

RESOLUTION 21R-35

To request the RI Board to consider providing a virtual meeting platform to supplement in-person attendance at certain events

Proposer(s): Rotary Club of Campinas-Sul, District 4590, Brazil

1 WHEREAS, RI is a century-old institution that has sustained itself through
2 constant updates and adaption to changing times. As Paul Harris presciently
3 remarked in 1935, “This is a changing world; we must be prepared to change with
4 it. The story of Rotary will have to be written again and again,” and

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6 WHEREAS, the internet is now firmly established as a global technology and its
7 use has become firmly established throughout the Rotary world, and

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9 WHEREAS, the development of new internet technologies, such as fiber optic
10 networks and 5G, combined with the nearly universal use of mobile devices (cell
11 phones, tablets, laptop computers, etc.), along with the widespread adoption of
12 more effective communication and meeting software, have substantially reduced
13 the need for in-person meetings, which has been confirmed during the COVID-19
14 pandemic, and

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16 WHEREAS, Rotary is also facing the challenge of competition from new social
17 media channels focused on networking and philanthropy, many of which
18 function entirely online and offer their services to users at no charge, and

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20 WHEREAS, it is imperative that Rotary reduce costs in order to maintain and
21 expand its membership, and

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23 WHEREAS, in-person meetings have an impact on the organization that extends
24 beyond their financial cost; they also necessitate the use of air travel and other
25 types of transportation with a heavy carbon footprint, and take time away from
26 members that might otherwise be dedicated to their professional and family
27 activities, and

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29 WHEREAS, RI’s experience in holding virtual events has been extremely positive.
30 The use of online technology provides greater accessibility to participants,
31 encourages more open, productive discourse, and completely eliminates the costs
32 associated with in-person meetings (venue, transportation, accommodations,
33 etc.), and

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35 WHEREAS, even large-scale Rotary International events, such as the Honolulu
36 and Taipei International Conventions, district conferences, and other meetings
37 around the world, have been held virtually and with great success, and

1 WHEREAS, several national and international meetings are held each year in
2 connection with Rotary programs such as Rotary Fellowships, intercountry
3 committees, Youth Exchange, Friendship Exchanges, etc., and

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5 WHEREAS, the high cost of participating in such events – particularly
6 international meetings – hinders attendance, and can therefore slow the
7 development of these programs, and

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9 WHEREAS, increasing accessibility to these meetings will significantly improve
10 the performance of Rotarians in activities that help to further Rotary’s objectives

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12 IT IS RESOLVED by Rotary International that the Board of Directors of Rotary
13 International consider providing a virtual meeting platform to supplement in-
14 person attendance at events held in connection with Rotary Youth Exchange,
15 intercountry committees, Rotary Fellowships, and other similar programs.

(End of Text)

PURPOSE AND EFFECT

16 The purpose of this resolution is to facilitate participation in and improve
17 accessibility to events held in connection with programs that operate outside of
18 RI’s core structure and are promoted primarily by Rotarian organizations, such
19 as those created to promote Rotary Youth Exchange. Many districts are
20 prevented from participating in face-to-face meetings by the high cost of
21 international travel and are therefore unable to develop such programs. These
22 meetings encourage participants to share information and can often be held more
23 effectively and reliably online. By holding virtual meetings, more districts will be
24 able to participate and their increased contributions will help to strengthen the
25 programs. In addition to Rotary Youth Exchange, other programs, such as
26 intercountry committees, Rotary Action Groups, Rotary Fellowships, and
27 Friendship Exchanges, will also benefit and become stronger and more inclusive.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

28 If implemented, this resolution could have a financial impact on RI which cannot
29 be determined at this time. Cost would be dependent on the scope and extent of
30 support provided by the RI Board to maintain a virtual meeting platform to
31 supplement in-person attendance at events.