

# INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

## EQUAL RIGHTS – EQUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### CONSTITUTION

(Revised 2010)

#### CHAPTER 1

#### NATURE OF THE ALLIANCE

##### **ARTICLE I Name, status**

- a. The name of the Federation is “The International Alliance of Women: Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities”, hereafter “the IAW”  
The Alliance has its seat in the Canton of Geneva, Switzerland.
- b. The IAW is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation. It is independent of any political or religious party or movement.
- c. The IAW is governed by this Constitution and by artt. 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code.

##### **ARTICLE II Objectives**

The objectives of the IAW are:

To secure all such reforms as are necessary to establish a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women and to work for equal partnership between men and women in all spheres of life.

To urge women to accept their responsibilities and to use their rights and influence in public and private life to ensure that the status of every individual, without distinction on grounds of sex, age, race, religious or political persuasion or any other ground, shall be based on respect for the person, the only guarantee for individual freedom, and

To promote a better quality of life and good understanding among peoples.

##### **ARTICLE III Mission**

The IAW, by mutual consent of its member societies, stands pledged to observe and promote the rights of women by means of:

Implementation of its current Action Programme

Representation of women before international organisations

Petitions to governments and international bodies when appropriate

International cooperation

Meetings

Publications, and all other legal means.

The IAW shall:

- a) observe strict neutrality on all other issues that are national or that concern relations between governments;
- b) favour no political party; and
- c) respect the autonomy of each member Society.

## **CHAPTER 2 MEMBERSHIP, FEES, PUBLICATIONS**

### **ARTICLE IV Membership**

1. Membership of the IAW consists of:
  - a. Affiliate Societies
  - b. Associate Societies
- a. Individual Members
2. Qualification for Membership:
  - a) A Society shall be eligible for Affiliate Membership if:
    - i) It is a national organisation which has local branches or admits its members from all over the country,
    - ii) It is an organisation not attached to any political or religious body, and
    - iii) Among its objectives are those which correspond with the Objectives and Mission as stated in Articles II and III of this Constitution.
  - b) A Society shall be eligible for Associate Membership if:
    - i) It is an organisation not attached to any political or religious body, and
    - ii) Among its objectives are those which correspond with the Objectives and Mission in Articles II and III of this Constitution.
  - c) Any person in sympathy with the Objectives and the Mission of the IAW shall be eligible for Individual Membership. Board Members must become Individual Members upon election or appointment.
3. Admission to Membership:

When a Society desires to be affiliated or associated with the IAW, it shall apply for admission to the Admissions Committee which shall decide on the basis of section 2 a) and b) whether it fulfills the conditions of membership. The Committee shall inform any Affiliate Society in the same country of its decision and give it the opportunity to present its views about such admission before accepting the Society for provisional affiliation or association. Provisional admission is subject to ratification by the next Congress.

Individual Members shall be admitted upon payment of the annual membership fee.
4. Loss of Membership:

In addition to the provision of article V 1.(b) a Member Society will be expelled when it no longer fulfills the requirements for eligibility, or when it acts against the Objectives and Mission of IAW. The decision to expell is made by Congress on the recommendation of the Board.

### **ARTICLE V Membership fees and rights of members**

1. Fees:
  - a) The membership fees due from Affiliate and Associate Societies and from Individual Members shall be decided at each Triennial Congress.
  - b) Membership fees shall be due from the year of provisional admission of a Society.

An Affiliate or Associate Society or an Individual lose their membership of the IAW if they are three years in arrears of the annual fee, provided that two formal requests for payment have been made.

- c) The Executive Committee has the authority to reduce or waive the fee, if, after consideration of a formal application by any member society pleading circumstances of special difficulty, it determines that such a reduction or waiver is justified.

1. Rights:

- a) Each Affiliate Society is entitled to receive all documents concerning the work of the IAW, if they are not published in the journal, described in Article VI.
- b) Each Associate Society is entitled to receive all papers regarding the International Meeting, the Congress and the Congress Report.
- c) Individual Members are entitled to receive the Call to Congress and, when present at Congress, all papers distributed and the subsequent Congress Report.
- d) Members of Affiliate Societies and Individual Members are eligible to hold office in the IAW in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.
- e) Member Societies have an exclusive right to use the IAW-logo in their publications and media.

#### **ARTICLE VI Publications**

The IAW shall publish a journal, which shall include reports on actions undertaken or planned on behalf of the IAW. All affiliate and associate societies and individual members shall receive the journal and may contribute to it.

Individuals and institutions which are not members of the IAW may subscribe to the journal.

The IAW may employ modern technology in its communications with members and/or the general public.

Members who do not have access to the technical facilities to receive these communications, may subscribe to a paper version.

The Board shall appoint Editors of the journal and of any other publications. Their duties shall be defined in by-laws.

The price of subscriptions shall be decided by each triennial Congress.

### **CHAPTER 3 STRUCTURE OF THE IAW**

#### **ARTICLE VII Congress**

- 1. The Congress is the governing body of the IAW. In order for it to exercise its authority, at least one third of the Member Societies must be represented at Congress.
- 1. The IAW shall hold Triennial Congresses called by the Board. The Board shall have power to change the length of time between Congresses for an urgent and serious reason. The interval between Congresses shall not be greater than four years nor less than two years.
- 2. Additional Congresses shall be held whenever called by the Board. The Board shall convene a Congress if requested to do so by at least one-third of Affiliate Societies or the International Committee.

3. Congress is comprised of delegations of Member Societies, members of the Board of the IAW, Individual Members and all individuals appointed by the Board under Article X.
4. If six weeks before Congress the registration does not comprise one third of the Member Societies, a repeated Call to Congress shall be sent. If attendance falls short of the number required under section 1 of this Article after the second Call, Congress shall be empowered to attend to all business.

### **ARTICLE VIII Board**

1. The IAW shall have a Board in which is vested all executive power. The Board consists of:

- a) The President, the Secretary general, the Treasurer and a maximum of 20 other members from at least twelve countries, ensuring an equitable geographical distribution. They shall be elected at Congress according to Article XVIII and shall hold office for the next Triennium.  
An elected member of the Board may stand for re-election, but may not serve more than two consecutive Trienniums. She may stand for election to the Board again after an interval of one or more Trienniums.

A candidate for the presidency must have been a member of the Board prior to standing for election as President. If she is a member of the Board immediately prior to this election she may be re-elected for a second consecutive Triennium.

A Secretary general or Treasurer who has reached the end of her term on the Board after one triennium in her office may stand for a second consecutive triennium.

In the case of a longer or shorter period between two Congresses, according to Article VII 2, this period shall be considered a Triennium.

- b) Convenors of Commissions according to Article IX.
2. a) An elected Board Member who is prevented from attending a Board Meeting has the right to appoint a proxy from the same country to attend the meeting, provided that such proxy has active knowledge of the work of the Society to which the Member of the Board belongs and that the Member has fully instructed her in the business of the Meeting.  
b) A Commission Convenor who is prevented from attending a Board Meeting has the right to appoint a member of her Commission as a proxy.
  3. Voting at Board Meetings is restricted to:
    - a) Board Members as defined in section 1 above or their proxies
    - b) The immediate Past President for the first Triennium after leaving office.
  4. Past Presidents who have served one full term of office shall become Honorary Presidents.
  5. The Honorary Presidents, the Honorary Vice Presidents, the Representatives of the IAW to the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies and to regional intergovernmental organisations, as well as the convenors of committees and auxiliary officers appointed by the Board are entitled to attend Board Meetings and International Meetings in an advisory capacity.
  6. After each Triennial Congress the newly elected Board Members shall elect from amongst themselves two Executive Vice-Presidents to serve on the Executive

Committee and Regional Vice-Presidents to coordinate the activities of the IAW in their respective regions.

7. The Board may fill any vacancy caused by the death or resignation of the Secretary general or the Treasurer from amongst its members in the interim between Congresses. If the President is unable to continue in active office, the most senior Executive Vice-President, if willing, shall be appointed for the remainder of the Triennium. If none of the Vice-Presidents are willing, the Board may appoint one of its other members.
8. The quorum for a Board Meeting is the simple majority of its members, or their proxies as in section 2 of this Article. A quorum may be achieved if absent Board Members are sufficiently involved in the business of the meeting, as described in a by-law.
9. The Board shall meet immediately before and after Congress and at least once between Triennial Congresses, being summoned for the purpose by the President. The President shall convene an additional Board meeting at the request of five members of the Board.
10. The term of the Board expires at the end of the last session of the Triennial Congress and the term of the newly constituted Board commences immediately thereafter.

#### **ARTICLE IX Commission Convenors**

The Board shall, if it is deemed necessary to facilitate the work of the IAW, establish Commissions for fields of policy and appoint their Convenors. Commission Convenors may be re-appointed provided they have stated in writing that they are prepared to serve another term and have given a satisfactory report to Congress. It shall be the duty of the Convenor to secure adequate membership of her Commission from amongst the members of the IAW.

#### **ARTICLE X Other Board appointments**

The post-Congress Board shall appoint:

- a) an Admissions Committee for the triennial period, which shall consist of three members of the Executive Committee.
- b) Members of the Permanent Representatives of the IAW to the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies and Representatives to Regional Intergovernmental Organisations, which admit representation of non-governmental organisations. Representatives may be re-appointed provided they have stated in writing that they are prepared to serve another term and have given a satisfactory report to Congress.
- c) Representatives to non-governmental organisations to which the IAW may belong, or to sister organisations.
- d) A Constitution Committee to advise the Board on the conformity of decisions with the Constitution and by-laws and on desirable changes thereto.
- e) The Financial Advisory Committee.

The pre-Congress Board shall appoint:

An Elections Committee in accordance with Article XVIII.1 hereafter.

A Resolutions Committee in accordance with the by-laws.

The Board shall appoint:

- a) The editors as described in Article VI.
- b) Substitutes for any vacant functions as described in this Article and in Articles VIII and IX.

c) An auditor in accordance with Article XIV hereafter.

The Board may appoint auxiliary officers to help carry out the work of the Board.  
The Board may institute ad hoc Committees for other fields of the internal work of the IAW as deemed necessary and appoint their Convenors and members.  
The Board shall establish job descriptions for the various tasks.

#### **ARTICLE XI Executive Committee and Headquarters**

1. The President, two Executive Vice-Presidents, the Secretary general and the Treasurer constitute the Executive Committee.
2. Between Board Meetings the Executive Committee is empowered to take decisions on behalf of the IAW. These decisions shall be communicated to the Board immediately.
3. The Secretary general functions as officer in charge of Headquarters. She is acquainted with the work of the auxiliary officers and committees and prepares decisions of the Executive Committee as needed. Where financial aspects are involved she prepares the decisions together with the Treasurer.
4. The authority to sign documents on behalf of the IAW shall be specified in the by-laws.
5. The President represents the IAW in and outside of Court.
6. If the President is temporarily unable to function the Executive Committee appoints an Executive Vice-President as Acting President as necessary.

#### **ARTICLE XII The International Committee and International Meeting**

1. The Presidents of Member Societies constitute the International Committee, which shall meet on the occasion of a Board Meeting at least once between Congresses and at such other times as it may be summoned by two thirds of its members or the Board. The joint meeting of the International Committee and the Board constitutes the International Meeting.  
At the International Meeting the members of the International Committee and the Board acquaint each other with the work done in the context of the Objectives and Mission of the IAW and of the Action Programme. The International Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Board.  
The International Meeting determines the theme and the outline of the next Triennial Congress.
2. A member of the International Committee unable to attend a meeting may appoint in writing a member of her Society as proxy.

### **CHAPTER 4 FINANCE**

#### **ARTICLE XIII Financial means**

The financial means of the IAW consist of:

Membership fees and subscriptions,  
Donations,  
Legacies, and  
All such funds as are acquired legally.

#### **ARTICLE XIV Financial organisation**

1. The fiscal year of the IAW runs from 1st January to 31st December.
2. The Treasurer shall submit to each Triennial Congress the accounts of the IAW together with the Auditor's report for the Triennium preceding the Congress.
3. The Treasurer shall submit to each Triennial Congress a budget and a proposal for the membership and subscription fees for the coming triennium.
4. At each Board Meeting the Treasurer shall present a report on the state of the finances of the IAW for the fiscal years since the last Triennial Congress and for the period of 1st January of that year to the end of the previous quarter.
5. The Board appoints an auditor who is neither a member of the Board nor of the same nationality as the Treasurer.
6. The Board appoints a Financial Advisory Committee whose duties are set out in the by-laws.
7. Authority to approve payments and to sign cheques is given to the President, the Treasurer and one Executive Vice-President, as specified in the by-laws.

### **CHAPTER 5 RULES FOR CONGRESS**

#### **ARTICLE XV Agenda of Congress**

With due observance of Article VII 1. the Triennial Congress shall at least deal with:

- election of President, Secretary general and Treasurer
- election of other Board members
- consideration and approval of the report of the previous Congress
- consideration and approval of the executive report of the President
- consideration and approval of the accounts of the IAW for the preceding Triennium
- discharge of the Treasurer for the previous Triennium
- decision on the membership and subscription fees for the next Triennium
- approval of the budget for the next Triennium
- decision on the Action Programme for the next Triennium
- consideration of the reports of Commissions, Representatives and Member Societies
- resolutions placed before the Congress
- the admission of new affiliate and associate societies
- the institution of an appeals committee regarding admission and expulsion of member societies
- acknowledgement of any by-laws made by the Board since the last Congress

The Congress program may include public meetings relative to the work of the IAW.

#### **ARTICLE XVI Representation at Congress**

1. A Member Society shall be entitled to be represented at Congress by not more than ten delegates and ten alternate delegates.  
Individual Members are entitled to full participation in Congress.
2. Members of Member Societies, who are not delegates, shall be entitled to attend all meetings of Congress, as non-voting participants.
3. It is the prerogative of the President or the Executive Committee to invite to the relevant meetings of Congress representatives of organisations and individuals involved in work for equality as non-voting participants.

## **ARTICLE XVII The right to speak and vote at Congress**

1. Members of the Board and Delegates (or in their absence, their alternates) from Member Societies, as well as Individual Members are entitled to speak and vote at Congress.  
Members appointed by the Board under Article X, who are not Delegates, have the right to speak and vote on their portfolio.
2. The Representatives of any Society and Individual Members whose dues up to and including the year of the Congress are unpaid shall not be entitled to vote at the Congress until such dues are paid. Newly admitted Societies must pay their dues from the year of provisional admission up to and including the year of the Congress before they can vote.
3. Distribution of Votes
  - a) The Delegation of an Affiliate Society shall be entitled to a block of ten votes (irrespective of the number of delegates present at Congress).
  - b) The Delegation of an Associate Society shall be entitled to a block of five votes.
  - c) Individual Members are entitled to one vote.
4. Where an Individual Member also attends Congress in the capacity of a Delegate, her right to vote as an Individual Member shall not be affected.
5. Non-voting participants as mentioned in Article XVI. 3 and 4 shall have the right to speak if called upon by the Chair.

## **ARTICLE XVIII Elections**

1. The Elections Committee is responsible for the organisation of elections. The Committee consists of five Members who are not Members of the Board or candidates and belong to five different countries. The Executive Committee shall immediately appoint a successor for any Member of the Elections Committee who is nominated for election to the Board during Congress. The Elections Committee shall elect its own Convenor at its first meeting.

Nominations of candidates for election either to the offices of President, Secretary general and Treasurer or to the Board must be received by the Convenor of the Elections Committee no later than two days before the election. Each nomination must be accompanied by a relevant curriculum vitae. Nominations shall be made by a Member Society, ten Individual Members, or a group of ten Delegates present at Congress.

All nominations shall be made on a prescribed form, signed by the candidate and by the person responsible for the nomination.

1. No nomination can be accepted from a Society whose dues are not paid up to and including the year of the Congress.
2. Before the ballot:
  - a) the Elections Committee shall present a report of the nomination procedure and make the curricula vitae of the candidates available to Congress.
  - b) Candidates shall have the opportunity to present themselves to the Congress.



4. The election to the offices of President, Secretary general and Treasurer shall be by ballot. The candidate who receives the greatest number of votes shall be considered elected provided the votes given to her exceed one half plus one of all the votes cast at the election. If none of the candidates receives an absolute majority of the votes cast, a second ballot shall be taken on the two candidates who have received the highest number of votes. In the event of a tie the election shall be decided by lot.
5. After the results of the election of President, Secretary general and Treasurer have been announced, the election of the Board Members shall be conducted. The twenty candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be considered elected.
6. A ballot shall be taken regardless of the number of candidates for each office or the Board. The list of candidates shall be in alphabetical order, beginning with a letter decided by lot.

#### **ARTICLE XIX Amendment of the Constitution**

1. The Constitution can only be amended by a two-thirds majority of votes cast at Congress.
2. Amendments may be proposed by Congress, the Board, the Executive Committee, the International Meeting and Affiliate Societies. Notice of proposed amendments must have reached the President at least six months before the Congress and must be sent to all Member Societies and Members of the Board with the preliminary agenda, or  
In a matter of urgency a motion to amend may be approved unanimously by all votes cast at the Congress.
3. Unless otherwise provided, the amended Constitution takes effect immediately after the close of the Congress at which it was adopted.

#### **ARTICLE XX By-laws**

The Board shall make by-laws as provided by the Constitution and in regard to other matters consistent with the Constitution as it deems necessary.

By-laws come into force as soon as they have been sent to the Member Societies. The next Congress will take note of them.

#### **ARTICLE XXI Dissolution**

The IAW may be dissolved by a Resolution passed by Congress with a majority of not less than two thirds of votes cast.

The procedure of article XIX 2. has to be followed.

In the event of a decision to dissolve, the Executive Committee shall notify all concerned and shall take steps to liquidate all assets and, after payment of outstanding debts, it shall transmit any balance to a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, whose Objectives and Mission conform to the Objectives and Mission of the IAW. If the dissolving Congress has not elected officers, the task will fall to the Executive Committee in office at the time of the decision.

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