Hello all,

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Tomer Ashur and I am the chairman of Wikimedia Israel and the interim secretary general of the Wikimedia Chapters association. Unfortunately, due to visa problems I could not attend in person in today's meeting. I understand that Ashley suggested I'll give this brief introduction through Video-Conference. Please forgive me in advance for the inconvenience.

I would like to start with a brief view to the history of the association and move on to speak about the future. Prior to the Wikimedia meeting in Berlin this April, as a reaction to changes in our movement, several groups of people started working on a forming some kind of an umbrella organization that was called back then "The Wikimedia Chapters Council", those groups who initially worked separately, eventually shared their thoughts on Meta and came up with two or three possible models.

When we arrived to Berlin, we got a copy of the founding document who was a combination of what was then called "Model B" and "The KISS Model". We also got a paper where we could give our commenting on these papers toward the meeting on next day. Despite the short notice, several people were able to do a great work of suggesting amendments and changes. This session started off on the wrong foot but as time passed reached a good balance.

On the first day we were told that by the end of the conference we are to select a Secretary-general. After two long days of discussion about the WCA activities and the purposes we were able to agree about what we now call "The Charter". In the evening of the last day we started a discussion about the Secretary-general. There were no candidates and it wasn't clear on what are the roles of this Secretary-General. We had very little time to define the roles of the Secretary-general.

So we decided to select an interim secretary-general but had no candidates for this role (mostly due to the short notice). My name was brought up by someone as an option but I refused this offer giving an explanation that I recently changed jobs and that I cannot commit to the time it may require. Frieda then suggested a committee so the burden can be split among several people. This was agreed and I agreed to lead this committee. I left the room to have this idea voted and (so I guess) was selected. It is only the day after that I learnt that the vote was to select me for the interim secretary-general position.

So, armed with the charter, a committee and a great support of twenty something chapters, each understanding the charter a little differently we started the work. We first established a work plan and published it on Meta. It seemed to be widely agreed that the most important task is to hire an SG. The first wall we met is that it requires a formal entity to hire this person and money to pay his salary. These two things mean we need to know where to register and have a budget funding this salary.

The location has also its own implications on the budget. The Foundation's legal counsel, Geoff, generously offered to pay for an external legal counsel who's specialty is in non-profit. This counsel, Bradly, compiled a report for us. Until this report, all discussions were made on Meta and the Internal mailing list. Due to the nature of the work, Bradley did not agree that we share it on a public location, so it was sent to the the chapters list and was discussed there. One of the items on the agenda today is to approve a location so whoever chosen to do the work can register the organization.

Based on our own recommendation, we started working on the budget as different locations means different costs. An office space in the UK does not cost the same as an office space in Switzerland. The taxes payed in Belgium on salaries are completely different from those paid in France. The building of the budget had some holdbacks. Nevertheless, you now have a draft before you. You can use the time

you have to discuss specific items (How much overhead there is on insurance in The Netherlands) but I prefer that you'll discuss ideas (Should the first year budget be directed to such high-salaries).

On the item of selecting a Secretary-general, we put on Meta a job Description for commenting. This commenting was made through the talk page but also through other channels people preferred. The comments who were very convincing or had a large support (even if they were against my personal opinion) were incorporated into the document. Some comments, especially those who came late were left to be dealt with in the future.

This is the time to emphasis that my view on the SG position is that it requires someone with experience on non-profit management, someone with international-multicultural mind. It would be a huge advantage if they know the Wikimedia world but it cannot be mandatory. I have heard that there are people who think it takes time to learn all the internal politics; this is true, it takes time, but it is possible. Perhaps it is also a good idea if the SG will not be familiar with all the internal politics right from the beginning.

So based on this job description and this vision we started a preliminary discussion with two HR companies. Both are very experienced in doing this type of work. We also asked them about the salary levels and got some initial numbers. This is probably what Sebastian meant when he wrote in his email that some information was communicated out. In my dictionary, this direction is called "in". We got an advice from the experts.

The agenda for today includes a discussion about the standing orders, the budget and the selection of organs. It is a very challenging one – as it reflect the massive work that has been done so far. Since there were things that you needed to decide about today, we did not publish the job offer yet so no candidates are present to you by our committee. Some see this as a failure – I see this as the only possible outcome of this process which is serial in its nature.

Therefore, we recommended the only possible option we saw which is to extend the interim period. This experience gave me some new presepective on this work. Building an equal-powered committee, with members who did not know each other beforehand and cannot meet in person is a very hard way to work. It starts with simple things like the lag induced by the time differences but also it takes time to reach a common ground given the culture differences.

The change suggested today is to select an interim secretary-general and a deputy secretary-general. Clear Hierarchy, clear way to make decisions, clear voice in discussions and clear task assignment. I had hopes that others nominate themselves for these roles. I would cooperate and give full support to whoever be chosen. However, to date, no one did so, so I hooked up with Delphine and asked her to be my deputy. I know that some are worried from Delphine, I have heard people saying that that she is not always the easiest person to deal with. First of all, so am I. And second, Delphine has a large track record in doing, rather than just talking. This is exactly the type of people these positions require.

My vision for future of the WCA is that the council should decide on location, approve at least part of the budget so we can hire a SG and register. The selected interim SG should then go and actually register the organization, publish the job offer as widely as possible and hire via an agreed hiring process.

So this is what I'm nominating myself for, I hope I'll have your support in continuing this line.
I will take questions now.