

For my year as President of the GSF in 2019/2020, I've chosen as theme:  
**Our Future in Speaking: Delivering and Expanding on the Promise**

**Global Connection | Global Knowledge | Global Certification**

The reason for choosing this theme is that, in talks with members of the Global Speakers Federation's (GSF) Presidential Leadership Team, the GSF Steering Committee, past Presidents of the GSF, and past and current presidents of our member associations, more and more people are asking: "What can and will the GSF do for our associations and through them for their members?"

Another question that arose is: "Why should we, as an association, pay to be a member of GSF?"

I understand these questions and I will try to answer them now as well as to find new answers in the coming year.

First, we can remember the words of Cavett Robert: "Let's make the pie bigger."

What that means to me is that we are all responsible to evolve and to create more awareness of the role of professional speaking in this world, which is becoming smaller and smaller because of digital developments.

We, as the GSF, also need to encourage and to support the more than 170 countries that are not connected yet to a home speaking association. And, maybe even more importantly, we need to serve the current associations, young and old, by making the professional speaking world more and more businesswise. We will support our member associations with a focus on professionalism and accreditation.

Second, we will serve and facilitate on the following three levels:

**A- Member Associations:** I understand that the value of the GSF is perceived differently by new (and emerging) associations versus older (and more established) ones. Obviously, we need to look for different approaches to each association. We will work on a specific pitch to be crafted. This should be part of our Strategic Plan.

**B- Association Leaders:** We need to work with the representatives on the Board of the GSF and possibly with all board members of our associations, should they request it. We need constant activation to really demonstrate the Federation's value and to encourage association presidents to take full advantage of the potential. My suggestion under the next level can support this.

**C- Contributors and Volunteers:** The fact we have recently created various active task forces is a step in the right direction and should be marketed through the associations and, through these associations, to their individual members (speakers) as an opportunity to expand their network and work with brilliant individuals from around the globe.

Our framework and purpose, as stated in our Bylaws, indicate that:

Section 1. Framework.

The GSF is a global framework for independent, non-profit speakers' associations to collectively serve the interests of the individual member associations while also advancing the profession of speaking. The GSF is a mechanism of affiliation through which associations for professional speakers around the world collectively, and through their association, serve their members and leaders by facilitating greater access to resources available worldwide that enhance professional education and development for speakers.

Based on this framework, the GSF serves the boards of our member associations and provides them with global resources, like maintaining appropriate standards for global professional certification, professional education, best practices, and benchmarking.

This includes the Global Speaking Fellow, the Global Speakers Summit (GSS), the Global Leaders Library, and regional support.

An interesting consequence of the above is that some of these resources and benefits will impact individual speakers through their home association, although that is not our main focus.

During this past year, we created a Strategic Plan for the coming three years. This project started with the above questions but also with an acute financial situation facing the GSF. Happily, the financial situation is much better now than last year, overall.

At this moment, GSF works to serve its member associations, through Task Forces and teams of GSF board members, by:

- Creating a more professional and businesswise environment
- Co-creating the world-wide standards for CSP/FPFA
- Co-creating the world-wide standards for professional membership per association
- Organizing a Global Speakers Summit (together with a national association every two years) to show the value of working together
- Facilitating a Global Leadership Library, in which examples of codes of conducts, ethical rules, and rules for sponsoring are available to all leadership teams of the current associations.

- Supporting the leadership teams of our member associations (by request) and also supporting teams who want to create new associations, all over the world
- Working on an international partnership/sponsorship program, which will facilitate all the associations equally

A challenge that faces the GSF is that not all associations are convinced of the value of the GSF. This is partly because we need to communicate our value propositions more and partly because of the organic changes in the association leadership teams occurring at different times annually.

A perception, by some at the moment, is that the GSF is of limited value. Most individual board members that I spoke with, can recall the Task Forces and the visits of the President of the GSF to their convention. They are aware of the Speaker magazine and VOE. These NSA-US products were originally shared because of action taken by the GSF and are now freely available on the internet.

We need to be clear on what the value of the GSF is and then we need to communicate this value to the rest of the speaking world.

## Delivering and Expanding on the Promise

Some individual board members of our member associations think that the value of GSF is limited. One could, of course, say that the financial contribution per member is also limited, but that doesn't solve the problem.

We, as leaders of associations and GSF, need to realize that all the potential is lying at our fingertips. National associations need a global connection, not only to leverage the collective global brain, but also to create opportunities and possibly, through them, to their individual members to attend and speak at conventions and in the industry around the world. The world is changing and the request for professional and businesswise speakers is increasing.

It's up to the GSF PLT, Steering Committee, and Board to communicate more about what the GSF is doing. Also, we need more "modern" instruments that can support our member associations and their members. All of this is in keeping with our Bylaws.

It's not that we don't do the right things, it's that we need to communicate more about it AND to add new instruments; so, we have something new to communicate. We have created a new structure, which connects leaders from around the world, but we still have to activate that network and communicate its value.

### Some Ideas for the coming years:

Connecting to the Strategic Plan.

In speaking with many people, a whole host of topics arose. There is international support of many (past) leaders of associations and GSF for these ideas:

1. Facilitating four Continental Speaking Regions:

- a. Europe
- b. Asian-Pacific
- c. Africa
- d. America

In these regions, we can organize and deliver (on rotation) association events that coincide with national events. These could be virtual events, conventions, workshops, or trainings. Every association can have their own conventions, inviting international guests; however, an emphasis on regional events may be a better time and cost effective approach.

Regional conventions to be rotated amongst the associations of that region (like the 4<sup>th</sup> European Convention: Antwerp, Berlin, Paris, and now the UK in 2020). This helps:

- To get more international speakers to a dedicated convention per region.
  - To select the best possible experts and business speakers on the platform.
  - To support the boards of associations per region by organizing a regional board meeting maybe under the chairmanship of the GSF-president and GSF-director. This meeting will be organized in connection to one convention per region per year.
  - To create an exchange of ideas about training, facilitating and supporting markets and members: e-Speakers, webinars, virtual meetings and videos through e-Speakers, and others.
  - To support the speaking industry per region.
2. Theme-events like live monthly webinars per region on several subjects such as: Humor & Culture, Ethics, Stage-craft, etc. These webinars can be recorded and then, after two weeks, be put on the GSF-website for a period of time (for access by other associations). Discussion with E-Speakers.
3. Regional (board) structure to support new member associations by sharing regional experiences in board-meeting on-line or in real time. Support the boards of associations per region by organizing a

regional board meeting under the leadership of the GSF President and GSF Executive Director will be my contribution to the associations in my year of Presidency.

Part of the Global Leaderships Library can be regionalized and made available in a wider circle for starting-associations.

4. GSS: making the GSS as a cooperation of a national association and the Federation more international, business-oriented and global:
  - a. 3 - 4 days
  - b. Focus on Knowledge, quality, accreditation and networking
  - c. Outside speakers: top-quality
  - d. Payment plans

At the beginning of a new and exciting year for me, all of you, our member associations as well as all the speakers in the world, I'm asking you to support our PLT in finding the answers to the questions of the beginning of this paper.

Let's work together and create *Our Future in Speaking*.

I am Paul ter Wal, the 2019-2020 President of the Global Speakers Federation. Thank you.