

Minutes of 1st Meeting of General Body of NFICI

Time: 03:00 p.m., Date: 20.04.2011

Venue: Civil Services Officers' Institute (CSOI), Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi

List of Participants:

1. **Members of NFICI or NFICI's existing Board of Governors** (representing respective ICs):

- **Shri Wajahat Habibullah**, IAS (Retd.) Ex-CIC, Central Information Commission and 1st President of NFICI
- **Shri C. D. Arha**, IAS (Retd.) Ex-SCIC, Andhra Pradesh State Information Commission and 1st Vice President of NFICI
- **Shri Jannat Husain**, IAS (Retd.), SCIC, Andhra Pradesh State Information Commission (Member, NFICI)
- **Shri A. K. Choudhary**, IAS (Retd.), SCIC, Bihar State Information Commission (Member, NFICI)
- **Shri Tarun Kanti Misra**, IAS (Retd.), SCIC, Orissa State Information Commission (Member, NFICI)
- **Shri Surinder Singh**, SIC, Punjab State Information Commission (Member, NFICI)

Special Invitees Present:

- **Shri Satyananda Mishra**, IAS (Retd.) CIC, Central Information Commission, **New Delhi**
- **Shri K. S. Sripathi**, IAS (Retd.), SCIC, Tamil Nadu State information Commission, **Chennai**
- **Shri Bhim Sen**, IAS (Retd.), SCIC, Himachal Pradesh State information Commission, **Shimla**
- **Shri Serjius Minj**, IAS (Retd.), SCIC, Chhattisgarh State information Commission, **Raipur**
- **Shri K. Tlan Thanga**, SIC, Mizoram Information Commission, **Aizwal**

Also present:

- **Smt. Anita Gupta**, Additional Secretary, Central Information Commission, **New Delhi**
- **Shri Vardhaman Vaidya**, Executive Secretary (interim), NFICI, CGG, **Hyderabad**

2. The meeting commenced with a welcome by **Shri Jannat Husain** and opening remarks by **Shri Satyananda Mishra**, who thereafter explained salient features of the agenda. Thereupon **Shri Wajahat Habibullah** and **Shri C.D. Arha** were requested to address the participants and explain the situation and circumstances under which NFICI was formed and other relevant facts.

3. **Shri Satyananda Mishra** in his opening remarks stressed upon the importance of an institution like NFICI and congratulated the sub-committee and the first Board of Governors for their contributions towards setting up of NFICI. He also stressed on the need to carry the good work forward.

4. **Shri C. D. Arha** emphasized the aims and objectives of NFICI as laid out in its MOA and hoped that NFICI would be able to achieve this in future. He shared with the participants how NFICI had come to be established and how it was a most significant outcome of the work carried out by the second sub-committee of the then CIC constituted on 12.01.2009 with 6 specific ToRs. He mentioned that NFICI was constituted on 01.09.2009 and that its first Board of Governors were to continue till the next Board is elected during the 1st General Body Meeting. He clarified that as per NFICI's Rules & Regulations, its Board of Governors or its General Body cannot comprise representatives of those Information Commissions who are yet to become members by paying stipulated admission fee. Relevant clauses of the rules and regulations were discussed and this was agreed. He added that representatives of non-member-ICs would attend NFICI's meetings as Special Invitees. He, further, made known to the participants that there has always been an acceptance of the point that NFICI should be head quartered

in Delhi. Yet, he stressed that NFICI's presence in Hyderabad – under the aegis of the APIC – was only an interim arrangement till such time a place could be found for NFICI's office in New Delhi. CGG, Hyderabad provided it some assistance in the initial days from its inception. Finally, he urged all those present to expedite becoming the members of NFICI.

5. Shri Wajahat Habibullah in his address stated that NFICI was envisaged to provide a proper institutional framework to the idea of an Information Commission and for aptly strengthening its position vis-à-vis the Executive as also the Judiciary such that all the Information Commissions could, among other things, deliberate and devise a unified / consensual position on key issues and concerns they are faced with. He believed that this would not only make for homogeneity of action, but also facilitate learning from each other's good practices and experiences. He went on to suggest that NFICI should consider having the Jammu and Kashmir State Information Commission also as one of its members.

6. Shri Jannat Husain then took up the agenda for the General Body meeting for discussion. Those present from among the existing Board of Governors including the President and Vice President formally resigned. It was deemed that the entire first Board of Governors has resigned.

7. The MoA and Rules and Regulations of NFICI were adopted by the General Body.

8. Shri Vardhaman Vaidya , Executive Secretary-interim presented a report on NFICI with special reference to the balance sheet and statement of expenditure. The membership contributions received so far were noted by those present. That the funds so received were deposited in the current account as also long term deposits was also noted and ratified. The General body also ratified doing the same for the membership contributions to be received in future. The following State Information Commissions have paid the amounts.

1. A.P.(Vice President)

2. Sikkim

3. Haryana

4. Bihar

5. Uttar Pradesh

6. Meghalaya

7. Orissa

8. Punjab

9. The proposal to refund the advance of Rs.10,000/- received from CGG, Hyderabad for opening the Current Account of NFICI was approved by the General Body.

10. It was decided that the requirement of NFICI having an auditor could be met by NFICI appointing CGG's auditor as its auditor. **Shri Jannat Husain** was authorized to work on the modalities of this arrangement.

11. It was mentioned that concerns had been raised about CGG, Hyderabad being able to provide backstopping support to NFICI, given the strain on its resources. **Shri Satyananda Mishra** requested **Shri Jannat Husain** to use his good offices to convince DG, CGG, Hyderabad to continue to provide the support that is being provided by CGG and NFICI's Executive Secretary (Interim).

12. As for the election of the 2nd Board of Governors, it was agreed that all the eight Information Commissions who have become the members of the NFICI would – through their respective State Chief Information Commissioners – be represented on NFICI’s Board of Governors and, thus, constitute the 2nd Board of Governors viz., SCICs or one of the SICs nominated by the SCIC.

13. Given that NFICI had received membership fee contribution from eight ICs, (and given that all the zones were not represented), the zonal representation criteria was waived for the time being by the General Body.

14. **Shri Satyananda Mishra** suggested that a proposal for an office for CIC (in the CBI premises) is in the pipeline and once this is through, NFICI could have its office in New Delhi under the aegis of CIC. Matters pertaining to appointment of full-time staff for NFICI and shifting NFICI’s account to New Delhi could be looked into then.

15. **Shri K. Tlan Thanga** mentioned that the Nagaland State Information Commission was pursuing very hard with the state government to get approval of funds for securing membership of NFICI. **Shri Surinder Singh, IC, Punjab** stated that the Punjab State Information Commission had insisted that NFICI should be headquartered in New Delhi, but also stated that it had become a member of NFICI.

16. **Shri Bhim Sen** mentioned that membership of the Himachal Pradesh State Information Commission was put on hold for some time, but he will consider becoming a member given the points made by **Shri C. D. Arha**. **Shri K. S. Sripathi** mentioned that all efforts would be made by TNSIC to become a member of NFICI.

17. The meeting ended with an agreement among all those present that subsequent general body meetings could be held one day before the Annual Convention of the Central Information Commission.

Shri Jannat Husain
Chief Information Commissioner, APIC
& Vice President, NFICI