

## STRATEGIC AIMS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEN

International PEN: “*promoting literature – defending freedom of expression*”



### THE SPIRIT OF PEN

In eighty years of existence, International PEN has come to link writers everywhere in support of the civil values associated with the creation of the world's literatures.

Its voice is heard in high places – it enjoys consultant status at UNESCO as the umbrella literary organization. To every PEN member the events and colleagues of his or her local PEN Centre are the immediate face of the association. It is through the Centres that the fellowship of PEN members is expressed, from participation in literary projects through to campaigns against censorship and repression.

PEN is proud of the long list of eminent writers who have devoted their energies to developing its distinctive vision and mission. H.G.Wells was its President when, meeting in 1933 at Dubrovnik, the Assembly condemned the totalitarianism of both Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Russia. Its focus on freedom of expression has not wavered in the years since.

At Congresses of International PEN, held annually in cities all over the world, delegates from many of the 140 Centres of PEN meet, discuss matters of importance to literature and writing, build PEN's policies and activities, and learn the scope of PEN's undertaking and powers.

In recent years, Bangladeshi feminist activist Taslima Nasrin and Brigadier-General Gallardo Rodriguez of Mexico have borne witness to oppression and resistance. Salman Rushdie, now President of American PEN, is another leading figure among the many who can testify to the vital role of International PEN's campaigns, of press publicity and postal and electronic messaging, in securing their liberty and safety.

The Committees of PEN are the agents of its most fervent aspirations. The Writers In Prison Committee is probably the best known, coordinating research and action on a world-wide case-list of writers murdered, attacked, imprisoned, or threatened.

The other Committees likewise network to promote literature and provide encouragement and support for the creative individual around the world. PEN is proud of its track record, where integrity of purpose and the ethics of a common Charter bond its global fellowship together. In promoting literature and defending freedom to write, we believe that bridge-building to create a culture for peace will also provide the creative environment necessary for the inspired writing of future generations.

# STRATEGIC AIMS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEN

International *PEN*: “*promoting literature – defending freedom of expression*”



## I. MISSION STATEMENT

*International PEN is committed to:*

- *building a world community of writers guided by the values of the PEN Charter*
- *reaffirming the importance of literature and literacy in civil society*
- *supporting access to literature across linguistic borders*
- *defending freedom to write and supporting writers under repression.*

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These aims are realized through a number of strategies, standing committees and programme activities. The work of International PEN is carried out at two levels, through the activities of member Centres and by the programmes of the Standing committees and the Secretariat of International PEN. Within the ideals of organisational democracy, Centres decide themselves on membership, select their representatives and conduct their activities. (PEN is not a trade union, and may not act as a literary agent).

## II. STRATEGIC AIMS FOR THE PEN CENTRES

**ONE:** *building a world community of writers guided by the values of the PEN Charter*

As an acronym, PEN in 1921 originally referred to Poets, Playwrights, Essayists and Novelists. From an early stage the membership also included qualified editors, publishers and translators, as well as other categories of writer such as historians and journalists in all media. Members are sought among those writers who manifestly share the goals of International PEN as expressed in the Charter. PEN Centres are called on to foster a sense of community among writers irrespective of nationality, ethnic origin, language, colour, gender or religion.

1:1 International PEN works actively to create new Centres in every part of the world and encourages cooperation among the Centres of specific geographical regions. PEN encourages writers in emerging countries, including such aims as achieving national literacy and freedom of expression.

1:2 Centres use regional meetings, networks and involvement in cultural events to develop dialogue between writers around the world, thus also raising the visibility of the PEN movement.

1:3 Centres endeavour to make themselves known to visiting PEN members from abroad, especially exiled writers to whom they offer support when possible.

**TWO:** *reaffirming the importance of literature and literacy in civil society*

PEN considers a vital literary life as indispensable to the free development of the individual and a long-term peaceful civil society, which includes promotion of literacy, public libraries and general access to literature in print and digital form. PEN Centres engage in some or all of the following activities:

- 2:1 arranging literary meetings for reading and discussion of literature and poetry, either for their membership or the public.
- 2:2 hosting or co-hosting seminars and conferences on literature and poetry.
- 2:3 encouraging good writing through publicity and prizes.
- 2:4 hosting international conferences or regional seminars in which members from other Centres and other guests are invited to participate.
- 2:5 actively promoting reading and writing skills to enhance the quality of education and the appreciation of literature and poetry.

**THREE:** *supporting access to literature across linguistic and cultural borders*

PEN upholds the rights of all to the ir mother tongue and works for the adoption by the United Nations of a convention built on PEN's Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, and encourages translation as a bridge between the linguistic communities of the world. PEN Centres engage in some or all of the following activities:

- 3:1 encouraging international participation in their home sessions and activities, thus offering a platform for global perspectives in literary and poetry sessions
- 3:2 actively promoting their own national literatures on the international scene.

**FOUR:** *defending freedom to write and supporting writers under repression*

Through its Centres, PEN takes rapid action to oppose any form of suppression of freedom of expression at home or abroad, and responds swiftly to calls for action by writers in their own country or from other PEN Centres.

- 4:1 International PEN shall have a Standing Committee for Writers-in-Prison. Individual Centres with Writers-in-Prison committees form the board of the Writers-in-Prison Committee (WiPC).
- 4:2 Centres work with the WiPC through developing their own committees on behalf of persecuted writers, through the adoption of honorary members and participation in 'Rapid Action' alerts on specific emergency cases.
- 4.3 Centres may also contribute directly to the PEN Emergency Fund which provides practical and financial support directly to persecuted writers and their families.

## **II. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK AND PROGRAMMES**

International PEN belongs to its member Centres. International PEN, as an organisation, plays a representative, co-ordinating and implementing role. This role is derived from the Charter, is subject to the annual scrutiny of the Assembly of Delegates, and is expressed in the Regulations and Rules of Procedure of International PEN.

International PEN is built on the ideals of effectiveness, transparency and accountability in order to promote the PEN vision. The London Office of International PEN, which houses the Secretariat, reflects these values.

International PEN has formal consultative relations with UNESCO, based on the overlapping ideals in our respective Charters, and is accredited as an international non-governmental organisation with the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The goals of International PEN are implemented through its programmes. The task and duties of the programmes are autonomous, subject to the general supervision of the Assembly and the Board. The chair of each programme which forms a Standing Committee is responsible to those Centres that participate in the programme. Each may choose its working methods and shall seek economic support for its activities.

This also means that any support from external sources can be directed to specific programmes and their activities according to the wishes of the donor. In order to sustain viable and expanding general support, core funding is also sought for the London Office, which directly and indirectly benefits all programmes. External funding is only accepted on the understanding that it does not affect the integrity of International PEN.

### **The programmes of International PEN are as follows:**

P 1 International PEN Foundation (independent status, governed by Trustees)

P 2 London Office

P 3 Annual Congresses

P 4 Writers for Peace Committee

P 5 Writers in Prison Committee

P 6 Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee

P 7 Women Writers Committee

P 8 Writers in Exile Network

P 9 *PEN International Magazine*

## **P 1 INTERNATIONAL PEN FOUNDATION**

The International PEN Foundation was set up in 1992 as a charitable body to support the educational and charitable activities of International PEN in the advancement of literature, and to assist in the relief of persecuted writers and their families. It organises literary events to raise PEN's public profile and encourages awareness of the work and ideals of PEN, which the charity aims to support. Its charitable status enables the Foundation to maximise the use of PEN's income, the bulk of which comes from PEN members. It can also raise additional money from foundations, companies and individuals sympathetic to PEN's ideals and seek grants from government bodies and independent trust funds.

## **P 2 LONDON OFFICE**

The Headquarters of International PEN are in London. The Administrative Director is in charge of the London Office, under the supervision of the International Secretary on behalf of the Board. The Administrative Director is also secretary to the Board of International PEN, which is chaired by the International President.

The Office services the Centres in order to enable them to function according to the strategic aims of International PEN. The Administrative Director is responsible for the staffing and the activities of the Office within the budget framework established annually by the Assembly of Delegates. The London Office is mainly funded through membership dues.

## **P 3 ANNUAL CONGRESSES**

The Assembly of Delegates of International PEN, consisting of delegates from the member Centres, is the governing body of International PEN. It gathers annually at Congresses organized each year by a different host Centre. As well as providing the venue for the meetings of the Assembly of Delegates, the International Congresses include literary sessions, readings and seminars, in which any PEN member may participate and many of which are open to the public. Congresses are funded by ad hoc fundraising activities, assisted by the London Office.

## **P 4 WRITERS FOR PEACE COMMITTEE**

The Writers for Peace Committee was founded in 1984. Its annual meetings are held within the framework of international writers' conferences organised by the Slovene PEN Centre at Lake Bled each year in May. At these sessions, representatives of PEN and other interested writers meet and consider ways in which writers can work for peaceful co-existence in the world.

The Committee organises dialogues and encourages peaceful co-existence among writers and intellectuals in regions of conflict. PEN is a literary organisation, and one focus of the Writers for Peace Committee is the abuse of literary language for the purpose of war propaganda and the instigation of hatred against nationalities, religions and cultures.

## **P 5 WRITERS IN PRISON COMMITTEE**

The Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN works on behalf of persecuted writers worldwide. Established in 1960 in response to increasing attempts to silence voices of dissent by imprisoning writers and journalists, the WiPC currently monitors the cases of almost 900 writers annually. Through its member Centres, the WiPC lobbies governments and offers moral support to imprisoned writers who may become honorary members of individual Centres. The WiPC also works through the mechanisms of the United Nations, including the UN Human Rights Commission, to bring attention both to individual cases and to systematic human rights problems in specific countries.

The WiPC maintains a database of all cases of abuses against writers and journalists, updated daily. This case list is produced in printed form twice a year, and information on individual cases or specific countries is available on request from the WiPC headquarters in London. The WiPC Rapid Action Network Alerts provide details of cases of individuals whose lives and liberty are being threatened, and governments' addresses for those who wish to send their own protests about the abuses.

## **P 6 TRANSLATION AND LINGUISTIC RIGHTS COMMITTEE**

The Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee was established in 1978. It has the task of encouraging translations especially of contemporary literature written in languages of lesser currency into both global and other languages. It also speaks out in defence of linguistic pluralism as a part of the cultural diversity and heritage of the world. Its aims are to ensure understanding of the essential role played by translations in bridge-building in pluralistic societies, and to encourage delight in the literatures of different cultures.

The Committee has submitted to UNESCO a proposal for a Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights for adoption as a text of international law. This holds that each person has the right to use his or her own language, and each group or linguistic community has the collective right to use its language. A rolling plan supports seminars and other projects, bringing together writers, poets and translators. The TLRC supports projects for the multilingual and translated publication of literary writing, such as the Diversity Collection as found on the homepage of the Macedonian PEN Centre ([www.diversity.org.mk](http://www.diversity.org.mk)).

## **P 7 WOMEN WRITERS COMMITTEE**

The International PEN Women Writers Committee was created in 1991 to address the special needs of women writers and encourages the popularisation, publication and translation of their works. The IPWWC now enjoys representation in more than 70 PEN Centres. Women writers from all six continents and from a wide diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups are active in the Committee work. IPWWC distributes an annual trilingual (English, French Spanish) newsletter to co-ordinators in over 70 countries for local distribution. The IPWWC also arranges regional conferences which always issue publications.

## **P 8 WRITERS IN EXILE NETWORK**

In 1999, a permanent 'Writers in Exile' (WiE) Programme was established, with the main objective of enhancing the support of International PEN for writers who are forced to live in exile. The Programme now takes the form of the Writers in Exile Network, whose aims are to share and exchange information and experiences and to raise awareness both locally and internationally about the problems facing exiled writers. By so doing, the Network helps such writers to establish themselves in their new environments and to resume their careers. It is engaged in setting up and maintaining a database as a clearing centre, which is hosted by one of the Network members.

## **P 9 PEN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE**

*PEN International* magazine is published twice a year by International PEN in London, under the aegis of its Editorial Advisory Board: Homero Aridjis, J. M. Coetzee, Ronald Harwood, Professor Edmund Keeley, Mario Vargas Llosa, Per Wästberg and Saadi Youssef. It contains a lively mixture of poems and short stories; papers delivered at International PEN's Congresses and conferences; reviews, focusing on contemporary literature in languages of lesser currency; articles; and a section of information on and writing by imprisoned writers. Subscriptions are available through the London Office.

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International PEN works closely with two associated Foundations, the PEN Emergency Fund and the Iberian American Foundation. Each is an independent legal entity, established to forward specific purposes of International PEN, and is governed by appointed Board of Trustees.

### **▪ PEN Emergency Fund**

The PEN Emergency Fund was founded in 1973 as an independent organisation co-operating closely with International PEN. The Fund gives practical help to imprisoned or harassed writers and journalists. In some cases, the Fund also offers support to their families.

### **▪ Iberian American Foundation**

The Iberian American Foundation was established in 1997 with the purpose of fulfilling International PEN's acceptance in the same year of Spanish as a working language of PEN by funding the expenses this generated.

It has paid for the translation of documents important to PEN as well as funding simultaneous interpretation at PEN Congresses since 1999, and has created a lively network to maintain communication among Spanish-speaking Centres. It is governed by an independent supervisory board funded through donations.

## **International P E N**

**Founder:** Mrs Catharine Amy Dawson Scott

### **Past International Presidents:**

John Galsworthy 1921–33

H. G. Wells 1933–36

Jules Romains 1936–41

### **International Presidential Committee**

(formed during Second World War)

Hu Shih 1941–47

Denis Saurat 1941–47

H. G. Wells 1941–46

Hermon Ould 1941–47

Thornton Wilder 1941–47

with {E. M. Forster 1946–47

{François Mauriac 1946–47

{Ignazio Silone 1946–47

Maurice Maeterlinck 1947–49

Benedetto Croce 1949–52

Charles Morgan 1953–56

André Chamson 1956–59

Alberto Moravia 1959–62

Victor van Vriesland 1962–65

Arthur Miller 1965–69

Pierre Emmanuel 1969–71

Heinrich Böll 1971–74

V. S. Pritchett 1974–76

Mario Vargas Llosa 1976–79

Per Wästberg 1979–85

Francis King 1986–89

René Tavernier May to November 1989

Per Wästberg (Interim President) November  
1989 to May 1990

György Konrád 1990–93

Ronald Harwood 1993–97

Homero Aridjis 1997–2003

### **Past International Secretaries:**

Marjorie Watts 1921–26

Hermon Ould 1926–51

David Carver 1951–74

Peter Elstob 1974–81

Alexandre Blokh 1981–98

Terry Carlbom 1998 – 04

### **Past International Treasurers:**

Thilo Koch 1974–91

Bill Barazetti 1991–96

Martyn Goff 1996–98

Jan Honout 1998–2001

## International P E N 2004

**International President:** Jiri Gruša

### International Vice-Presidents

Homero Aridjis

Andrei Bitov

Alexandre Blokh

Sook-Hee Chun

Georges Emmanuel Clancier

Moris Farhi MBE

Nadine Gordimer

Ronald Harwood CBE

Nancy Ing

Lucina Kathmann

Francis King CBE

György Konrád

Joanne Leedom-Ackerman

Predrag Matvejevic

Arthur Miller

Boris A. Novak

Antonio Olinto

Michael Scammell

Mario Vargas Llosa

Thomas von Vegesack

Per Wästberg

### Board of International PEN

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International Treasurer

International Secretary

Cecilia Balcazar (Colombian Centre)

Takeaki Hori (Japanese Centre)

Eric Lax (USA West Centre)

Elisabeth Nordgren (Finnish Centre)

Sibila Petlevski (Croatian Centre)

Judith Rodriguez (Melbourne Centre)

Eugene Schoulgin (Norwegian Centre)

**International Secretary:**

**International Treasurer:**

**Finance Administrator:**

**Administrative Director:**

**Administrative Assistant:**

**Chair, Writers in Prison Committee:**

**Programme Director, WiPC:**

**Researchers:**

**Chair, Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee:**

**Chair, Writers for Peace Committee:**

**Chair, Women Writers' Committee:**

**Editor, *PEN International* magazine:**

Joanne Leedom-Ackerman

Britta Junge Pedersen

Kathy Barazetti

Jane Spender

Karen Efford

Karin Clark

Sara Whyatt

Sara Birch, Cathy McCann, Dixe Wills

Kata Kulavkova

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Judith Buckrich

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