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This is an initial informal report written upon our return from the Founding Convention in St. Louis. It was an amazing experience. By my preliminary count (to be corrected in a more formal report later), over 250 delegates from the U.S. and more than 10 countries met first in the International Broadcast Standards Summit and then in the Convention itself. I am very proud to report that, thanks largely to those who helped secure scholarships for many participants, we were able to assemble the most diverse representation of leaders and activists in the field of culture and communication that ever met in the U.S., or anywhere else for that matter.

The program succeeded beyond the most optimistic expectations. It provided information and inspiration. It demonstrated what it means to have all liberating voices speak for themselves and to share stories that have something to tell instead of only things to sell. It generated unity within diversity and much personal networking. And its 15 Working Groups worked hard to develop an action program.

The Convention approved by unanimous vote a representative organizational structure; elected a Coordinating Council consisting of all delegates present, and elected a Steering Committee consisting of all those who were nominated. The Steering Committee includes the Convention's full diversity of representation of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality and ideological perspective. In moving forward, I am certain that the Steering Committee will continue to exert every effort to insure even greater diversity on every level.

Delegates to the Founding Convention are henceforth members of the CEM Coordinating Council charged by the Convention to carry on its work.

Suggestions for improvements in the Peoples Communication Charter, the Viewers' Declaration of Independence, the Working Group reports, and other expressions submitted to the Convention were referred to the Steering Committee for review and resubmission to the Coordinating Council.

The Steering Committee and the Board of Directors met afterwards, as scheduled. Time was short as most members of the Committee had flights to catch. Nevertheless, the Committee recognized its obligation to fulfill the Convention's mandate to initiate the process that sets up CEM's basic organization and democratic functioning. That process includes establishing a group to review suggestions for the Charter and Declaration; to synthesize the action recommendations; and to re-circulate all documents to the full Steering Committee. Upon further review, these basic documents will be sent to the entire Coordinating Council for comment and approval. All this will be forthcoming, along with other reports and information, as soon as the respective committees can complete their work. When that is done, thoughtful deliberation and the election of a leadership to join the Board of Directors of CEM can begin.

Needless to say, the pressure was intense to select the group that would have the time and the accessibility to meet and consult, and the experience and ability to deliver the editorial results quickly. I opened the meeting with a request for nominations, including my own. After some discussion about both procedure and substance, and at times heated debate about qualifications for the drafting committee, a five-member Editorial Board was nominated and elected. Members of the Board are Linda Holzman, Jacquelyne Smith-Crooks, Sean D'Abreu, William Fore and Joni Yamaguchi. I am asking members of the Steering Committee who can help this Board expedite its work to volunteer in an editorial advisory capacity. Please let me have your name, address, and all contact information, and I will share that with the Editorial Board.

I expect the Board to have all materials early next week, and to review and share its recommendations with the full Steering Committee within two weeks, i.e. by first week of April. I trust that the Editorial Board and the Steering Committee will do the job on time, and that CEM can soon begin its formal organization to carry on the momentum, the spirit, and the work of the Founding Convention. More reports will follow to those of you on the Editorial Board, the Steering Committee, the Coordinating Council, and/or CEMNET.