REPORT ON RESOLUTIONS AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DURING THE 14TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SONA AT RADISSON BLU HOTEL, IKEJA, LAGOS, NIGERIA FROM 23-27 MARCH 2019

The following were the resolutions at the General Assembly (GA) on Tuesday 26 March 2019

1. **Governing Council**
   
   Ractification of the names of the members of the SONA Governing Council. The names are as on the SONA website. In 2020, there will be a call for new members of the Governing Council.

2. **Election of a new Assistant Secretary-General**
   
   Dr Moses B. Ekong from the University of Uyo, Nigeria was the only nomination received and unanimously elected as the Assistant Secretary General of SONA 2019 - 2023

3. **Movement of SONA Secretariat to South Africa**
   
   The Conference Company, based in Durban, South Africa, operates the new SONA Secretariat. The contact email address is sona@confco.co.za or Vanessa@confco.co.za The current website for SONA is: [https://confco.eventsair.com/society-of-neuroscientists-of-africa/home-page](https://confco.eventsair.com/society-of-neuroscientists-of-africa/home-page)

   Following the approval at the GA, we will pursue the implementation of a new SONA website with a SONA domain name as the current website is limited in its function. This will provide opportunities to develop social media presence, SONA Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. Governing Council member, Mosab Ali Awadelkareem (mosb555@gmail.com) will oversee SONA interface on social media through the office of the Secretary-General.

4. **Membership**
   
   We now have full online membership application process with a functioning online payment platform for credit cards for ease of member. Do visit the website indicated above for details under the ‘Membership’ menu.

   Corporate Members to be renewed yearly ($100) which automatically makes their members to be SONA Members. Individuals members of corporate members are expected to pay only the Yearly Annual Dues of $50 (Regular members) or $20 (Students). While some corporate Members have paid the 2019 dues, others are still being expected to respond accordingly. Please contact the SONA secretariat or the SONA Treasurer, Prof Yusuf Sadiq.

   We have now included on the website the 3-Year membership at $130.00 for Regular Members as agreed at the GA.

   With the retirement of Prof Nilesh Patel from the University of Nairobi, we will like our colleagues in Kenya to confirm who becomes their representative on the Governing Council.

   The following Corporate Members did renew their membership for 2019: Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Zambia and Mali (the newest corporate member and the contact person is Dr Kone Zeinab Email: inakone82@yahoo.fr)

   The GA approved the harmonization of the Annual dues year from July-June circle to the Financial Year that is January to December.

5. **SONA 2021**
   
   Two bids from the Ghana Neuroscience Society (GNS) and the Zambian Neuroscience Society (ZNS) respectively were received as at the deadline. Following the presentations by the Representatives and the vote by financially paid up members, Ghana was chosen as Venue for the 15th International Conference of SONA and the city will be Accra.
6. Revised Benefits of Membership of SONA
The following are as indicated on the SONA website with some additions.
- Reduced registration rate for SONA conference. Subsequent SONA Conferences beginning from 2021 in Accra, Ghana will implement differences in the Conference Registration for SONA Members and Non Members.
- Receive information on research and training opportunities for African neuroscientists
- Eligibility for travel assistance to SONA conferences and workshops
- Eligible to apply and be awarded funds from Organizations affiliated with SONA, e.g. IBRO-ARC, ISN, etc. If one is NOT a *bona fide* member of SONA, he or she should not access funds that are linked to the Society OR he/she should pay the SONA Annual dues in that year of the activity.
- Eligible to publication discounts in special issues of journals organised under the auspices of SONA. IBRO Report Journal will publish a Supplement from all abstracts presented at SONA 2019. Discussion are underway for publications of full manuscripts for those who will be interested. You will have to liaise with the Secretary General on this.
- Discount on Article Publication Cost in the proposed Journal for SONA/AFN.
- Eligible to vote and be voted for into any office of SONA and its subcommittees
- Eligible to be appointed into any of these subcommittees of SONA
  - Education Committee: Chaired by Prof Desire Tshala-Katumbay
  - Finance Committee: Chaired by the Treasurer
  - Awards Committee: Chaired by Secretary General
  - Joint Publication Committee with AFAN: Assistant Secretary General

6a. SONA Education Committee
Approved by the GA. The SONA Education Committee will include all past James Kimani Lecture Awardees (Desire Tshala-Katumbay, Richard Idro, Samir Ahboucha, Rufus Akiyemi, Noelene Nakasujja and Amira Zaky) and some nominated members (Willias Masocha) and some recipients of IBRO Fellowship and/or the IBRO/ISN Fellowships). They will be required to act as mentors to younger colleagues in matters of Research visits, travel grants, grant writing, educational programmes. I have requested Prof Desire Tshala-Katumbay as the First recipient of the James Kimani Lecture Award to Chair this Committee. This Committee should take advantage of the current electronic academic learning platforms and with time, they might be able to organise and host online course(s)/webinar or other courses during SONA Meetings that could attract some additional funding for SONA.
Workshops: There has been a suggestion that Workshops on (a) professional skills, (b) research ethics, and (c) new methodologies should become a permanent part of SONA meetings (or pre-meetings) and could be funded by registration fees and the SONA budget with time. However, I will like to encourage those who may have access to some funds for such workshop to continue assisting SONA.

6b. An Awards Committee (chaired by the Secretary General).
In addition to reviewing possible Conference related Prizes for best poster/oral presenter, etc., I will like to take this opportunity to appeal to Senior Members of SONA and individuals who will like to bequeath a SONA prize or can do so via an organization to get in touch with me. This Committee will also recognize those who have made significant contributions to the existence of SONA for induction into the “SONA Hall of Fame”. All Past Office Bearers of SONA, some consistent Workshop/School Organizers and some Participants at least seven (7) SONA Conferences. Certificates and SONA memorabilia were presented to the 2019 Inductees during the SONA Dinner. These names will now be a permanent feature on the SONA website. The Inductees who could not attend can contact the Secretary General.
7. Journal for SONA
Approval received from the GA to proceed to next stage - Identifying Associate Editors and an Editor-in-Chief and potential Journal Publisher. Prof Kalaria has agreed to take the lead to identify a Journal publisher). Agreed in principle with the President (Prof Yomi) and Secretary-General, (Tina) of the African Academy of Neurology (AFAN) that the profit will be shared at 50/50 ratio. To identify Associate Editors (1 for basic neurosciences and 1 for clinical neurosciences), and then an Editor-in-chief). Some potential Journal Advisory Board Members have been identified. E.g. Prof Amadou Gallo DIOP (Senegal), Vivienne Russell, Nilesh Patel, Prof Angelina Kakooza (from Uganda, chair of the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)'s Commission on African Affairs). Suggestions to the Secretary General are welcome.

8. Interactions with Partner Societies
a. IBRO Advocacy & Engagement Event
Thank you to Tasia Asakawa, the Director, Development and Communications, IBRO for making this Event part of SONA 2019. Although one of our International Facilitators, Prof Munster Ibrahim, a Professor of Medicine from Sudan and a renowned Geneticist was arrested by the Government of Sudan and became a political prisoner after accepting to be part of this programme. Glad to inform that following the turn of events in Sudan he has since been released. Following the success of the event, Tasia has indicated that she will be willing to be at the next SONA Meeting and set up an IBRO Stand.

b. The 2019 IBRO Congress takes place in Daegu, South Korea in September 2019. SANS has submitted a bid to host the IBRO Congress 2023 at Cape Town, South Africa. All SONA affiliate members who are members of the IBRO Governing Council are encouraged to be in South Korea and campaign for this bid as a collective bid from the continent.

c. International Society for Neurochemistry (ISN)
Professor James Olopade (SONA 2019 President and LOC Chair), was elected as an ISN Councillor 2019-2023. I am in the 2019 ISN/ASN Program Committee for the 2019 ISN/ASN Meeting in Montreal Canada taking place in August 2019. I am also a member of the ISN Schools Initiative Committee.

d. Partnership with Wellcome Trust, UK
For those who attended SONA 2019, you will recall that Dr Andrew Welchman, Head of Neuroscience and Mental Health Sciences at the Wellcome Trust office in London did make a presentation on the new Funding Opportunities directed at Neurosciences. In my subsequent discussions with him, it is apparent that members of SONA stand to benefit from this initiative outside their usual strong Public Health domain. I have intimated Dr Welchman the willingness of SONA to partner with Wellcome Trust in this regard.

9. Active Participation in SONA
Finally, I will like to call on all members of SONA to use their contact and experiences to see SONA become a more vibrant Society representing the interests of all the 55 countries on the continent. We are the ones to make the difference and so I call on all to ‘Make a difference in SONA’.
Finally, the SONA Silver Jubilee Memorabilia (T-shirts, Caps and Lapel pins), can be purchased from the contacts below in four countries:

1. **Ghana (Host for SONA 2021)**
   Dr Robert Peter Biney, Secretary General, Ghana Neuroscience Society
   University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Email: robert.biney@ucc.edu.gh
   *Alt. e-mail:* rpbiney@hotmail.com

2. **Nigeria**
   Assistant Secretary-General, Dr Moses Ekong, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
   Email: mbe_flashpoint@yahoo.com

3. **Uganda**
   Treasurer, Prof Sadiq Yusuf, St Augustine University, Kampala. Email: sadiqyus@gmail.com

4. **South Africa**
   Secretary-General, Prof Amadi O. Ihunwo, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
   Email: Amadi.Ihunwo@wits.ac.za

The memorabilia is an avenue to raise some funds for SONA so that we can begin providing travel grants towards the 2021 conference for some members.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Amadi O. Ihunwo, PhD**
**Secretary-General, SONA**