

# RESOLUTION 21R-05

To request the RI Board to consider replacing the annual presidential theme with the permanent theme of “Service Above Self”

**Proposer(s):** Rotary Club of Rotary Club of Malmö-City, District 2390, Sweden

1 WHEREAS, from a marketing perspective, it is easier to maintain a permanent  
2 and generally relatable Rotary theme of “Service Above Self” than to create  
3 numerous annual themes that are unremarkable and easily forgotten, and  
4  
5 WHEREAS, many Rotarians are focused on environmental issues, follow them  
6 with great concern and are keen on taking measures to protect our environment  
7  
8 IT IS RESOLVED by Rotary International that the Board of Directors of Rotary  
9 International consider discontinuing the annual presidential theme and adopting  
10 “Service Above Self” as the sole Rotary theme.

(End of Text)

## PURPOSE AND EFFECT

11 Many discussions have been held over the need for Rotary to rebrand, or better  
12 brand itself.  
13  
14 The annual theme change can be confusing. It does not inspire Rotarians to serve  
15 better or more frequently, and can be costly to clubs and individuals, who are  
16 ‘encouraged’ to purchase ties, scarves, pins, and banners with the new theme.  
17 While RI receives some revenue from theme-oriented sales each year, such  
18 purchases can represent a significant annual expenditure for the individual  
19 Rotarian, and would be better applied toward PolioPlus, scholarships, and  
20 international projects. Rotarians are already inspired to serve and a new annual  
21 theme does not add to their inspiration.  
22  
23 Part of good branding is a consistent message. “Service Above Self” is a worthy  
24 message and, if delivered consistently, will become synonymous with Rotary and  
25 its logo (emblem) for the general world population as well as Rotarians. Many of  
26 our past ‘annual themes’ have had meaning only to and for Rotarians. The theme  
27 of “Service Above Self” would be understood by all, Rotarians as well as the  
28 general public. It could be applied much more effectively and consistently as a  
29 marketing tool, creating interest in those outside the Rotary structure.  
30  
31 This change also directly supports the new RI Strategic Plan by strengthening  
32 Rotary’s brand. Some well-known international corporations have tried to vary  
33 their message and/or logos and this has proven costly in terms of lost business.

1 Rotary is no longer attracting new members, and struggles to compete with other  
2 local and international non-governmental organizations for funding, in part  
3 because its message is neither clear, concise, nor consistent.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

4 If implemented, this resolution could have a financial impact on RI and The  
5 Rotary Foundation which cannot be determined at this time. In 2021, net  
6 contributions of approximately US\$1 million were generated for The Rotary  
7 Foundation from the sale of presidential-themed ties and scarves. Sales could be  
8 impacted by the implementation of a permanent theme.