



## An Analysis of the SSSCT Concept Paper by a Senior Officer of the SSSIO

It has come to my attention that many senior officers of the International Organisation are very unhappy with the plan.

When Swami left His body, it was a time of great concern for the future of the Sri Sathya Sai Mission. Thankfully, by the dedication of many, including in the International Organisation, our part in the Mission has grown, with Divine Guidance and Blessings. A lot has been achieved by the International Organisation and I know almost all overseas devotees recognise and are most grateful for your leadership.

With this background, I read the SSSCT's plan. Unfortunately, the document has not properly explained the need for a Global Council and has also given rise to grave concerns about the intentions of the author of the document. It is easy to understand why it has caused so much disillusionment amongst leaders in the International Organisation.

The short paragraph at the top of page 3/7 beginning "In order to formalise ..." does not explain why the recognition by the United Nations of our work to-date requires us to "formalise and to provide a firm foundation for continued achievement of the ideals and goals of Sri Sathya Sai", particularly when the structure and work to-date has already been formalised and built on a firm foundation **by Bhagawan**





**Himself** and has proved to be so successful as to cause the UN to confer Special Consultative Status.

Unfortunately, reading the document as a whole has caused many to perceive only a matter of SSSCT's authority.

Before explaining this, I am heartened by Sri Rathnakar's emails in December 2020 because they seem to show a realisation of the strong commitment of leaders in the International Organisation to the existing structure and also of their rejection of the Global Council. In this regard, his emails provide a pathway for moving forward. I shall come back to this below.

The SSSCT's plan referred to Bhagawan's Will but seemed to go against it. Swami Himself terminated the former existing World Council in 1987 and He Himself set up the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation (SSSWF) and the Prasanthi Council (PC). In the following 24 years to 2011, Bhagawan did not declare that the SSSCT should be the controlling body of the whole Sathya Sai Organisation, and indeed the SSSWF and the PC operated with a high degree of autonomy or independently of the SSSCT, being only answerable to Swami personally. Plainly, these were the clear guidelines Swami Himself laid down in the functioning of the SSSCT and SSSWF/PC.

Had it been His intention to create the plan now put forward, He could easily have done so, but did not - over 24 years! His Will must be respected and followed. Therefore, it may be argued that the SSSCT's plan is not only radical, but contrary to His own actions over 24 years. This, in itself, has undermined the credibility of the plan in the eyes of devotees the world over.

Whilst the SSSWF/SSSIO has cooperated with the SSSCT after 2011 and respected its input, this does not mean that it divorced itself from Bhagawan's Will, including His arrangement for its high degree of autonomy or independent operation.

Secondly, the plan fails to explain why and how the Global Council can achieve the objectives it purports to identify, and why the existing structure of the relationship between the SSSCT and SSSWF/PC needs to be changed. A case for change is not even attempted.





Additionally, it fails to explain how the plan can be practically implemented. Also, it fails to explain why senior officers who have served for decades and have a wealth of experience in national and regional organisational matters, particularly members of the SSSWF / PC, Zone Chairs and Central Coordinators, should have their service dispensed with.

It is painful that the plan makes reference to appointments by the SSSCT of international devotees to the Global Council and its Executive Committee. Who are these people and what should the criteria be? Why should they replace the members identified in the paragraph above? This breeds division and a lack of trust in the plan.

Why have five countries been identified for representation in the Executive Committee when they do not represent the views, cultures, traditions, organisation history of other countries in the Sai Mission? This is not explained and breeds dissatisfaction with the thinking that has gone to produce the plan.

Worse still, the author of the plan has evinced an intention for the SSSCT to take control of the whole Sri Sathya Sai Organisation without any rational reason suggested, giving rise to serious questions and doubts as to motives.

There are many who consider this a total takeover of the SSSIO by the SSSCT. The reason for this is in the plan itself:

a) Point II1, page 3/7, provides that the SSSGC will "oversee, guide, coordinate and **direct** the global mission." No attempt is made to explain why this is necessary and how it can improve the situation. Object II5 is already happening well. The letters to the SSSCT in December by international officers reveal the plan was very poorly received. The SSSCT and SSSGC will not have the local expertise. That the SSSGC is imposed from above will be its Achilles heel.

b) Object II4, page 4/7, provides: "To oversee and guide the functioning of all Sri Sathya Sai Trusts in India and abroad ... **under the authority of SSSCT** in order to ensure." Sadly, no effort is made to explain why this is necessary to ensure anything other than the SSSCT's authority. There is no basis to suggest this is necessary to ensure the integrity, accountability and transparency in the operations of the trusts abroad. Firstly, it has not even demonstrated that these





are a problem. And, secondly, how it can improve on these? In fact, it will almost certainly make matters worse because it will replace the individuals who have served locally for decades.

c) Point 1, page 7/7, provides: "The SSSGC ... shall be guided and **be bound by any** directions, guidance, **orders and instructions given by the SSSCT ...**" This is the most direct statement of domination.

d) Also, in the same section: the SSSGC "shall function under the **overall superintendence** of SSSCT."

e) That three trustees of the SSSCT and five other so-called long-standing devotees **are to be nominated by the SSSCT** to be members, that the SSSCT is to **nominate the chair** of the SSSGC, and the Managing Trustee be a permanent invitee to the Executive Committee, together with five senior functionaries to **be nominated by the SSSCT** to the Executive Committee, all these give the clear, unmistakable intention to control the SSSGC. Many people are concerned that such nominations will only lead to people seeking to please the SSSCT for their own ambitions.

f) The Executive Committee formed by the SSSCT is to appoint the Chairs of the SSSSO and SSSIO.

Further, the following point reveals the overt strategy to control the SSSGC: the staff of the SSSGC will be provided by the SSSCT - this completes the concern of a takeover.

What has aggravated the consternation is, as I have stated above, the absence of any attempt to demonstrate how and why these actions are necessary to further or improve the Sri Sathya Sai Mission. Winning hearts rather than imposing a decision from above is always a good approach.

Having regard to the reactions to the plan, it is clear the plan is a disservice to the noble history of the SSSCT.

The statement that there should be a global plan of activities for the whole world is also radical as Swami Himself never did this, and it also reveals a lack of understanding of the vastly differing circumstances around the world. Thus, for





example, the plan in China or Russia cannot be the same plan as for America, or even Singapore where local laws govern overseas involvement in local charitable organisations.

The Way Forward:

In his email dated 12 December 2020, the Managing Trustee said the plan was not to be in any way disruptive. The response of senior leaders of the international organisation reveal unequivocally that the plan is seen to be very disruptive and thus rejected.

Further, on 20 December 2020, the Managing Trustee said, "we have no intention to interfere with Zone Chairs or Country heads." Yet, the role of the Zone Chairs only exists in the existing structure and does not exist in the plan.

It was comforting that the Managing Trustee said, "... I promise that this entire effort is only to fulfil the command of Bhagawan." Accepting his good intentions, it seems that this necessarily means we maintain the structure Bhagawan Himself established in 1987 and oversaw personally for 24 years.

I humbly suggest that the plan has not achieved the credibility and support it requires. What is required is something that actually wins hearts and minds. In these tumultuous times in the world, this is absolutely required. Sadly, we are now faced with a real risk that the unity of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation can be destroyed. I am sure everyone agrees this must be avoided at all costs, if only for Swami.

Forgive me for my lengthy comments. I hope they are of some assistance in understanding the objections of the people that have spoken to me.

With Loving Sairams,

