

A close-up photograph of a camera lens. The lens is dark and metallic, with a prominent circular element in the center. Below this element, the word "FOCUS" is engraved in a circular pattern. The background is a blurred landscape with a blue sky and white clouds.

# MISSION REFOCUS

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## INTEGRATED FOR MISSION



2023 GENERAL CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT WORLD ADVISORY



# GC SECRETARIAT STRATEGIC PLAN

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GENERAL CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

**We have the:**

- Ball**
- Field**
- Players**
- Goalposts**

Without goalposts

**How can**  
we play and win the game?

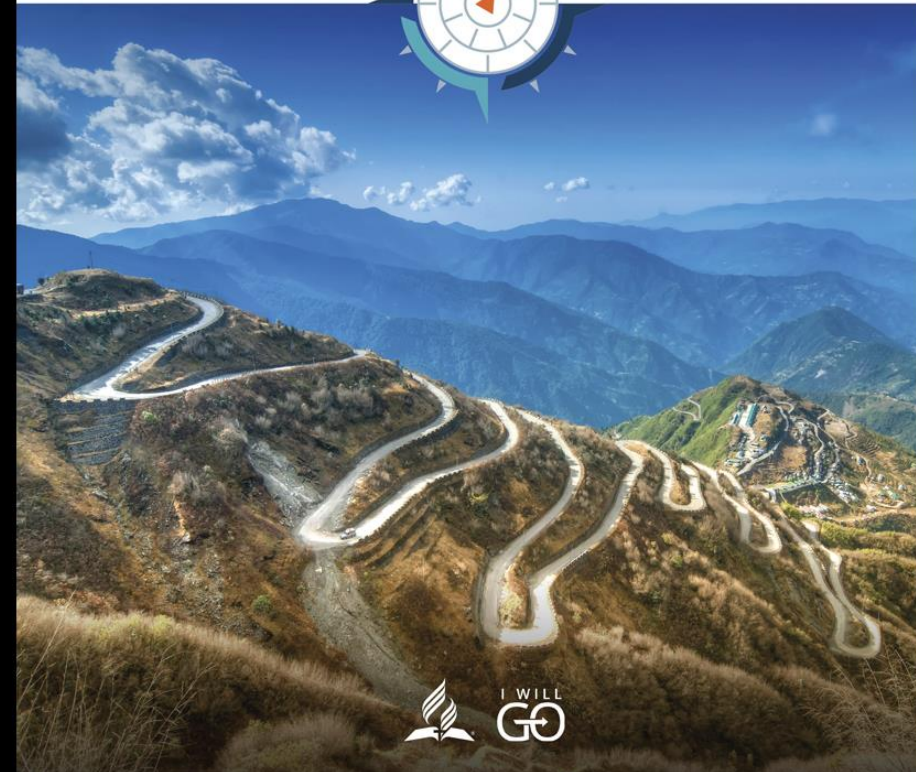


# SECRETARIAT STRATEGIC PLAN

2020



2025



Commit to the Lord  
whatever you do,  
and your plans  
will succeed.

Proverbs 16:3 (NIV)

If any of you lacks  
wisdom, let him  
ask God, who gives  
generously to all  
without reproach,  
and it will be  
given him.

James 1:5 (NIV)

In their hearts  
humans plan their  
course, but the Lord  
establishes their steps.

Proverbs 16:9 (NIV)



## FOREWORD

A company president told his workers in a planning meeting, "Autumn is a lovely time to marvel at the beauty of the leaves, to revel in the coolness of the air, to reflect on the passage of time, and to count the survivors of the strategic planning process last year!"

Strategic planning doesn't have to be a killjoy or drudgery. Rightly done, a strategic plan should help to align organizational activities with its mission statement. The mission statement spells out the purpose of our existence. It defines who we are as a people. It articulates why we do what we do. It is likened to a compass or roadmap.

While the mission statement is the compass, the strategic plan deciphers how we go about accomplishing the purpose. It defines how we do what we do. It identifies the strategic issues. It sets performance indicators and action plans.

We have the pleasure to introduce to you a booklet entitled *General Conference Secretariat Strategic Plan 2020-2025: I Will Go*. It is designed to help you understand and implement the Secretariat strategic plan for the new quinquennium.

One reason that organizations may fail to meet their strategic targets is that little time is devoted to strategic planning. According to research outlined in the *Harvard Business Review*,<sup>1</sup> 85 percent of executive leadership teams spend less than one hour per month discussing strategy, and 50 percent spend no time at all. The research also reveals that, on average, 95 percent of a company's employees are not aware or do not understand the company strategy.

Strategic planning requires time, effort, and intentionality. May God bless you and your team as you grapple with the central process of strategic planning so that the mission of the Church may be achieved, God's kingdom on earth expanded, and the knowledge of the glory of God fill the earth as waters cover the sea.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Kaplan and David Norton, "The Office of Strategy Management," *Harvard Business Review*, October 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Habakkuk 2:14.





## MISSION AND METHODS

### OUR MISSION

To provide administrative leadership and strategic direction to the world Church in making disciples to reach the unreached.

### OUR METHODS

- ▶ Strategizing mission priorities for the world Church
- ▶ Promoting awareness of and enthusiasm for mission to the unreached
- ▶ Developing a comprehensive mission enterprise following Christ's method
- ▶ Facilitating the mobilization of global resources
- ▶ Supporting sound administration and fostering good governance



## SEVEN KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES





KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE

Division and union administrations need a more systematic approach to documenting and communicating the policies and policy framework for the organization.

OBJECTIVES

1. To enhance the transparency, accountability, and credibility of denominational organization, operations, and mission initiatives (IWG Leadership Objective 10)
2. Empower and assist the division in providing their unions with a simple and practical process to document and communicate, either in print or in electronic form, the policies and policy framework for the organization

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- KPI 1** Implementation of comprehensive and practical training on policy development in all divisions
- KPI 2** Evidence that unions have a framework for making sound decisions, for ensuring the organization is administered consistently, and that employees are treated fairly
- KPI 3** To expect a 50 percent increase, over five years, in the number of divisions and unions that have developed and updated their Working Policy books
- KPI 4** To develop and implement an orientation process on policy-related items as well as others for officers and executive committee members of all units within denominational structure (IWG KPI 10.2)



Evaluation to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of this Strategic Plan, and wherever possible, to measure the extent to which the KPIs have been achieved, will be carried out at two levels:

1. A mid-term evaluation will be conducted in **January 2023**, with progress reports to GC Secretariat team and copies to division/attached union Secretariat.
2. A final evaluation will be conducted in **April 2025**. The final evaluation will be carried out to assess the achievement of the objectives of the Strategic Plan, and to identify and document lessons learned.

The **GC Secretariat Strategic Plan** will be evaluated at the yearly Secretariat strategic planning session in August.

**Itineraries** of GC Secretariat staff will continue to be informed by the GC Strategic Strategic Plan.

The **Division Strategic Plans** will be evaluated at the yearly Secretaries Council in October. Three Division Strategic Plans will be reviewed each year so that all plans will have been evaluated during the quinquennium.



SECRETARIAT  
secretariat.adventist.org



# Objectives of this Interview

- Share with the participants the outcome of the evaluation exercise and receive broad input from division and attached union secretariats to improve the efficiency, focus, and execution of the GC Secretariat Strategic Plan.
- Inspire the division/attached union secretariats to develop/evaluate their Strategic Plan, in line with the GC Secretariat strategic plan, and making strategy a habit for all organizations





“If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization.”

*(Testimonies to the Church, vol. 1, p. 649)*



# MISSION REFOCUS

GENERAL CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT STRATEGIC PLAN

2020



2025



INTEGRATED FOR MISSION





Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

Psalm 96:3 (NIV)

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Mark 16:15 (NIV)

Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you.

Proverbs 4:25 (NIV)

When creating a strategic plan, two words are fundamental, focus and integration. Focus ensures that it is clear where we are going, and integration creates the environment when we arrive.

Focus is well illustrated by the story of a small rural community where a leader decided to retire and select his replacement. He called three promising young men. Giving them hunting equipment, he asked them to point to a fig on a fig tree. Then to the first he asked what he saw.

"I see the fig," the young man replied.

"What else?" quizzed the leader.

"I see the leaves of the fig tree," was the response.

"Anything else?"

"I see the light of heaven behind it," said the young man.

"Give me back your equipment," said the leader.

He called the second young man and asked the same question: "What do you see?"

"I see the fig on the fig tree."

"What else?"

"I see a bird near it."

"See anything else?"

"I see the clouds that are behind it."

"Give me back your equipment," the leader said.

Then he called the third candidate and asked,

"What do you see?"

"I see the fig hanging from the fig tree."

"What else?"

"I see the fig on the fig tree."

"Yes, I understand," said the boss. "But what else do you see?"

"I see the fig on the fig tree."

"You are my chosen one," said the leader.

This story is simple, but the message is compelling, clear focus makes all the difference. The early Christian church understood this reality. When they faced their first challenges, "The apostles got together and made a big decision: to stay focused. They chose seven men, delegated tasks, and remained focused. The chosen ones also remained focused and, as a result, the church experienced great growth."<sup>1</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Church, called to be the last prophetic movement, also needs to have this clear vision. Therefore, Ellen White recommends that, "every person in office where sacred responsibilities are involved must inquire at every step, 'Is this the way of the Lord?'"<sup>2</sup>

The other vital element in strategic planning is team integration. In my first year of ministry, I read a book on planning and even though I later lost the book, one sentence has stuck in my mind, "People help accomplish what they helped to plan." Simple, direct, and profound! Integration during the planning, construction, and execution process will always produce bigger, better, and more consistent results. Our call is to, "Press together, press together. In union there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat."<sup>3</sup>

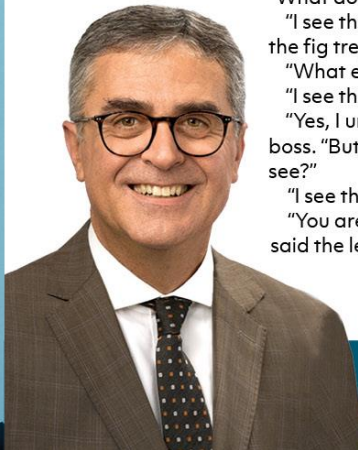
This booklet entitled *General Conference Secretariat Strategic Plan 2020-2025: I Will Go* presents how the Secretariat of the world Church is working with a focus on mission, integration in action, and dependence on the Holy Spirit to present the Three Angels' Messages "to the end of the earth."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Campanhã, Josué. *Planejamento Estratégico para Igrejas: Como Assegurar a Qualidade no Crescimento de Ministérios Eclesiásticos*, United Press, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> White, Ellen. *Christ Triumphant*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> White, Ellen. *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 488.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 1:8, ESV



ERTÓN KÖHLER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS  
FEBRUARY 2023



## MISSION AND METHODS

### OUR MISSION

To provide administrative leadership and strategic direction to the world Church in making disciples to reach the unreached.

### OUR METHODS

- ▶ Identifying mission priorities for the world Church
- ▶ Promoting the Mission Refocus Initiative
- ▶ Promoting awareness of and enthusiasm for mission to the unreached
- ▶ Developing a comprehensive mission enterprise following Christ's method
- ▶ Supporting sound administration and fostering good governance



## SEVEN KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES





## 1 MISSION STRATEGIES

### KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE

There are three roles of Secretariat: Administrative, Executive, and Missional. While some may think the first two functions to be of primary importance, the task of mission is the foundation and purpose for everything Secretariat does. In fact, the Mission Re-focus Initiative helps us concentrate on areas and people groups who have not yet been reached or where the Adventist Church is not well-established. Extreme care should be given that Secretariat avoids “mission drift”—where focus is placed more on the maintenance of church structures, policies, and programs.



### OBJECTIVES

1. Prioritizing all functions according to mission impact
2. Encouraging Secretariat staff in each division to personally participate in mission, and to help the division intentionally focus its human and financial resources on areas and people groups where the work is not well established
3. Continuing to support the Office of Adventist Mission in raising mission awareness among church members, and planting new groups of believers in unentered areas and among new people groups
4. Supporting I Will Go (IWG) Objective 1: “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, in a journey of discipleship.”
5. Sharing the latest stories, visual presentations, statistics, and trends connected to mission as provided by Adventist Mission and the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR)

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- KPI 1** Holding regular meetings to discuss IWG Objective 1 (referenced above in Objective #4), and to receive reports from other Secretariat entities on how their activities are directly affecting mission
- KPI 2** Prioritizing all Secretariat functions according to mission impact
- KPI 3** Dedicating significant time in all Secretariat Advisories and Training Seminars to discuss mission challenges, priorities, and activities
- KPI 4** Developing a presentation (PPT/Keynote and/or video) annually that focuses on mission challenges, priorities, and activities for division secretaries and staff to share at union and conference levels
- KPI 5** Facilitating speaking engagements for frontline missionaries at major camp meetings and other church gatherings (IWG KPI 1.2)
- KPI 6** Advocating for Adventist Mission priorities by Secretariat leadership (including church planting and the importance of mission offerings) by relating mission challenges, priorities, and activities in committees, at camp meetings, and other church gatherings (IWG KPI 9.1)
- KPI 7** Sharing the mission resources of Adventist Mission and ASTR with Secretariat leadership at least bi-annually
- KPI 8** Increasing the percentage of international service personnel, volunteers, and Global Mission pioneers serving in the 10/40 Window, in large urban areas, and among unreached people groups (IWG KPI 9.2 & 9.3)



## 2 ISE CALL PROCESS

### KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE

The processing of International Service Employee (ISE) calls is unnecessarily long, and systematic communication regarding the status of calls among all stakeholders is lacking.

### OBJECTIVES

In line with the Mission Refocus Initiative, to reduce the call processing time and improve communication among all stakeholders at all levels of the Church by (IWG Leadership Objective 10, IWG KPI 10.3):

1. Creating a tracking system of the entire call process, with access provided to all stakeholders in Secretariat, International Personnel Resources and Services (IPRS), divisions, and calling entities
2. Creating fillable online forms where personal information entered once will automatically pre-fill in all other forms
3. Surveying appointee families after arriving infield to assess their experience during the call process
4. Updating guidelines and providing on-going, regularly scheduled training as needed to divisions and unions to expedite the call process
5. Evaluating all steps of the call process and identifying which steps can be eliminated or done concurrently

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- KPI 1** Reduce the time it takes to process a call, measured by the online tracking system
- KPI 2** Provide evidence from surveys of increased communication to appointees during the appointee process
- KPI 3** Extend the online call process to the union level
- KPI 4** Provide job description templates for ISE positions at the division/union/conference/ mission/institution levels of the Church



## 3 MISSIONARY CARE

### KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE

There is a decreased effectiveness of ministry when pastoral and emotional support for ISE families is lacking, resulting in early returns from the field.

### OBJECTIVES

In line with the Mission Refocus Initiative, to increase the effective ministry of the ISEs, and decrease early returns by providing care to all by (Spiritual Objective 5, IWG KPI 5.1; Spiritual Objective 8, IWG KPI 8.1, 8.3):

1. Implementing placement testing for a better match of missionaries to positions
2. Expanding the care team by adding an additional pastoral couple
3. Creating awareness in each division of the need for intentional missionary care, communication with the ISEs, and financial support for spiritual retreats
4. Addressing the challenges of ISEs that will emerge by offering periodic questionnaires or surveys
5. Making provision for all returning ISEs to attend a Re-Entry Program (not only in and/or from NAD) and work with divisions in re-employment of ISEs in their homeland

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- KPI 1** Giving all appointees placement tests to better match them to a position
- KPI 2** Reduce early personnel returns by 15 percent
- KPI 3** Increase the number of missionary care programs funded by divisions including more involvement of division personnel
- KPI 4** Reestablish regular prayer sessions for ISEs in Secretariat/IPRS especially addressing their challenges as well as sending them personalized messages
- KPI 5** Increase onsite visits to missionaries and Deferred Mission Appointees (DMAs) by the care team by 10 percent
- KPI 6** Increase the opportunity for all returning ISEs to attend a re-entry program by 20 percent





## 4 DISCIPLE-MAKING AND RECLAIMING

### KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE

The challenge of low retention rate is related to faulty discipleship. Strong disciples will most likely remain faithful and active as they disciple others.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults (Mission Objective 6)
2. Develop a strategy in partnership with other departments and ministries in order to assimilate, equip, and disciple both new and old members

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- KPI 1** Evidence from the Global Church Member Survey and Pastor Survey that a significant number of local churches in each division have effective disciple-making programs
- KPI 2** Significant increases in church member involvement in fellowship, worship, and service
- KPI 3** Evidence of new members being nurtured through an active discipleship process
- KPI 4** Improved retention rates of young adults, youth, and unbaptized children, based on the collection of specific statistics on those groups (IWG KPI 6.8)
- KPI 5** Significant increase in number of church members regularly praying, studying the Bible, using the Sabbath School Adult Bible Study Guides, reading the writings of Ellen G. White, and engaging in other personal devotions (IWG KPI 5.1)
- KPI 6** Improved retention rates of audited [reviewed] memberships globally (IWG KPI 1.7)
- KPI 7** Evidence of efforts to reclaim former members resulting in their return to church fellowship





## 5 REDEMPTIVE MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

### KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE

Church membership records have become inflated through the years resulting in a disparity between membership records and actual church attendance on Sabbath. Even though a great number of unions have implemented an electronic membership system, many reveal a large discrepancy when compared to official numbers. Membership review can identify shortcomings in the discipleship process and assess current reality and performance using multiple metrics.

### OBJECTIVES

Utilize various methods to assess performance and the state of the church to enhance the transparency, accountability, and credibility of denominational organizations

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- KPI 1** The completion of a redemptive membership review in each conference by every local church at least once during a quinquennium (IWG KPI 1.7)
- KPI 2** The official adoption and implementation of approved membership software by 75 percent of unions (IWG KPI 10.1)
- KPI 3** A 20 percent increase in church attendance as reported through Global Church Member Survey (IWG KPI 5.2)
- KPI 4** A significant increase in membership involvement in outreach ministries as reported through Global Church Member Survey (IWG KPI 1.1)
- KPI 5** A significant increase in the proximity between electronic membership report and officially reported numbers



## 6 TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

### KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE

For the past five years the Secretariat Development Program (formerly Secretariat Nurture and Evaluation Program) has significantly raised the importance and performance of division and many union administrators. Adjustments are needed to adequately address new areas, and to increase the usefulness of the document so it can be used at the conference level.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To enhance the transparency, accountability, and credibility of denominational organizations, operations, and mission initiatives (IWG Leadership Objective 10)
2. Develop a revised Secretariat Development Program
3. Provide training to all division secretaries on the new Secretariat Development Program and its use (IWG KPI 10.2)
4. Develop a tracking system for all completed evaluations which can be plotted, and results entered into a central document

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- KPI 1** Develop a revised and updated instrument that takes into consideration specific issues related to individual divisions as well as the new areas of responsibilities implemented in all divisions
- KPI 2** Conduct assessments in all unions not evaluated during the past quinquennium, as well as in at least 40 percent of all unions (IWG KPI 10.2)
- KPI 3** Develop and present new materials at the 2023 Secretariat World Advisory
- KPI 4** Train all division/union secretaries on the new instrument and its use (IWG KPI 10.2)
- KPI 5** Develop and implement a tracking so all major recommendations can be plotted for all divisions
- KPI 6** Develop and implement a follow-up system to track improvements on major recommendations for all divisions







## 7 WORKING POLICY

### KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE

Division and union administrations need a more systematic approach to documenting and communicating the policies and policy framework for the organization.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To enhance the transparency, accountability, and credibility of denominational organization, operations, and mission initiatives (IWG Leadership Objective 10)
2. Empower and assist the division in providing their unions with a simple and practical process to document and communicate, either in print or in electronic form, the policies and policy framework for the organization

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- KPI 1** Implementation of comprehensive and practical training on policy development in all divisions
- KPI 2** Evidence that unions have a framework for making sound decisions, for ensuring the organization is administered consistently, and that employees are treated fairly
- KPI 3** To expect a 30 percent increase, over three years, in the number of divisions and unions that have developed and updated their Working Policy books
- KPI 4** To develop and implement an orientation process on policy-related items as well as others for officers and executive committee members of all units within denominational structure (IWG KPI 10.2)



## ACTION PLAN FOR EVALUATION

Evaluation to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of this Strategic Plan, and wherever possible, to measure the extent to which the KPIs have been achieved, will be carried out at two levels:

1. A mid-term evaluation was conducted in **January 2023**, reports to GC Secretariat team.
2. A final evaluation will be conducted in **April 2025** will be carried out to assess the achievement of the objectives of the Strategic Plan, and to identify and document lessons learned.

The **GC Secretariat Strategic Plan** will be evaluated bi-annually at the Secretariat strategic planning session.

**Itineraries** of GC Secretariat staff will continue to be informed by the GC Strategic Plan.





For more information about the  
*General Conference Secretariat Strategic Plan,*  
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