSM's contribution will be confirmed and associations will be informed. The work on the strategy is progressing and a full update is available on the strategy section of the WOSM website [www.scout.org/strathome](http://www.scout.org/strathome). The website also identifies tools which have been developed to enable the strategy to be communicated at all levels in Scouting and to the wider community.

*For a strategy to be successful it needs to become 'everyone's business'. Please share this information with others.*

## FROM MELBOURNE TO THESSALONIKI

### A continuous process

A summary of the main phases of the development of the strategy, and the key achievements within each phase, is provided in the table below.

### FROM "TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR SCOUTING" TO "A STRATEGY FOR SCOUTING"

	1988	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002
	<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>Paris</b>	<b>Bangkok</b>	<b>Oslo</b>	<b>Durban</b>	<b>Thessaloniki</b>
Selection of 4 strategic priorities:		Focus on:	Focus on:	Focus on:	Focus on:	Focus on:
Youth Programme	Youth Programme	Youth Programme	Adults in Scouting and Management	WOSM's Own Financial Resources	The mission of the Movement	Adoption of a Strategy for Scouting, including strategic areas and strategic priorities
Adults in Scouting Management	Adoption of the World Programme Policy	Adoption of the World Adult Resources Policy	Adoption of a new fee system	Adoption of a mission statement		
WOSM's Own Financial Resources	Addition of a 5th strategic priority: the Growth of the Movement		Start of thinking process concerning the mission of the Movement: <i>"Scouting for what? Scouting for whom?"</i>			Discussions on the expected results and WOSM's support
						Identification of the key priorities for the next triennium

As the above table illustrates, work on the strategy has been a focal point of every World Conference since 1988.