

Acceptance Speech
By
Mr. Saad Al-Qaddumi
WCC AISBL Extra Ordinary General Assembly Speech, Tues, 14 Dec 2021

Acceptance of the New WCC AISBL President (2022-2024)

1. Introduction:

Dear esteemed WCC Regional Presidents, Vice Presidents, National Entity Members, Associate Members, Individual Members, Honorary Members & Advisers,

It is my honor to be here among you all virtually to give my Acceptance Speech of the Presidency of the WCC International for the remaining years from 2022 till 2024. I am thankful for your vote of confidence and trust in me as International President. It means so much to me that I shall be thus able to continue the Action Plan and accomplish and realize the vision and goals that my predecessor the late President, Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi, had set forth when she had been elected President of WCC AISBL in its 19th General Assembly on 9th December 2020.

This is an extremely special moment for me as I take over from being the Interim President to being the President of WCC AISBL, also, specially that I need to live up to my late mother's standing and her memory as President of WCC among all of you. I look forward to continuing working jointly with all the WCC International Executive Board and our esteemed members so as to achieve our mutual goals in serving the cause of handicrafts and the craft communities worldwide.

There are many challenges facing the craft sector in a world still threatened by Covid 19 pandemic and its recurring variants, but I am determined to continue the legacy of the Late President Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi. I am confident that with your help, we would be able to accomplish her vision, and, the Action Plan for WCC to become a global leader, in the field of crafts, as formulated by the Late President, and fine-tuned by myself, aiming, basically, at advocating, the mission of WCC International in meeting the aspirations of the craftspeople worldwide, and benefiting, the craft communities' best interests in all WCC 5 Regions.

Although Covid-19 has had mixed effects on global consumption and market, yet with the increasing return to agriculture and nature, the future may not be as grim and austere for the handicrafts sector as it may seem now. With reference to Alison Philips's article, 15 Jun 2021, as part of the Jobs Reset Summit, World Economic Forum website, I quote, ***"Still, as with many consumer goods market segments hard-hit by the pandemic, the overall long-term growth outlook for the Creative Manufacturing and Handmade(CMH) Sector seems to be very positive"*** unquote. As forecasted by a recent report, I quote ***"...with more than \$500 billion in annual revenue last year, the global Creative Manufacturing and Handmade(CMH) sector, is set to grow by 20% per year reaching \$1 trillion by 2024."*** Unquote.

I firmly believe, that a stronger and more centralized WCC will exert a positive and constructive impact on the crafts communities worldwide, by fostering equal opportunities and access to crafts training and education for all artisans and crafts communities in all countries, that would contribute effectively to building stronger communities and societies.

Realizing the following Main Goals and Objectives as WCC International President, I would be giving priority to the following:

- Developing WCC International into a stronger and more vibrant Organization by accomplishing the following:
 1. Finalizing the revised WCC Bye-laws and setting standard policies and procedures for WCC and for the 5 Regions.
 2. Establishing a Centralized WCC Bank Account in Belgium where it can be financially enriched by membership fees, sponsors, etc. from all the 5 regions and facilitating direct membership fees to the WCC Bank account in Belgium.
 3. Implementing the Communication Development Strategy of WCC AISBL:
 - Innovating WCC International Website into a more modern and interactive website aiming at Marketing WCC vision and Mission.
 - Making use of other interactive social media platforms with the aim to bring directly light on Artisans and their work for recognition and marketing their products.
 4. Advocating the current flagship projects of WCC AISBL among all the 5 Regions:
 - WCC-World Craft Cities Project
 - WCC Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Project
 - WCC International Craft Events
 - Maintaining the Online Encyclopedia of Handicrafts, but as an independent project.
 5. Further Investigation, and consultation about the mechanism, and the feasibility of establishing a Centralized International Head Quarters for WCC AISBL Secretariat.
 6. Recruiting new Members
- Preparing for and celebrating WCC AISBL Diamond Jubilee (60th Anniversary) in 2024 General Assembly.

2. Conclusion:

I would like to conclude that I happily accept the post of WCC AISBL Presidency regardless of all the challenges that are ahead. There is no denying that the Crafts Sector has been affected severely by Covi-19 pandemic, but I am confident that by working together with all of you, we will be able to serve and fulfill the noble altruistic mission of WCC.

In memory of my late mother and her passion towards WCC, we are proud as her family to continue with the Encyclopedia of Handicrafts as an independent project, as well as scholarships and Award of Excellence incorporated under **Ghada Hijawi Qaddumi Foundation for Arts & Crafts**, which should be reflected on the newly formed WCC International Website.

Other avenues initiated by my late mother need focused attention and prompt action on our part, such as encouraging and embracing the young generations to be more involved and proactive with WCC. This has been well recognized by Ms. Chantal de Saram (Chairperson of Srilanka Artisans & Craftsmen's Association) and Mr. Edric Ong (WCC-APR Honorary Member and Advisor),

and I am sure others who believe in the need to build a young generation who would continue in realizing and reaching WCC's vision and mission, and beyond.

I promise you, as president I will do my very best. I know that we can do more together than we could ever hope to do alone.

It is the principle of teamwork on which our organization should be based. All of us here today are united in our common goals of taking WCC forward and ensuring its lasting sustainability, which can only be achieved by all of us, working together, as a team. I ask you to keep that spirit of teamwork and cooperation always in your minds. Our dedication and commitment to WCC will enable it to make a difference in assisting artisans and in building stronger and more active craft communities that serve artisans and craft communities in better and more lasting ways all over the world.

It is believing in the good work of WCC that will make it grow and get stronger, thus making a difference to our communities, our countries and the world, which is what really counts. **Let's all join hands in "Making a difference together as one Reality Team" in the World of Craft.**

Thank you!

Saad Al-Qaddumi
President, WCC-AISBL
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