

# **RULES OF THE CONFERENCE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS**

**(June 2014)**

## **NAME**

- 1.** The name of the association shall be "The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations" (henceforth referred to as "the Conference").

## **AIMS**

- 2.** The aims of the Conference are:
  - a.** to ensure that NGOs in consultative status enjoy the fullest opportunities and all appropriate facilities for performing their consultative functions;
  - b.** to foster cooperation and dialogue among all NGOs and with groupings of NGOs related to the UN system;
  - c.** to provide a forum for the exchange of views on matters relating to the consultative process, and on strengthening of the relationship between NGOs and the United Nations, including the contributions which NGOs can make to promoting the principles, purposes, and effectiveness of the UN and its related agencies and programmes;
  - d.** to mobilize public opinion in support of the aims and principles of the United Nations, and to promote education about the UN with special emphasis on the contribution which NGOs make to its work; and
  - e.** to convene meetings of NGOs for the exchange of views on matters of common interest.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

- 3.** Membership in the Conference is open to NGOs having consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council, and which accept the aims set forth under rule 2 (henceforth in these rules referred to as "Members").
- 4.** Associate membership in the Conference is open to all NGOs having formal relationships with the United Nations system - including NGOs affiliated with the Department of Public Information, NGOs accredited to United Nations Conferences, and NGOs accredited to treaty bodies - and which accept the aims set forth under rule 2. Associate Members shall not have the right to vote.

## **STRUCTURE**

- 5.** The Conference consists of:
  - a.** the General Assembly
  - b.** the Board
  - c.** the Officers
  - d.** Regional committees
  - e.** Committees on substantive issues

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

- 6.** The General Assembly of the Conference (henceforth referred to as "the General Assembly") is the sovereign organ of the Conference.
- 7.** The General Assembly shall normally meet once every three years. The Board, however, may convene the General Assembly sooner, or may postpone convening the General Assembly until four years have elapsed since the previous session. However, at the request of one-third of the member organizations of the Conference, the Board shall convene the General Assembly within six months of the time such a request is received. The General Assembly should be convened at least three months in advance by a notice indicating the provisional agenda and the program. Reports of the officers, including the financial statements, the draft resolutions and reports of the regional and substantive committees shall be sent out six weeks in advance of the General Assembly.
- 8.** The General Assembly shall review the activities of the Conference since the previous session, and may consider any matter consistent with the aims of the Conference, with a view to the preparation of recommendations for future activity.
- 9.** The General Assembly shall also elect the President of the Conference and its Board with due attention to the need for:
  - a.** a balanced representation of organizations, having regard inter alia to the geographical basis or political or other orientation of the membership and their various fields of action;
  - b.** continuity as well as rotation among the Members.
- 10.** Only Members which have paid their membership fee until the end of the previous financial year shall be eligible to send delegates to the General Assembly. No individual or delegation may represent more than three Members. Associate Member organizations which have paid their membership fee until the end of the previous financial year shall be eligible to send observers to the General Assembly.
- 11.** Observers at the General Assembly may be invited by the Board from:
  - a.** Members in arrears with their membership fees;
  - b.** NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, which are not Members of the Conference;
  - c.** the United Nations system;
  - d.** Governments.

Observers may be allowed to take the floor.

**12.** The General Assembly shall have the following committees:

- a. Credentials Committee
- b. Nominations Committee
- c. Tellers Committee
- d. Resolutions Committee

It may establish other committees, as it deems necessary.

**13.** The General Assembly may create commissions, on prior recommendation of the Board, to discuss substantive issues during its current meeting.

**14.** The Credentials Committee shall be responsible for checking the credentials of delegates and observers, and making recommendations to the General Assembly upon any issue which may arise concerning them.

**15.** The Tellers Committee, composed of not more than six Members, shall be appointed by the General Assembly. The tellers are responsible for counting the votes.

## **THE BOARD**

**16.** The Board of the Conference (henceforth referred to as "the Board") shall consist of a President, who shall serve in a personal capacity, and 20 Members. The President and the Members shall serve until the end of the following session of the General Assembly. They shall be eligible for re-election, subject to the provision that their mandate shall be limited to two consecutive periods.

**17.** The 20 Members elected to the Board shall appoint representatives to the Board.

**18.** Apart from the President, the Board shall, at its meeting immediately after the close of the General Assembly, appoint from among the members of the Board:

- a. a First-Vice-President, who shall not have his/her office at the same UN Centre as the President, and who shall serve in a personal capacity;
- b. a Vice-President who shall have his/her office in Vienna and who shall serve in a personal capacity, as well as up to two other members of the Board to serve as Vice-Presidents;
- c. two Members to act as Secretary and Treasurer of the Conference respectively. If not already members of the Board, they shall be co-opted by the Board.

If a vote proves necessary for any of these appointments it shall be held by secret ballot.

**19.** The Board shall direct the officers and activities of the Conference between sessions of the General Assembly, in conformity with the resolutions and decisions of the latter. It meets at least twice a year. Electronic means of participation shall be made available at the meeting location.

20. Where an issue arises at any of the UN centers, or elsewhere, which affects the consultative process and/or the interests of the Conference, there shall be the fullest possible consultation with representatives of Member organizations of the Conference located where the issue arises, and the Board shall be immediately informed so that appropriate action reflecting the interests of the Conference as a whole may be taken by or with the agreement of the Board.
21. In the event that the President is unable to complete his/her term of office, the Board shall appoint his/her successor from among its members by an absolute majority of the elected members of the Board.
22. If, during the term of office of the Board, a vacancy should occur among the other officers of the Conference, the vacancy shall be filled by a decision taken by an absolute majority of the elected members of the Board.
23. The immediate out-going President and First Vice-President may remain members in their personal capacities, with full voting privileges.
24. Meetings of the Board shall be open to observers from Members of the Conference not represented on the Board. Such observers shall be entitled to speak with the consent of the Chairperson. Under exceptional circumstances the Board may decide to hold a closed meeting.
25. The Board shall create the following Standing Committees:
  - a. Finance, fundraising and resource development;
  - b. Membership development and services;
  - c. Substantive Committeesand any other committees that may enhance the work of the Board. The Board will appoint members of these Standing Committees from among its members, with power to co-opt from the members of the Conference, but not to exceed 25 percent of the membership of the committee.

## **OFFICERS**

26. The following shall be the Officers of the Conference (henceforth referred to as "the Officers"):
  - a. President
  - b. First Vice-President
  - c. other Vice-Presidents
  - d. Secretary
  - e. Treasurer
27. Between meetings of the Board there shall be full consultation among the Officers on matters which arise requiring attention before the next Board meeting.
28. The President shall:
  - a. chair meetings of the Board;

- b. be the principal spokesperson responsible for conveying the views and positions of the Conference membership, as expressed through the General Assembly and the Board, to ECOSOC, the UN Secretariat, other UN organs and representatives of UN Member States;
- c. provide leadership aimed at the most effective articulation and harmonization of the collective work undertaken by the Conference, in accordance with its mandate, on behalf of NGOs with consultative status at ECOSOC;
- d. provide leadership aimed at facilitating political and physical access to the United Nations for the Members of the Conference;
- e. serve ex-officio on all committees established by the Conference and the Board.

**29.** The First Vice-President shall:

- a. chair meetings of the Board in the absence of the President;
- b. assist and act for the President as spokesperson for the Conference;
- c. work closely with the President in order to accomplish the aims of the Conference;
- d. serve ex-officio on committees of the Board.

**30.** The Vice-Presidents shall:

- a. replace the President or the First Vice-President in undertaking any of the responsibilities defined above, in the event of the absence of one or the other;
- b. advise and assist the President in accomplishing the aims of the Conference.

**31.** The Secretary shall:

- a. send notices of regular Board meetings and, except in the case of emergency meetings, circulate necessary papers no later than one month before the meeting;
- b. keep a record of all Board meetings;
- c. circulate minutes of each regular Board meeting to all Board members no later than two months after the meeting.

**32.** The Treasurer shall:

- a. maintain the accounts of the Conference and present financial statements to each meeting of the Board;
- b. send notice of annual dues to Members;
- c. exercise oversight on expenditure in accordance with the budget approved by the General Assembly;
- d. present a financial statement for the previous three years to the General Assembly.

## **REGIONAL COMMITTEES**

**33.** Regional Committees may be established by NGOs under the auspices of the Conference, corresponding to the regions of ECOSOC. Regional committees shall promote and facilitate collective work among NGOs in a manner consistent with the rules and procedures of the Conference and related to programmes, policies and activities of the United Nations system.

**34.** The establishment of a regional committee of the Conference may be recognized

either by the General Assembly or by the Board at the request of twenty or more Members from that region or having structures in that region. When a decision has been taken to establish a regional committee, the Board shall notify the Members of the Conference.

- 35.** Regional committees shall report regularly to the Board.
- 36.** Regional committees of the Conference are required to establish rules and procedures for membership, for voting, for the periodic election of officers among members of the Conference (as defined in paragraph 3 above), for the keeping of meeting records, the handling of monies, and the conduct of their work, in a manner consistent with the rules of the Conference.
- 37.** Regional committees shall not act, nor claim to act, in the name of the Conference, or of the Board.

### **COMMITTEES ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

- 38.** Committees may be established under the auspices of the Conference in order to promote and facilitate collective work among NGOs on the substantive issues related to programmes, policies and activities of the United Nations system. These committees may organise activities which provide opportunities for NGOs to debate such issues, to articulate their views, to advocate positions with respect to UN resolutions or programmes, and to mobilize public opinion.
- 39.** Committees may be established either by the General Assembly or by the Board at the request of twenty or more Members, which shall specify whether the committee is to be a standing or fixed-term committee. When a decision has been taken to establish such a committee, the Board shall notify the Members of the Conference and invite all Members to an initial meeting.
- 40.** Committees of NGOs in consultative status which have already been established outside the framework of the Conference may be accepted by decision of the Board as committees of the Conference provided they agree to accept the rules applying to committees of the Conference.
- 41.** Committees shall report regularly to the Board.
- 42.** Committees set up under the auspices of the Conference are required to establish rules and procedures for membership, for voting, for the periodic election of officers among the members of the Committee who are representatives of organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC, for the keeping of meeting records, for the handling of monies which will include an annual financial report to be made available to its membership and to the Board, and for the conduct of their work, in a manner consistent with the rules of the Conference, and with guidelines provided to them by the Board.

43. Committees so formed shall not act, nor claim to act, in the name of the Conference, or of the Board.
44. Committees having similar interests shall maintain close contact with each other, and shall coordinate their activities and programmes.
45. Where a committee is engaged in the preparation of a non-governmental activity in connection with a particular United Nations event, there shall be close collaboration with other NGO groupings interested in that activity.
46. According to the funds at its disposal, the Board may give financial assistance to a committee, which may also levy an annual subscription from its member or participating organizations.
47. Where a Substantive Committee has ceased effective functioning, or is in breach of rules of the Conference, the Board shall have authority to dissolve such a committee.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

48. At the latest six months before a regular session of the General Assembly, the Board shall appoint nine persons who shall constitute the Resolutions Committee; the composition of the committee shall reflect the diversity of the membership of the Conference.
49. Draft resolutions can be submitted to the Resolutions Committee up to three months before the General Assembly by any Member of the Conference or any Conference committee when they are supported by its members. The drafts shall deal with issues regarding relationships between NGOs and the United Nations, the role of the United Nations, as well as substantive or general issues related to the programmes, policies and activities of the United Nations system. The Resolutions Committee shall review the drafts in order to decide whether to recommend them for discussion by the General Assembly. It shall forward them, together with its recommendations, to the secretariat of the Conference, to be distributed to the Members at least six weeks before the Assembly.
50. Emergency resolutions shall be submitted to the Resolutions Committee by the end of the first day of the Assembly. The Resolutions Committee shall determine whether the emergency resolution is appropriate.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

51. At the request of ten or more Members of the conference, the President (or another member of the Board acting on his/her behalf) may convene a meeting of NGOs for an exchange of views on any substantive issue related to the United Nations system. A meeting so convened shall elect its own chairperson; it shall have no authority to speak in the name of the Conference or the Board. If agreement is reached on a resolution it shall be clearly stated that it is a resolution of the named NGOs which

support it.

52. If agreement is reached on a resolution on any substantive issue at a meeting of a committee, it shall be clearly stated that it is a resolution of the named NGOs which support it and not of the committee or of the Conference.

## **PREPARATION FOR UN MEETINGS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE**

53. The Conference may facilitate the mobilization of NGOs on substantive issues for major United Nations events, including world conferences, summits and special sessions. The Conference may consult with other groupings of NGOs to initiate or facilitate the convening of an NGO forum at such an event, and may establish, or help to establish, an organizational committee or committees for that purpose.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT**

54. The Board may, subject to available finance, establish an office or offices and engage staff for the purpose of assisting the elected officers.
55. The staff shall report to the officers, who shall be responsible for its supervision and shall report accordingly to the Board.
56. Engagement or contracting of staff, subject to available finance, shall be the responsibility of the officers, subject to the laws applicable at the site of United Nations Headquarters or other UN Centres.
57. Member organizations elected to the position of Treasurer or Secretary should be prepared to provide administrative or operational support to the fulfilment of these functions.

## **FINANCE**

58. Each Member of the Conference shall pay an annual membership fee, to be established by the General Assembly. Annual membership shall be from 1 January to 31 December. If an alteration in economic or financial circumstances makes it impossible for the Conference to continue operating at its anticipated level without an increase in the annual membership fee, the Board shall be entitled to revise the annual membership fee for a future year or years. The Board shall establish annual fees for Associate Membership.
59. In order to be eligible to vote at the General Assembly, an organization in consultative status which is a member of the Conference, must have paid annual membership dues for each year since the previous General Assembly. An organization newly admitted to consultative status which has paid annual membership dues during the year of admission shall be eligible to vote.
60. The Conference, and its committees, may accept donations, subject to the approval of

the Board, and will be accountable for the disbursements, and committees will provide an annual financial statement to the Board for information.

- 61.** The Board may take steps to facilitate the raising of funds, including support for the establishment, in accordance with national laws applicable at UN centres, or elsewhere as appropriate, of foundations or trust funds for the purpose of fulfilling its purposes and business.
- 62.** The Board Finance Committee shall arrange for a record to be maintained of in-kind contributions to the work of the Conference by officers and other members of the Board.
- 63.** The Conference shall maintain bank accounts in Geneva, New York or other centres, as deemed necessary by the Board.
- 64.** The General Assembly shall elect two Members of the Conference as auditors to audit the accounts of the Conference, and to submit a report thereon to the next ordinary session of the General Assembly.

## **ELECTIONS**

- 65.** Not less than twelve months before an ordinary session of the General Assembly, the Board shall appoint seven persons to serve as a Nominations Committee, of whom not more than three shall be representatives of members of the Board. No member of the Nominations Committee shall be a candidate in the elections.
- 66.** The Nominations Committee shall invite nominations, within a fixed deadline, for election to the Board from the Members of the Conference. Nominations must be proposed by a member organization and seconded by at least two other member organizations. The written consent of the nominated organization must be received by the Nominations Committee not later than the deadline for nominations. No member organization may propose or second a total of more than 20 organizations. If an organization does propose or second a total of more than 20 organizations, all its proposed nominations or secondings shall be invalid. The Nominations Committee shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of the organizations which have been validly nominated.
- 67.** The list of nominations, showing for each nominee the names of proposing and seconding Members, shall be circulated to all Members at least five months prior to the General Assembly, and the Nominations Committee shall at the same time draw attention to the interests which appear to them to be under-represented or not represented at all among the nominations received by the due date. The Nominations Committee may accept further nominations made to rectify such imbalance up to the day prior to the penultimate day of the General Assembly. If nominations for the office of President have been received, the Nominations Committee shall also circulate them to the Members.

- 68.** Nominations for the post of President may be submitted by a Member to the Nominations Committee until noon on the second day of the General Assembly. Each nomination must be supported by at least two other Members.
- 69.** Only Members which have paid their annual membership fees until the end of the previous financial year may be nominated or may nominate or support candidatures.
- 70.** At the General Assembly, upon expiry of the deadlines provided for in paragraphs 67 and 68, the Nominations Committee shall prepare two separate lists: one list shall contain the names of candidates to the office of President and shall state, for each candidate, his or her names, the name of the Member to which he or she belongs and the names of the Members which have nominated or supported him or her; the other list dealing with candidates to the Board shall state, for each candidate organization, its name and those of the Members which nominate or support it. These two lists shall be drawn up in alphabetical order, starting with a name drawn by lot.
- 71.** The elections shall be held by secret ballot. For the Board, the 20 Members which have received the highest number of votes shall be declared to have been elected.

## **VOTING**

- 72.** Subject to the provision of paragraph 71, decisions in the General Assembly and the Board shall normally be taken by a process of consensus.
- 73.** Where it is necessary to take a vote, each Member organization which has paid its annual membership fees in compliance with paragraph 58 shall have one vote. All decisions, except amendments to the Rules, shall be taken by a simple majority of Members present and voting.
- 74.** There shall be no provisions for absentee voting.

## **AMENDMENTS**

- 75.** These Rules shall be binding on the General Assembly and may not be waived or otherwise departed from. The Rules can be amended only as provided hereunder.
- 76.** A proposal to amend these Rules may be made by a member. Only the General Assembly can decide upon any such proposal.
- 77.** Proposed amendments shall be notified to the Board and shall be circulated to all Members of the Conference at least three months before the General Assembly. In order to take effect a proposed amendment must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in the General Assembly.