

CONSTITUTION OF THE
SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION
OF
SOCIAL WORKERS
[SLASW]



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PREAMBLE

The Sierra Leone Association of Social Workers (SLASW) is a National Organization comprising of Social Work Professionals, Social Workers and Promoters of the core values of the Profession and the Association in Sierra Leone. The Mission of SLASW is to advocate for Social Justice, Human Rights and Social Development through plans, actions, programs and the promotion of best practice models in Social Work within a framework of national and international cooperation. The

Article 1: NAME

- i. The name of the Association shall be the Sierra Leone Association of Social Workers (SLASW), hereinafter referred to as “The Association”.

Article 2: STATUS

- i. This constitution shall be the supreme document of the Sierra Leone Association of Social Workers (SLASW)
- ii. The Association shall be non-governmental, non-political, non-religious and non-tribal
- iii. Any resolution, decision or action that is inconsistent with this constitution shall be null and void.

Article 3: PLACE OF OPERATION

- i. The operations of the Association shall be throughout Sierra Leone and
- ii. The Association shall have its Head Office situated in the Capital City of Sierra Leone.
- iii. The Association shall have Regional Offices in the Provinces hereinafter referred to as “Region or Branch”

Article 4: OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

- i. The objectives of the Association shall be:
 - a. To promote the Social Work Profession
 - b. To provide support to Social Workers in the practice of the Profession
 - c. To represent the views of Social Workers on matters of Social Welfare Policies and Practice at National and International level
 - d. To advocate for the welfare and interests of members of the Association
 - e. To promote awareness about the contribution of Social Work to society
 - f. To ensure that Social Workers in Sierra Leone engage in ongoing Professional Development and Capacity Building

Article 5: MEMBERSHIP

I. Categories of Membership of the Association shall be divided into the following four categories:

a. FULL MEMBERSHIP

- i. A Full Membership shall be comprised of Graduate in Social Work from a recognized Tertiary Institution.
- ii. A Full Member shall have Delegate Status and voting right at Annual General Meetings.

b. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

- i. Shall be Practitioners not meeting the Full Membership status, but have practiced for more than five years to the first Annual General Meeting of the Association
- ii. Shall be Practitioners in Social Work from other countries
- iii. Shall have observer status at the Annual General Meeting of the Association

c. HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

- i. Shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Association have done distinguished work to promote the Social Work Profession
- ii. Shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Association have done distinguished work in furthering the objectives of the Association.
- iii. The recommendation or application for an Honorary Member shall be subject to approval at an Annual General Meeting
- iv. An Honorary Member shall have observer status at the Annual General Meeting

d. STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

- i. A student member shall be persons pursuing a Social Work Program in a recognized University
- ii. Should be a member of the Social Work Students' Association of his/her University.
- iii. The Social Work Student Association of the University should have an accreditation from the Association (SLASW)
- iv. Student Members shall have observer status at the Annual General Meeting

II. Application for Membership

- i. Application for membership shall be made by the completion of the respective application form as would be provided by the Association
- ii. Applications shall go through vetting process in line with Social Work ethical Standards

III. Membership Fee

- i. The calendar year of the Association shall last from January 1st to December 31st.
- ii. Members of the Association are required to pay a prescribed Annual Membership Fee.
- iii. Membership fee shall be due on the 30th of September every year.
- iv. The National Executive Committee (NEC) may from time to time amend the fees and dues, subject to the approval of Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- v. Membership fees will be the same for different categories of membership except for student membership

IV. Termination of Membership

- i. Membership of a Member of the Association shall be terminated when:
 - a. The Member dies
 - b. The Member resigns and resignation is accepted
 - c. If a member is of unsound mind and infirmity
 - d. When a member is in breach of the Code of Ethics or commits serious misconduct as recommended by resolution of a disciplinary Committee of the National Executive Committee subject to the approval at an Annual General Meeting

ARTICLE 6: ORGANS OF THE ASSOCIATION AND THEIR DUTIES:

I. The Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- a. The AGM will be the highest decision-making body of the Association
- b. The AGM shall comprise of all Members that had fully complied with this constitution before the meeting
- c. The AGM shall discuss and make decision on the President's Annual Report and
- d. The AGM shall discuss and approve the Plan of Action of the New Activity Year
- e. The AGM shall receive financial reports and approve budget of the Association for the new financial year
- f. The AGM shall in a Delegates Conference elect Office Bearers and Delegates at the AGM and replace vacant offices before their expiration of their terms
- g. The AGM shall Discuss, Review, Modify, Approve or Disapprove Amendments to this Constitution
- h. All Members are entitled to discuss the issues and delegates are entitled to vote on issues
- i. Decisions at the AGM shall on first vote be by 2/3 majority at first voting, and where there is no winner, the first two in the voting result order would go for a simple majority of 50+1% voting

II. The General Meeting (GM)

- a. The General Meeting shall be the second highest decision-making body of the Association
- b. The GM shall comprise of all elected Officers at National Executive Committee, The Chairman, Regional Secretary and the Financial Secretary of the Branch Executive Committee and Members of the Board of Trustees
- c. The meetings for the General Meeting shall be convened quarterly of the year or where 1/3 of the NEC deems it fit and agree that there is a need for an Emergency General Meeting which can be convened at anytime
- d. The quorum for a General Meeting shall be at least 1/3 of every Organ to be represented
- e. The General Meeting can approve changes in the AGM's approved plan of action,
- f. The General Meeting can approve supplemental budgetary expenditure,
- g. The General Meeting can approve suspension of a Member

III. The National Executive Committee (NEC)

- a. The National Executive Committee shall comprise of all elected National Officers at AGM and Delegates Conference
- b. Quorum of the NEC Meetings shall be by 1/3 and decisions shall be by 2/3 majority of members present
- c. Shall be responsible to provide strategic leadership to the Association and oversee the day to day national business of the Association's planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Program of Action
- d. Shall support, promote and authorize projects of the Branch Executive Committee consistent with the approved National Plan of Action

IV. Branch General Meeting (BGM)

- a. The Branch General Meetings shall be comprised of all Members of a Branch meeting the requirements as provided for in this constitution
- b. The meeting can be convened bi-monthly or where the Branch Executive Committee decides by 50+1% of all members of the BEC that there is need to convene an Emergency Branch General Meeting which can be done at anytime
- c. The quorum for a Branch General Meeting for decision-making shall be by 1/3 of Branch Members meeting qualification for the last Annual General Meeting to the meeting year
- d. Decisions of the Branch General Meeting shall be by simple majority of total members present
- e. Decisions of the Branch General Meeting shall not be inconsistent with decisions of the AGM, GM or NEC decisions or it would be null and void

V. Branch Executive Committee (BEC)

- a. The Branch Executive Committees shall be responsible for planning and administration of their respective Branches in accordance with this constitution
- b. The Branch Executive Committee shall prepare and submit quarterly reports to the **NEC**.
- c. The Branch Executive Committee shall comprise of all Executive Members of the Branch
- d. Quorum of the BEC Meetings shall be by at least 2/3 of BEC Members
- e. The decision of a Branch Executive shall be by simple majority of the BEC members present

VI. BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

- a. The Association shall have a Board of Trustees comprising of 7 Members
- b. The 7 members shall be constituted of 5 Members nominated and approved at the AGM, the NEC President and a Legal Practitioner with a Social Work credential who shall be the Secretary to the Board
- c. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall be elected from the 5 members elected at the AGM from a simple majority vote from among the 5 of them
- d. The Board of Trustees shall be the guardian of **Sierra Leone Association of Social Workers (SLASW)** and protect the legal and property rights of the Association

- e. The Board of Trustees shall be the Managing Board of any subsidiary of the Association approved at an AGM
- f. The Board of Trustees shall be the disciplinary structure of the NEC and BEC
- g. Complaint for disciplinary measures against a NEC or BEC member shall be made in writing to the Secretary of the Board
- h. Rules of Procedure for a disciplinary action shall be made by the Board and made public to the Membership before the commencement of any procedure
- i. The Board of Trustees shall approve or disapprove suspension of Members by the National Executive Committee
- j. Meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be conveyed at any time by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman
- k. Decisions of the Board of Trustees shall be by at least 4/5 vote of the 5 AGM nominated members. Where there is a 3/5 vote, the Secretary shall make the deciding vote on whether to support or oppose a decision and shall be the final decision

Article 7: OFFICIALS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

i. The National Executive Committee shall comprise of:

- a. The President
- b. Vice President
- c. Secretary General
- d. Assistant Secretary General
- e. Organizing Secretary
- f. Public Relations Officer
- g. Financial Secretary
- h. Internal Auditor
- i. The Branch Executive Chairpersons

ii. The Branch Executive Committee shall comprise of:

- a. Chairperson
- b. Vice chairperson
- c. Regional Secretary
- d. Assistant Regional Secretary
- e. Financial Secretary

Article 8: DUTIES AND AUTHORITY OF OFFICIALS OF THE SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS (SLASW)

1. Duties and powers of the National Executive Committee:

i. The President:

- a. The NEC President shall provide Executive and Operational leadership to the Association
- b. Shall be the Head of the Association's Executive Committee
- c. The President shall preside over National Executive Committee meetings and General Meetings
- d. Shall have powers to convene Emergency General Meetings pursuant to the provisions of this constitution
- e. Shall represent the Association at National and International or delegate representation to an Official of the Association to uphold a positive image of the Association
- f. Shall present an annual report to the Annual General Meeting at the end of the year
- g. Shall be one of the signatories to the Association's Bank account

ii. The Vice President

- a. Shall be the Principal Assistant to the NEC President
- b. Shall carry out duties within the remits of the NEC President as assigned consistent with the provisions of this constitution
- c. Shall act as President in the absence of the NEC President, save for signing Bank Account in the absence of the President

iii. The Secretary General

- a. Shall be the Administrative Head and Head of Secretariat of the Association
- b. Shall be responsible to summon all Annual General Meetings, General Meetings and NEC Meetings in consultation with the NEC President, NEC Executive and consistent to the provisions of this Constitution
- c. Shall facilitate minutes and record keeping of all meetings of the Association
- d. Shall carry out any other administrative responsibilities assigned by the NEC President consistent with provisions of this constitution
- e. Shall be one of the signatories to the Association's Bank Account

iv. The Assistant Secretary General

- a. Shall be the Principal Assistant to the Secretary General
- b. Shall act and perform the duties of the Secretary General, save for signing of Bank of Account in the absence of the Secretary General
- c. Shall carry out any other duties as may be assigned by the Secretary General consistent with the provisions of this constitution

v. The Organizing Secretary

- a. Shall be responsible to take lead in Organizing events approved by the NEC Executive
- b. Shall undertake any other assigned role by the President consistent with the provisions of this constitution

vi. The Public Relations Officer

- a. Shall be the Officer leading public discourse of the Association as approved by the Executive
- b. Shall engage the media on the key objectives of the Association
- c. Shall perform related tasks as assigned by the Secretariat in consultation with the President

vii. Financial Secretary

- a. Shall be responsible for the overall Financial Administration of the Association
- b. Shall collect all monies payable to the **Association** and Bank it into the Association's Bank account
- c. Shall be the Principal Signatory of the Association's Bank Account
- d. Shall prepare and present financial report, and audited account to the Annual General Meeting
- e. Shall carry out related duties as may be decided by NEC consistent with the provisions of this Constitution

viii. Internal Auditor

- a. Shall conduct Internal Audit
- b. Shall submit to the Board of Trustees

2. Duties and powers of the Branch Executive Committee:

i. Regional Chairperson

- a. Shall Preside over all Branch Meetings
- b. Provide leadership at the Branch level
- c. Represent the Branch on the **NEC**
- d. Any other duties by the constitution at Branch level

ii. Regional Vice Chairperson

- a. Shall be the Principal Assistant to the Regional Chairperson
- b. Shall act and execute the roles of Branch Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson

iii. Regional Secretary

- a. Shall perform duties similar to that of the Secretary General but at Branch level

iv. Assistant Regional Secretary

- a. Shall be the Principal Assistant to the Branch Regional Secretary
- b. Shall act in the capacity of the Regional Secretary in the absence of the Regional Secretary

v. Regional Financial Secretary

- a. Shall perform duties similar to that of the NEC Financial Secretary but at Branch level

Article 9: MEETINGS

1. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- a. The Annual General Meeting shall be a meeting of all members held once every between November and December of the Year.
- b. The President's Annual Report and the Financial Reports are to be submitted to the Board of Trustees on behalf of the Members and discussed at the AGM
- c. The Election of National Executive Committee, Branch Executive, Board of Trustees and any other constitutionally mandate election shall be held at an Annual General Meeting and National Delegates Conference after every three years at the expiration of their terms or bye-election be conducted at the earliest AGM to replace a vacant Officer.

2. General Meetings

- a. General meetings shall be convened quarterly of every calendar year of the Association and is to in consistent with the provisions of this constitution

3. National Executive Committee (NEC) Meeting

- a. The NEC meeting shall be held pursuant to the provisions of this constitution.

4. Extra-ordinary Meeting

- a. An Extra-ordinary meeting may be held under Emergency circumstances or when called by written demand of at least a 1/3 of total membership stating the reason for the demand

Article 10: ELECTION

1. Term of Office

- a. Term of Office for the Office Bearers shall be a period of three years per term.
- b. The President shall not be eligible for re-election after more than two consecutive terms

2. Types of Elections

Elections shall be held during the sitting of the **AGM**

There shall be two categories of elections:

a. General Elections

There shall be the election of a new executive committee ending the term of office and affect the dissolution of the incumbent committee

b. Bye-Election

Shall be held whenever an office falls vacant due to:

- i. Death of an Executive Committee member
- ii. Resignation of Executive Committee Member
- iii. Dismissal of Executive Member
- iv. If one becomes of unsound mind
- v. Any other cause consequent of a disciplinary action approved at the AGM
- vi. Before the bye elections, the executive shall temporarily appoint among themselves a person to take care of the vacant office

3. Eligibility to Vote and to be Voted into Office

- a. Only fully paid up members by 30th September of the AGM Year with delegate voting right are eligible to vote.
- b. Non-Sierra Leonean citizens who qualify as full members shall be eligible for election into any office, provided they are resident in Sierra Leone for at least 3 years uninterrupted to election date, and hold valid work permits for their tenure in office

4. Procedures for Elections

- a. A Returning Officer and 1 Regional Election Officer from each Branch shall be approved at the AGM preceding the Year for Delegate Conference
- b. The Outgoing Executive shall be dissolved of any direct elections planning duty not later than one month to the AGM and Delegate Conference
- c. Nomination for **Elective Members** shall be by filling in forms by the applicants, endorsed by two fully paid-up members and forwarded to the Returning Officer, with copies to the Secretariat
- d. Election rules and procedures shall be formulated by the Returning Officer and Regional Elections Officers not later than one Month to the Elections
- e. The President, Secretary General, Regional Chairpersons and all other positions with Vice, shall nominate their deputies as running mate to the election.
- f. The Running ticket shall be a gender balanced ticket

Article 11: REMOVAL FROM SLASW OFFICE

In the event that an executive member fails to perform expected duties, the following procedures shall take place

- a. The President may discuss the matter with the executive member
- b. If there is no improvement, the President may on the advice of the Executive Committee discuss the matter at a general meeting
- c. The Office Bearer may be suspended subject to the approval by the Board of Trustees

Article 12: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSOCIATION

a. REVENUE

- i.** The income will comprise of membership fees, fund raising activities, contribution, donations, sponsorship, gifts and income generating activities

b. BANK ACCOUNTS

- i.** The bank account of the **Association** shall be opened and maintained in such a Bank Account as the National Executive Committee shall determine
- ii.** All monies of the association must be properly banked.
- iii.** All bank cheques and cash withdrawals under the jurisdiction of the **NEC** shall be signed for and on behalf of **Association** by the Financial Secretary, President and/or Secretary General, while at the branch level, it shall be the Branch Treasurer and The Chairperson or the Secretary

c. FINANCIAL YEAR

- i.** The Financial Year of the Association shall be from January 1st to December 31st every year.
- ii.** The Financial Secretary shall during this period prepare and have a written audit report to present to the **AGM**

d. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

- i.** An External Auditor shall be appointed at the **AGM and Delegate Conference** and shall serve until the first sitting of the new executive committee in the following term of Office.
- ii.** The Association will remunerate and give a Terms of Reference of the Auditors

Article 13: CODE OF ETHICS

- i.** The Association must maintain a written Code of Ethics, which after adoption by the General Assembly shall be binding on all registered Members
- ii.** The Code of Ethics shall establish professional values and standards of conduct expected of Social Workers in different situations
- iii.** The Code of Ethics shall also establish principles that should underlie the value and standard of practice
- iv.** The Association will review the Code of Ethics every three years. Any amendment of the Code of Ethics shall take effect after it has been discussed and adopted by the **AGM**
- v.** Copies of the Code of Ethics to be made available to all members of the Association

Article 14: AMENDMENT TO THIS CONSTITUTION

- i.** Any Repeal, Amendment or Addition to the constitution may be made by a resolution passed by two-thirds of those members present and voting at the **AGM**
- ii.** Amendment of the constitution shall be a regular item on the agenda of the **AGM**

ARTICLE 15: DISSOLUTION OF THE SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS -SLASW

- i.** The **SLASW** or a branch may be dissolved only by a resolution passed by at least two-thirds of the members of the **AGM** called for that purpose.
- ii.** All monies standing to the credit of the Association after paying all debts and liabilities shall be donated to similar Associations or used to set up student bursaries

ARTICLE 16 – TRANSITIONAL CLAUSE

- i.** There shall be an Interim Transitional Committee
- ii.** The Transition Interim Committee is to be made up of Central 7 members Committee and 5 Interim Regional Secretaries representing the Regions in Sierra Leone
- iii.** The mandate of the Committee shall be to superintend over the Association's Affairs until the first AGM and Delegates Conference

CONSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

**Adopted at the National Social Work Conference 2023,
Milton Margai Technical University ‘The Great Hall’,
Freetown on 22nd March, 2023**

Organized by the Sierra Leone Social Workers Steering Committee in collaboration with the
Ministry of Social Welfare, GOSL with supports from UNICEF

SIERRA LEONE SOCIAL WORKERS STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sylvester Amara Lamin, PhD	- Chairman
Michael Mitchell Conteh, Esq	- Secretary/Coordinator <i>M.MitchellConteh</i>
George Mansaray	- Member
Hassan Koroma	- Member
Maurice Musa Momoh Kargbo	-Member
Ibrahim Hassan Koroma	-Member

