



GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN GOPIO International

GOPIO Convention 2013 in Kochi, India
RESOLUTIONS PASSED on January 6, 2013

RESOLUTION 1

Unreasonable & Unrealistic Custom Duty

Issue: The Customs in India allows only 10,000 Indian Rupees worth of jewelry for a Gentleman passenger and 20,000 Indian Rupees worth of Jewelry for a lady passenger duty free while travelling to India. It means that the allowance is only Rs. 10,000 worth of gold (about 3 gms) for a man and Rs. 20,000 worth of gold (about 6 grams) for a lady. So, we are not allowed even to wear a ring and a thali (pendant)! Does this regulation imply any common sense?

Whereas GOPIO commends Government of India for organizing these PBDs in a fabulous manner; and,

Whereas several recent decisions taken by Government of India show a goodwill gesture toward the Indian Diaspora; and,

Whereas despite these positive actions, the irritant policies to harass the travelers especially the PIOs & NRIs continue unabashed; one of such is the custom duty policy of not even to allow a ring for a lady and/or pendant traveling to India.

Therefore, be it resolved that GOPIO bring this issue to the attention of appropriate authority of Government of India to quash this thoughtless policy. If a limit must be put, it should be at least 25 grams of gold for a gentleman and 50 grams of gold for a lady.

RESOLUTION 2

Property Related Matters

Issues: There are at least two separate issues related to property matters. The First one relates to grabbing of share in ancestral properties of overseas relatives by conniving with local authorities and unscrupulous elements. The other is denying a fair share of sisters/daughters in the parental property by manipulating the distribution process thus violating the laws.

Whereas the function of a Democratic government is to protect the life and property of its citizens; and,

Whereas GOPIO believes that Government of India is interested in upholding its laws for the benefit of a common man.

Therefore, be it resolved that GOPIO request Government of India to create Fast Track courts to address the issues related to property matters of NRIs & PIOs and help NRIs and PIOs to regain their properties immediately and retroactively.

RESOLUTION 3

Cultural Conflicts of New Indian Immigrants settling in other Countries

Issue: Recent incidents in Norway about the so called child abuse and in Ireland where a pregnant woman dies are just examples of many incidents that have haunted the Indian Diaspora due to the unfamiliarity with cultural & legal issues.

Whereas India has a unique culture of its own that has developed through five thousand years of progress and history; and,

Whereas other countries has developed their own ways of life; and,

Whereas quite often there is a possibility of conflict in the two cultures and their values.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Govt. of India creates a committee to study such issues of Cultural Conflicts and establish a mechanism with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to request a swift action where the life and liberty of a NRI/PIO is in jeopardy.

RESOLUTION 4

Extremely Slow System of Indian Justice

Issue: Too many cases of PIOs/NRIs are pending in Indian Courts un-adjudicated

Whereas India takes pride in its independent judiciary, but as they say “justice delayed is justice denied” and,

Whereas the current system does not allow expeditious resolutions of cases pending in courts which reflects very poorly on the judicial system in India.

Therefore, be it resolved that GOPIO request the Government of India to set up Fast Track Court system to address all the court cases related to PIOs/NRIs to settle them within two years.

RESOLUTION 5

Contradictory Provisions for Research in India

Issue: Unnecessary requirement of Special Permission for OCI/PIO Card holders for doing Research in India

Whereas OCI card holders are allowed to engage in any activity India as are its citizens except to participate in elections; and,

Whereas the Ministry of Home Affairs has created new rules pertaining to OCI/PIO card holders wishing to do Research in India requiring a “Research Visa”; and,

Whereas the requirement of Research Visa is contradictory to the spirit of the provisions of OCI/PIO Cards.

Therefore be it resolved that the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to study this issue and take up this matter with the Ministry of Home Affairs for getting it addressed.

RESOLUTION 6

Image of India as a Country

Issue: The stories of corruption and lack of law and order (recent case of rape in Delhi is not unique; there are more than 600 cases of rape per year in Delhi alone) make the Indian Diaspora hopelessly embarrassed about the country of their ancestors.

Whereas the Indian Diaspora is proud to note the tremendous progress India has made in important fields like technology, nuclear energy, and economy and has emerged as the most qualified nation to occupy a seat at the UN Security Council as a permanent member; and,

Whereas the image of India and its Diaspora is so intertwined that both the positives and the negatives of each affects the other; that is, both have stakes in each other’s prosperity; and,

Whereas the prevalent corruption and lack of law and order in India has brought shame to the Diaspora; recent case of rape in Delhi is just an example.

Therefore be it resolved that GOPIO brings this issue to the attention of the Government of India at the highest level so the image of India would no longer be tarnished by corruption and India will take its legitimate place at the Security Council.

RESOLUTION 7

International Indian Emigration Day

Issue: The Indian Diaspora has created a unique history of progress in various countries. To keep them connected and related to India is in India's interest. The Kolkata Monument was a great example of this unique relationship.

WHEREAS the global Indian Diaspora outside of India currently numbers about 30 million residing in several countries; and

WHEREAS most of these PIOs are the descendants of Indian laborers who emigrated from India during the 18th and 19th centuries and the early part of the 20th century; and,

WHEREAS the first arrival of indentured laborers to each major former British colony is designated as "Indian Arrival Day" and is proudly observed annually with social and cultural events; and,

WHEREAS countries such as Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Suriname, Fiji, Trinidad, Guadeloupe and others with significant population of PIOs hold major events marking their respective "Arrival Day;" and,

WHEREAS the respective dates of "Arrival Day" of individual countries are different because the date of arrival of the first ship was designated as the "Arrival Day" for each country; and,

WHEREAS in some cases the population of PIOs is relatively small and their respective "Arrival Day" is hardly observed, although there is a desire to mark the date in some meaningful and significant manner.

Therefore be it resolved that GOPIO commits itself to obtain global Diaspora collaboration to identify and designate a single, universal date that would appeal to all PIOs as a common date that can be observed by all and used in a significant way to better connect the Diaspora and that date could be called International Indian Emigration Day.

RESOLUTION 8

Terrorism: Safety of Life & Property

Issue: In a Democratic Civic Society like India it is imperative that safety of life and property must be ensured

WHEREAS it is very disturbing to NRIs & PIOs that attacks on civilian population by terrorists have become very common; and,

WHEREAS despite our persistent requests to the Government of India on this issue, the situation has further deteriorated; and

Therefore be it resolved that GOPIO urge Government of India to take strong actions to protect its citizens since state governments have failed to protect the life and property of its citizens.

RESOLUTION 9

Selection of Speakers for PBD

Issue: There is a widespread dissatisfaction among PBD participants on the way speakers are selected

WHEREAS we salute the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for organizing the fabulous PBDs; and,

WHEREAS it has been noted that several of the Speakers and Presiders are repeated year after year which indicates as if the Diaspora is short of qualified people and that is not the case.

Therefore be it resolved that GOPIO work with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to suggest qualified names for the PBD 2014 and beyond.

RESOLUTION 10

Rajya Sabha Seats for NRIs/PIOs

Issue: During the past few years, the Government of India has genuinely engaged with PIOs/NRIs to maintain a better relationship. Rajya Sabha seat(s) would bring this relationship much closer.

Whereas, about the 30.0 million strong Indian Diaspora living outside India constitute an important force and represent a tremendous resource in intellectual, technical, scientific, professional, economic, trade, and entrepreneurial excellence with high potential and interest to contribute to the well-being and prosperity of their motherland; and,

Whereas, the NRI/PIO community has emerged as an important ally in promoting India's interest in shaping relations between "host" and the "home" countries and in steering a dynamic shift toward India's economic and political advantage in the world affairs;

Therefore be it resolved that GOPIO urge the Government of India to nominate a few prominent NRIs/PIOs as members of the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House of Parliament) so as to reinforce and further integrate the bonds between India and the overseas NRI/PIO community.