

Constitution and by laws

PREAMBLE

The International Federation of Social Workers recognises that social work originates variously from humanitarian, religious and democratic ideals and philosophies; and that it has universal application to meet human needs arising from personal-societal interactions, and to develop human potential.

Professional social workers are dedicated to service for the welfare and self-fulfilment of human beings; to the development and disciplined use of scientific knowledge regarding human behaviour and society; to the development of resources to meet individual, group, national and international needs and aspirations; to the enhancement and improvement of the quality of life of people; and to the achievement of social justice.

Art. 1 NAME AND COMPOSITION

a) The name of the Federation is
International Federation of Social Workers
Fédération internationale des travailleurs sociaux
Federación Internacional de Trabajadores Sociales

b) The Federation shall be composed of national professional social work organisations or national Co-ordinating Bodies.

c) The Federation shall be a non-profit making organisation

Art. 2 INCORPORATION

The Federation shall be incorporated under the relevant Articles of the Civil Code in the country where it is seated. The Federation may, by decision of the General Meeting, incorporate under relevant laws in an alternative country

Art. 3 SEAT AND DURATION

The Federation's seat shall be at Bern, Switzerland, or at any such other place as may be determined by the General Meeting in accordance with the Federation's Articles.

Art. 4 AIMS

a. The aims of the Federation are:

I) to promote social work as a profession through international co-operation, especially regarding professional values, standards, ethics, human rights, recognition, training and working conditions;

II) to promote the establishment of national organisations of social workers or professional unions for social workers and when needed national Co-ordinating Bodies (collectively "Social Work Organisations") where they do not exist;

III) to support Social Work Organisations in promoting the participation of social workers in social planning and the formulation of social policies, nationally and

internationally, the recognition of social work, the enhancement of social work training and the values and professional standards of social work.

b. In order to achieve these Aims the Federation shall:

I) encourage co-operation between social workers of all countries;

II) provide means for discussion and the exchange of ideas and experience through meetings, study visits, research projects, exchanges, publications and other methods of communication;

III) establish and maintain relationships with, and present and promote the views of Social Work Organisations and their members to international organisations relevant to social development and welfare.

MEMBERSHIP

Art. 5 MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

National Social Work Organisations

a) Membership is open to national Social Work Organisations of any country, whose core members must have completed post secondary education in social work and must practice (or intend to practice or have practiced) social work. (For the purpose of such membership criteria the Executive Committee shall in its discretion determine the applicable definition of “social work”, in accordance with any applicable resolution on the subject passed at any General Meeting of the Federation).

b) Membership is limited to one such national Social Work Organisation in any country.

Co-ordinating Bodies

c) If more than one Social Work Organisation in a country is interested in membership of the Federation only a national Co-ordinating Body representing every such organisation may be admitted as a Member of the Federation

d) If there is an existing Member from any country and another national Social Work Organisation from that country, otherwise fulfilling the eligibility criteria, confirms a wish to become involved with the Federation, the existing Member is obliged to endeavour to facilitate the development of a Co-ordinating Body to succeed it as the Member from that country, in accordance with the By Laws and any General Meeting resolution giving such direction.

e) All the Social Work Organisations wishing to be involved in a Co-ordinating Body must individually meet the criteria for full membership. If one or more organisation does not meet the membership criteria, the other interested organisation(s) may still pursue an application through a Co-ordinating Body.

f) A Co-ordinating Body will be comprised of representatives from each of the national Social Work Organisations that meet the membership criteria and wish to become involved with the Federation.

g) The Co-ordinating Body will establish procedures with respect to Federation elections; voting at meetings; organisation of international conferences; co-ordinating of mailing lists; and, identification of social workers to serve on Federation committees.

h) In the event that one Member of the Co-ordinating Body ceases to operate or otherwise to be involved with the Co-ordinating Body this need not effect the status of the body.

i) Co-ordinating Bodies shall have the same right and obligations as any other Member of equivalent status.

j) Organisations or bodies, other than national Social Work Organisations wanting to be associated with the Federation may join the Federation's Friends' Program.

Art. 6 CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

a) There shall be the following categories of membership:

Full Member

Provisional Member

b) A Full Member shall be an existing Member as at the 2002 General Meeting which fulfils the eligibility criteria adopted at that meeting and every Candidate or Provisional Member which is admitted to full membership by resolution of the General Meeting (provided they continue to fulfil applicable eligibility criteria).

c) A Provisional Member shall be a Member which has previously fulfilled the criteria for full membership, but has ceased to do so as a result of the adoption of new criteria at the 2002 General Meeting or otherwise and which is engaged in the process of fulfilling such criteria and regaining its Full Member status. A Provisional Member which has not been admitted as a Full Member within six years of the date it ceased to be a Full Member shall cease to be a Member of the Federation.

d) All applications for membership shall be subject to the applicable procedures set out in the By Laws.

Art. 7 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

a) All Members shall:

submit such documents to the Secretary General, at such times and in such forms as is prescribed in the By Laws

observe these Articles and the By Laws

endorse and promote among its membership the document "The Ethics of Social Work, Principles and Standards" and the policies currently approved by the Federation

pay membership dues as prescribed by resolution of the General Meeting, in accordance with applicable procedures set out in the By Laws

promote the profession within their country and at the international level

apply the ethical principles of the Federation

contribute to and promote Federation activities in their respective countries.

support international conferences promoted by the Federation through promotion to their members and endeavouring to send official representation

support and endeavour to express international solidarity in relation to international

standards of human rights
shall participate in the work of Committees
shall support the Federation's international conferences by ongoing promotion
among its members and by making efforts to send official representation
pay regional membership dues as prescribed by the region

b) Full Members shall:

be entitled to receive direct communication and all Member publications and
materials from the Federation
be entitled to full participation in Federation elections in accordance with these
Articles and the By Laws
be eligible to participate in the work of Federation committees

c) Provisional Members shall be entitled to all rights of Full Members, except the
right to present nominations for Federation offices and to vote

Art. 8 CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP

a) A prospective Full Member which has applied for membership and has been
assessed as being eligible for full membership, but which has not yet been admitted to
Full Membership at a General Meeting shall be known as a Candidate.

b) Candidates shall:

be entitled to observer status in General Meetings
correspond with their Region, rather than directly with the Secretariat

Art. 9 SUSPENSION, EXPULSION AND REINSTATEMENT

a) A Member that does not pay its dues, that violates the Articles of this Constitution
and/or the By Laws of the Federation or in any other form counteracts the basic
interests, aims and policies of the Federation or its Members may be suspended or
expelled by the General Meeting upon recommendation by at least two Members or
the Executive Committee. A two-thirds majority shall be required for suspension or
expulsion.

b) A suspended Member may be reinstated to membership by the General Meeting.
Evidence that the grounds for suspension no longer exist shall be provided to the
Executive Committee by or on behalf of the suspended Member. Such evidence shall
be considered by the Executive Committee, and circulated to Members not less than
thirty days before the General Meeting at which the proposal is to be put. The
evidence may be accompanied by an Executive Committee recommendation: a
recommendation shall be made by the Executive Committee to the General Meeting.
A two-thirds majority of Members voting shall be required for reinstatement.

c) Further procedures set out in the By Laws relating to suspension, expulsion and
reinstatement shall apply.

Art. 10 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

The Federation may by decision of the General Meeting, extend to other
organisations the status of a partner organisation.

a) The General Meeting must be satisfied that the proposed organisation
I. Either shares goals and ethical principles that are consistent with those of the
Federation and/ or does not have goals that are expressly oppositional to the

Federation's.

II. There is no competition or conflict of interest with the Federation or its Members

III. There is clear recognition of and respect for the role of Federation as the peak body representing social work at an international level.

IV. There is agreement to enter into a formal compact/contract or memorandum of understanding; and

V. There is a set period to review the relationship

b) A partner organisation shall be entitled to attend the General Meeting of the Federation as an observer and to receive all relevant paperwork pertaining to that meeting.

c) A partner organisation shall not have the right to vote and may participate in the General Meeting with the leave of the President/Chairperson

Art. 11 EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

a) The Federation shall have seven Executive Committee Officers – a President, five Vice Presidents and a Treasurer. The Secretary General is the Chief Executive Officer.

b) For organisational purposes, the Federation is divided into five geographical Regions. Each Region shall have one Vice President who shall be known in the region as President of the Region.

c) The governing body of the Federation is the General Meeting. There is also an Executive Committee.

d) Honorary positions of Honorary President and Ambassador/s will be agreed by the General Meeting.

Art. 12 SECRETARIAT

a) There shall be a secretariat, consisting of a Secretary General and such other staff as may be needed and approved by the Executive Committee on recommendation of the Secretary General.

b) The Secretary General shall be appointed under contract by the Executive Committee.

c) The Secretary General shall report to and carry out duties assigned by the General Meeting, the Executive Committee and the President. She or he shall attend each Executive Committee, and General Meeting.

d) The Secretary General shall be entitled to attend, as a non voting participant, all Federation Committees and other bodies established under the terms of these Articles and the Federation's By Laws. She or he shall be entitled to copies of all papers produced for such bodies.

THE GENERAL MEETING

Art. 13 FUNCTIONS

a) The General Meeting is the supreme and governing body of the Federation. It consists of delegates of Members and the Executive Committee Members.

b) The General Meeting ratifies the general and financial policies of the Federation, the method of assessing the annual membership dues for Members and shall review its activities and accounts.

c) The General Meeting elects the Executive Committee Members by direct election of President and Treasurer and it receives nominations of the Vice Presidents and Members-at-large made by the Regions.

d) The General Meeting elects an Elections Officer, Parliamentarian and other necessary persons to carry out duties as it may decide, subject to the Constitution.

e) The General Meeting establishes committees as it deems necessary.

f) The General Meeting decides on the admission, expulsion, suspension or reinstatement of Members.

g) Additions or amendments to By Laws recommended between General Meetings must be approved at the next General Meeting.

h) The General Meeting may delegate any of its powers to the Executive Committee except the power to alter, amend or add to the Articles of the Constitution.

i) The President presides at the General Meeting. In the event of absence, the first Vice President shall preside

Art. 14 CONVENING OF AND ATTENDANCE AT GENERAL MEETINGS

a) The General Meeting shall meet not less than once every two years. A preceding General Meeting shall normally decide the date and venue of the General Meeting or as shall otherwise be determined by the Executive Committee.

b) Special General Meetings may be called by the President, at the direction of the Executive Committee, or upon the written request of not less than one fifth of the Members.

c) Notice of the General Meeting, including its date and preliminary agenda, shall be dispatched to all Members and to the Executive Committee not less than 90 days before the date set for the meeting. Notice of a Special General Meeting shall also be 90 days but may be reduced to no less than 30 days by the decision of the President, and its business is limited to the matters notified in the preliminary agenda.

d) A Quorum of the General Meeting shall consist of representatives, present in person at the opening of the General Meeting, of one third of the Members with voting rights.

Art. 15 PROCEDURES IN GENERAL MEETINGS

a) Each Member is entitled to three delegates, each of whom is entitled to speak. Observers to the General Meeting may be admitted with the permission of the President, but may not speak unless the President so decides.

b) Each Member shall have one vote, which may be exercised, in person by delegates, or by proxy, or by post, or by fax.

c) A Member may act as proxy for other Member not in attendance. The instrument appointing a proxy must be in the form specified in By Law 10.

d) Votes of the General Meeting shall be by simple majority, except where otherwise specified in the Constitution. In the event of a tied vote the President shall exercise a decisive vote.

- e) Election procedures, including voting, shall be as prescribed in the By Laws.
- f) No Executive Committee Member shall have any vote in a General Meeting in such capacity (subject to any casting vote of the President provided by the Constitution)
- g) Minutes of General Meetings shall be reviewed and adopted by the Executive Committee. A full set of draft minutes will be circulated to Members prior to adoption.

Art. 16 VOTES BY POSTAL BALLOT

- a) The vote on an issue may be taken by postal ballot. In order for the vote to be valid one third of the Members must return a ballot with the stipulated time period. Decision will be made by a simple majority.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Art. 17 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION

- a) The Executive Committee shall consist of the 7 Executive Committee Officers and 1 additional Member nominated by each Region.
- b) The eligibility criteria for the office of President are membership of a Member in good standing and previous personal service in some capacity with the Federation of no less than two years.
- c) The eligibility criterion for the office of Treasurer is membership of a Member in good standing.
- d) The eligibility criterion for the office of Vice President and for nomination as an Additional regional Nominee is membership of a Member within the relevant Region in good standing.
- e) The Executive Committee shall elect one of the Vice Presidents to be the First Vice President.
- f) The term of office of each Executive Committee Member shall be four years (subject to the transitional provisions in s), t) and v) below).
- g) An Executive Committee Member may be re-elected or re-appointed to the same executive position for a second continuous term, but may not be elected to the same executive position for a third continuous term (subject to the transitional provisions in x) below).
- h) The maximum continuous period during which an individual may be an Executive Committee Member in any capacity is three terms (subject to the transitional provision x) below).
- i) A vacancy in the following executive positions arising between General Meetings, which the Executive Committee considers should be filled before the next General Meeting shall be filled as follows:

First Vice President – Executive Committee election of one of the remaining Vice-Presidents

Treasurer – Executive Committee election of an existing Member of the Committee or

by appropriate Executive Committee co-option
Regional Nominee – by interim nomination by the relevant Region

j) A vacancy in the office of President arising between General Meetings shall be filled by the First Vice President.

k) A vacancy in the office of any Vice-President arising between General Meetings shall be filled by the regional Nominee from the same Region.

l) An interim appointment under i) j) or k) shall stand for election at the first coming General Meeting (subject to b), c) and d)).

m) Vacancies in any executive positions arising during a General Meeting shall be filled by election at the same General Meeting (subject to b), c) and d)).

n) The terms of office for elections (subject to l) or m)) follows the ordinary election period (subject to q), r), s), t), u), v) or w) below).

o) An interim appointment under i), j), or k) shall not be counted for the purpose of calculating any term in any particular executive position but is subject to the provisions under x) below.

p) An interim appointment under i) j) or k) shall be counted for the purpose of calculating the maximum continuous period as an Executive Committee Member, except in the case of a co-opted Treasurer, or an interim regional Nominee.

q) Elections for the office of President shall take place at the 2002 General Meeting and subsequently at General Meetings at four yearly intervals.

s) Elections for the office of Treasurer shall take place at the 2002, the 2004 General Meeting and subsequently at General Meetings at four yearly intervals.

t) Vice-Presidents shall be nominated by the Africa, Asia & Pacific, and Europe Regions at the 2002 General Meeting, the 2004 General Meeting and subsequently at General Meetings at four yearly intervals.

u) Vice-Presidents shall be nominated by the Latin America & Caribbean and North America Regions at the 2002 General Meeting and subsequently at General Meetings at four yearly intervals. If and when North America comprises more than two Members, the regime for appointments in that Region under this Article shall be reviewed

v) Additional regional Nominees shall be nominated by the Latin America & Caribbean at the 2002 General Meeting, the 2004 General Meeting and subsequently at General Meetings at four yearly intervals.

w) Additional regional Nominees shall be nominated by the Africa, Asia & Pacific, North America and Europe Regions at the 2002 General Meeting and subsequently at General Meetings at four yearly intervals. If and when North America comprises more than two Members, the regime for appointments in that Region under this Article shall be reviewed

x) A transitional term of two years served by any individual under p), or r), or, by a new Treasurer, under o), shall not be counted in calculating any maximum term

applicable to any such individual, under g) or h). Accordingly, any such individual shall, after the transitional two year term, be eligible for re-election to two further continuous full four year terms in the particular position and shall, after the transitional two year term, be eligible for a total of three continuous further terms in office as an Executive Committee Member.

y) In calculating terms in executive positions and periods as Executive Committee Members under this Article “two years” shall be interpreted as the period between successive Biennial General Meetings and multiples of “two years” shall be interpreted accordingly.”

Art. 18 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

a) The Executive Committee shall have delegated authority to conduct the affairs of the Federation between General Meetings, in accordance with the general policies laid down by the General Meeting.

b) The Executive Committee shall consider and approve a budget, which may be revised annually by the Executive Committee and presented for ratification to the General Meeting.

c) The Executive Committee shall determine the duties and powers of the Officers, subject to these Articles and the current By Laws of the Federation.

d) The Executive Committee shall have delegated authority to decide on the signing authority on behalf of the Federation.

e) The First Vice President shall substitute for the President in case of the President's absence.

f) The Executive Committee shall appoint a personnel committee consisting of the President, Treasurer and first Vice President. The committee shall have responsibility for the appointment of, disciplining and dismissal of the Secretary General, subject to conducting regular performance reviews and reporting to the Executive Committee.

g) The Executive Committee may establish such committees, and appoint such persons, as may be necessary to carry out the program and specific activities of the Federation.

h) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for preparation of the By Laws and such additions and amendments as may be necessary for approval by the General Meeting. Such additions and amendments shall, if approved by a three quarter majority of the Executive Committee, be adopted and implemented prior to their being considered for approval by the next General Meeting.

i) The President shall preside at the Executive Committee. In the President's absence, a first Vice President shall preside as stipulated in Article 16 d).

j) The Executive Committee elects a Parliamentarian for each of its meetings.

Art. 19 CONVENING AND ATTENDANCE AT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

a) The Executive Committee shall meet not less than once in each calendar year. It may meet more frequently. It shall be convened to any suitable place.

b) Notice of the Executive Committee Meeting, including its date and preliminary agenda, shall be sent not less than 30 days before the date fixed for the meeting.

c) Additional regional Nominees not able to attend a particular meeting may appoint alternates to attend in their place and exercise their rights and duties. The nomination of such an alternate must be made with the written consent of the Region and conveyed in writing to the Secretary General before the start of business at the Executive Committee.

d) A Quorum of Executive Committee shall consist of one half plus one of the Executive Committee Members. The Quorum shall be confirmed at the beginning of the meeting.

e) Observers may be admitted with the permission of the President, but may not speak unless the President so decides.

Art. 20 VOTING IN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

a) The Executive Committee shall make its decisions by simple majority of the Executive Committee Members attending the meeting, except where otherwise required by this Constitution.

b) The President, as Chair, shall exercise a casting as well as deliberative vote.

Art. 21 BALLOTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

a) The Executive Committee may take decisions by postal and/or email ballot. The vote is valid only if ballots are returned by two thirds of those entitled to attend Executive Committee Meetings, within the stipulated time period. Decision is by simple majority.

Art. 22 REGIONS

a) The membership shall be divided into 5 geographical Regions: Africa, Asia & Pacific, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean and North America.

b) Each Member as at the 2002 General Meeting shall continue to be a Member of the Region it was associated with as at that date.

c) Every applicant for membership after the 2002 General Meeting shall (following consultation with the applicant if necessary) be referred by the Secretary General to the Region (via its representative Vice President) with which it is most closely associated geographically, unless special circumstances apply and the Executive Committee, in its discretion, decides that the referral should be to another Region. The application shall be assessed by the Region, under the guidance of its Vice President, (subject to the Constitution) in accordance with such procedures as the Regional Committee, or in the absence of a Regional Committee as the representative Vice President, in consultation with the Secretariat, shall determine.

d) Any Member wishing to change its assignment from one Region to another shall submit a request in accordance with the prescribed procedures set out in the By Laws.

e) The Members of each Region shall, as soon as circumstances allow, appoint a Regional Committee and a Regional Secretariat. For as long as a Region is without a Regional Committee and/or a Regional Secretariat, the Secretariat shall support the

Region in fulfilling its functions (in accordance with any directions issued by the Executive Committee).

f) The Members of each Region may determine the frequency, content and conduct of meetings within the Region, provided they are consistent with these Articles and the By Laws and on the establishment of a Regional Committee and/or a Regional Secretariat, such functions shall be exercised by those bodies.

g) A Region shall be responsible for assessing the eligibility for membership of any applicant for membership referred to it. Provided the Region considers the applicant to meet the criteria for full membership it shall confirm to the applicant and the Executive Committee that the applicant has Candidate status and shall recommend to the next General Meeting that the applicant should be admitted as a Full Member of the Federation and that it should be assigned to that Region.

h)

I) A Region shall be responsible for monitoring its Members to ensure that they fulfill the criteria for full membership. If a full Member appears to be in breach of the provisions under Article 7 of the Articles the Region shall advise the full Member and seek an explanation of the full Member's position. If no satisfactory explanation is provided or the breach is not remedied in a timely fashion the Region shall recommend to the Executive Committee and the next General Meeting that the Full Member shall be transferred to the status of Provisional Member.

II) A Region shall be responsible for supporting and monitoring the transitional process for the attainment of Full Member status by each Provisional Member which is a Member of that Region. The Region shall confirm to the Provisional Member and the Executive Committee when the Provisional Member has fulfilled the Full Member eligibility criteria. The Region shall recommend to the next General Meeting following confirmation that the Provisional Member meets Full Member eligibility criteria that the Provisional Member should be admitted as a Full Member.

i) Each Region shall make arrangements for the nominations of Vice Presidents and Additional Regional Nominees to the Executive Committee for the purposes of Article 16, through such procedures involving nomination and elections of Members within such Region, in accordance with the procedure set down by the Elections Committee.

Art. 23 CONDUCT OF REGIONAL MEETINGS

a) Vice Presidents are empowered and encouraged to organise and promote meetings of Members in their Regions.

b) Meetings of Members in each Region may determine the frequency, content and conduct of meetings, provided that these Articles and the By Laws of the Federation, are not contravened.

c) Meetings may be organised in co-operation with other bodies.

Art. 24 INCOME

a) The Federation's income comes from:

dues paid by Members;
donations and legacies;

subsidies granted by governments for specific projects
subsidies granted by public or private entities or persons;
funds resulting from conferences, publications, technical help or other services rendered within the scope of these Articles and the By Laws of the Federation;
by such other non-dues revenue activities as may be determined.

Art. 25 LIABILITY

a) Only the Federation's own property is liable for its financial obligations. There is no personal liability on the part of its Members, Executive Committee Members or Secretary General.

Art. 26 BUDGET ARRANGEMENTS

a) The financial year of the Federation shall be 1 January to 31 December.

b) The Secretary General shall carry responsibility as delegated by the Treasurer for,:

I) Collecting annual dues from Members;

II) Preparation of accounts for the Auditors;

III) Preparation of the budget for submission to the Executive Committee;

IV) Receipt, deposit and withdrawal of all funds of the Federation under the direction of the General Meeting or the Executive Committee;

V) Preparing and making available a statement of receipts and expenditure to each Executive Committee Meeting and each General Meeting;

VI) Maintaining true and regular current accounts of the Federation's monies;

VII) Making a written report on all assets and liabilities of the Federation and on any other such financial matter as may be determined by the Executive Committee or General Meeting.

Art. 27 AUDITING ARRANGEMENTS

a) The General Meeting shall appoint Independent auditors.

b) The auditors shall submit a certified report to each General Meeting.

c) The auditors may conduct an informal audit of the Federation's financial records at any time. They shall report irregularities to the Executive Committee.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES

Art. 28 AMENDMENT OF ARTICLES

a) Articles may be amended only by decision of the General Meeting. A proposal to amend the Articles will be accepted only if supported by two thirds of the Members present or represented by proxy at the General Meeting.

b) Any proposed amendment to the Articles shall be circulated in writing to the Members not less than 90 days before the date fixed for the General Meeting.

Art. 29 DISSOLUTION

a) A decision to dissolve the Federation may be made by the General Meeting.

b) Acceptance of a proposal to dissolve the Federation shall require a majority of three-quarters of Members present, or represented by proxy, at the General Meeting.

c) Any proposal to dissolve the Federation shall be circulated in writing to the Members not less than 90 days before the date fixed for the General Meeting.

d) If the General Meeting decides on dissolution of the Federation it shall also decide on the disposal of the Federation's funds and assets.

Art. 30 FINAL DISPOSITIONS

a) These Articles shall replace those determined at earlier General Meetings, and shall be in force from 29 July 2006.

b) These Articles, together with any By Laws currently in force as a result of approval by a General Meeting, shall be known as the Constitution of the International Federation of Social Workers.

c) In any question of ruling on the Constitution, the President shall be advised by the Parliamentarian. The President's ruling shall prevail, except if it is contested by all other Executive Committee Members of the Federation, or by a three-quarter majority of all organisations eligible to vote.

d) For purposes of interpretation of this Constitution the English language version shall be regarded as authoritative.

By Laws to the Articles of the International Federation of Social Workers

By Law 1 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES (Article 1)

The official languages of the Federation are English, French and Spanish.

By Law 2 REVIEW OF THE ETHICAL DOCUMENT (Article 4)

The Executive Committee shall review the "The Ethics of Social Work – Principles and Standards" at intervals of not less than four years, and prepare any amendments it considers necessary for adoption by the General Meeting

By Law 3 APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP (Article 5)

National organisations and Co-ordinating Bodies [hereinafter referred to collectively as 'organisations'] wishing to become Members of the Federation are obliged to submit a written application to the Secretariat. The Secretary General shall provide such applicants with a standard form and with a copy of the Articles and "The Ethics of Social Work – Principles and Standards". The form will include an undertaking to observe the Articles and support the Ethical Document and policies of the Federation. This shall be completed and signed on behalf of the applicant organisation. Additional documents, such as may from time to time be determined, shall be supplied by the applicant organisations in support of the application and in proof of fulfilment of criteria for membership.

By Law 4 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FROM A COUNTRY ALREADY REPRESENTED BY A MEMBER (Article 5)

Where an application for membership is received from a Social Work Organisation other than the Member in any country, the Secretary General shall forward the application to the Vice President of the relevant Region. The Vice President shall in liaison with the Regional Committee and/or Regional Secretariat (if applicable) prepare a report for the Executive Committee setting out the position in the Member

country having consulted with the Member. If the matter requires further investigation the Executive Committee may, by a majority vote, appoint a Committee of Enquiry to report to the next General Meeting with a recommendation on membership. The Committee of Enquiry will consider the applicant's Constitution, Code of Ethics, and latest Annual Report, applicable membership criteria, the number of members of the applicant with professional qualifications, involvement of the applicant in professional and social justice and social policy issues, involvement of the applicant in professional development and other relevant factors affecting the Member and the applicant organisation. In its report the Committee of Enquiry will address the feasibility of a Co-ordinating Body representing the Member and the applicant organisation being established. Following the receipt of the report of the Committee of Enquiry, the Executive Committee shall recommend to the General Meeting the appropriate membership arrangement for that country and the General Meeting may endorse, modify or reject the recommendation.

By Law 5 SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FROM MEMBERSHIP (Article 9)

a) The General Meeting shall satisfy itself that the organisation whose suspension or expulsion is proposed has been given reasonable opportunity for explanation or defence. A vote of the General Meeting for suspension or expulsion shall require a two-thirds majority of Members voting.

b) Transfer from full membership to provisional membership by reason of non-payment of dues for two consecutive calendar years shall be initiated automatically by the Secretary General. She or he shall report such action to the President and to the Vice-President of the Region concerned.

c) Procedure for suspension or expulsion by the General Meeting requiring that:

I) A proposal in writing stating the grounds of the proposal shall be conveyed to the Secretary General.

II) The Secretary General shall request a written comment and response to the proposal by the organisation involved, not less than 90 days before the General Meeting.

III) The foregoing documents shall be submitted to the Executive Committee by the Secretary General, and the organisation shall be invited to be represented at the Executive Committee meeting.

IV) The Secretary General shall make available to all organisations a written report on the proposal for suspension or expulsion not less than 30 days before the General Meeting.

By Law 6 REINSTATEMENT (Article 9)

a) A suspended Member seeking reinstatement must apply in writing. The Secretary General shall forward to the organisation a copy of the Federation's standard admission/reinstatement form, to be completed on behalf of the organisation. The President of the Region shall be responsible for confirming that the organisation complies with the Federation's requirements and shall submit a report to the Executive Committee.

b) Subject to a) above, the Executive Committee shall have the power to recommend reinstatement, and shall report any such recommendation to the General Meeting. Such reinstatement may be subject to conditions.

By Law 7 SPECIFIC OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP (Article 7)

a) Members are obliged to submit to the Secretary-General each year, in any of the three official languages:

I) A copy of each annual report or its equivalent; Numbers and categories of members in the current year; A list of the names and addresses for contact purposes of officers of the Member following their election and when changes occur, not less than annually;

II) Upon request by the Secretariat or the President, a means of contacting expert members of the national organisation, in the event of such experts being required in connection with specific tasks for the Federation;

III) A copy of the organisations journal or other such publication.

IV) Upon request by the Secretariat or the President, information to comply with any assessment process related to conditions of membership of the Federation.

b) Members shall not discriminate against groups of social workers or individual social workers on grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender, language, religion, political opinion, age or sexual orientation.

c) Members shall promote among their membership regular professional training, based upon an organised sequence of social work education, and incorporating ethical standards of practice compatible with social work principles.

By Law 8 ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (Article 13)

a) An Elections Officer, a First and Second Alternate Elections Officer, shall be elected at the General Meeting and shall constitute the Elections Committee. The Elections Committee Members are ineligible for nomination as Members of the Executive Committee during their respective periods of office.

b) The period of office for the Elections Officer, and the First and Second Alternate Elections Committee Members shall be two years. Individuals may be re-elected for subsequent periods of office. A casual vacancy shall be filled by decision of the Executive Committee., following the seeking of nominations from organisations. Such a period of office expires at the next General Meeting.

c) The Elections Officer is responsible for receiving nominations for all Federation elected positions, for determining the validity of nominations, for such ballots as may be necessary, and for the declaration of ballot and election results.

d) The First and Second Election Committee Members shall have the role of tellers at the General Meeting if they are present.

e) The First and Second Election Committee Members may be appointed to act as Election Officer for regional elections.

f) Decisions of the Elections Officer in these matters shall be final, save only for a vote of three quarters of the organisations represented in person or by proxy at the General Meeting.

By Law 9 AGENDA FOR THE GENERAL MEETING (Article 13)

- a) The preliminary agenda shall be prepared by the Secretary General in consultation with the President.
- b) The draft agenda shall be prepared by the Secretary General in consultation with the President. It shall be sent by the Secretary General, with all accompanying documentation, to all Members and to the Executive Committee not less than 40 days before the date set for the commencement of the General Meeting.
- c) Members may propose additional subjects for discussion to be included in the final agenda. The agenda is finalised after the opening of the General Meeting.

By Law 10 CREDENTIALS OF DELEGATES (Article 14)

- a) Before the opening of the General Meeting, representatives of Members shall make available credentials from their respective organisations. These shall be letters or other documentary evidence of individuals being nominated as delegates. Each shall be examined by two Members of the Executive Committee assigned to this task by the President. In any case of doubt, the matter shall be referred for decision on acceptance to the President, who shall consult with the Secretary General.
- b) Before the opening of the General Meeting, the form to appoint organisations to act as proxy as prescribed below shall also be examined by the two Members of the Executive Committee designated in a) above. In any case of doubt, the matter shall be referred for decision on acceptance to the President, who shall consult with the Secretary General.

c) Form to Appoint a Proxy:

A Member may act as proxy for another Member not in attendance. An appointment of a proxy is valid if both the organisation giving and organisation exercising the proxy are financial at the commencement of the General Meeting. The proxy must be signed by the authorised Office Bearer of the organisation making the appointment and contain the following information:

- I) The organisation’s name and address
- II) The name and address of the organisation to hold the proxy
- III) The meeting or meetings at which the proxy may be used

The proxy must be received by the Secretary General not later than the commencement of the General Meeting.

The instrument appointing a proxy may be in the following form or as close to that as circumstances permit:

To: The International Federation of Social Workers

I (insert position e.g. President) being a duly authorised Office Bearer of the appoint the organisation as proxy to vote on our behalf at the General Meeting of the Federation to be held on the day of, and at any adjournment of that meeting.

Signed this day of

This proxy is in favour of/against the resolution/following resolutions. (Unless otherwise instructed, the proxy may vote as the proxy thinks fit.)

By Law 11 THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS (Article 15)

a) At the General Meeting if one or both of the Alternate Elections Officers are not present the General Meeting shall appoint not more than two substitute tellers to assist the Elections Officer. Tellers shall act on the advice of the Elections Officer and under his or her direction.

b) The Elections Officer shall initiate the following procedures for the Positions of IFSW President and IFSW Treasurer

I. No less than 120 days before the date set for the General Meeting, the Elections Officer shall invite member organizations to nominate candidates from among their own members, for the offices of President and Treasurer.

II. The Elections Committee shall determine eligibility for re-election and shall advise those holding elected office, as President or Treasurer, of the limitations of service under the Constitution

III. Member organizations shall be advised of the criteria for the election of IFSW positions.

IV. No less than 50 days before the date set for counting the ballot, nominations shall be submitted to the IFSW Elections Committee on the association's letterhead, signed by two executive members, the President (unless she/he is the nominee) and one other member of the association's executive (unless she/he is a nominee).

V. Proof of a motion carried by the Executive meeting of the association supporting the nomination is required. The nomination shall include a Profile of Nominee form completed by the nominee, and a written consent signed by the nominee.

VI. Nominations shall be received by fax, regular mail or special delivery.

VII. The Elections Officer shall confirm receipt of nominations via letter to the nominating member organization and submit the nominations to the IFSW Secretary General no less than 40 days before the date set for counting the ballot.

VIII. The Elections Officer, in consultation with the IFSW Secretary General, vets all nominations to establish that they are valid and meet constitutional requirements.

IX. The Elections Officer shall draw up and disseminate the list of nominees and attached nominee profiles to all members, no later than 30 days before the date set for counting the ballot.

X. The Elections Committee conducts all the elections, for such ballots as may be necessary, and for the declaration of ballots and election results.

XI. Each member in good standing shall have one vote, which may be exercised in person, or by proxy, or by post, or by fax.

XII. Votes shall be a simple majority; in the event of a tied vote, a second election shall take place between the two tied candidates. In the event of a second tied vote a further vote will be taken until the matter is resolved.

XIII. The Elections Committee shall prepare reports on committee activities for the IFSW Executive and General Meeting.

XIV. The Elections Committee will communicate and work with the IFSW President and the Secretary General on regular basis.

XV. The Elections Committee shall formally present the results of the election to the General Assembly.

c) The Elections Officer shall initiate the following procedures for the Positions of Regional Vice Presidents and Members at Large

I. No less than 120 days before the date set for the General Meeting, the Elections Officer shall invite member organizations to nominate candidates from among their own members, for the offices of regional Vice President and regional Member at Large.

II. The Elections Committee shall determine eligibility for re-election and shall advise those holding elected office, as executive Committee Members or as members of the Executive Committee, of the limitations of service under the Constitution

III. Member organizations shall be advised of the criteria for the election of IFSW positions.

IV. No less than 50 days before the date set for counting the ballot, nominations shall be submitted to the IFSW Elections Committee on the association's letterhead, signed by two executive members, the President (unless she/he is the nominee) and one other member of the association's executive (unless she/he is a nominee).

V. Proof of a motion carried by the Executive meeting of the association supporting the nomination is required. The nomination shall include a Profile of Nominee form to be completed by the nominee, and a written consent signed by the nominee.

VI. Nominations shall be received by fax, regular mail or special delivery.

VII. The Elections Officer shall confirm receipt of nominations via letter to the nominating member organization and submit the nominations to the IFSW Secretary General no less than 40 days before the date set for counting the ballot.

VIII. The Elections Officer, in consultation with the IFSW Secretary General, vets all nominations to establish that they are valid and meet constitutional requirements.

IX. The Elections Officer shall draw up and disseminate the list of nominees and attached nominee profiles to all members of the region, no later than 30 days before the date set for counting the ballot.

X. The Elections Officer will seek the nomination of two representatives from each region, who with a member of the Elections Committee will constitute a Regional Elections Committee. Together they shall conduct all the elections, for such ballots as may be necessary, and for the declaration of ballots and election results.

XI. Each member of the region in good standing shall have one vote, which may be exercised in person, or by proxy, or by post, or by fax.

XII. Votes shall be a simple majority; in the event of a tied vote, a second election shall take place between the two tied candidates. In the event of a second tied vote a further vote will be taken until the matter is resolved.

XIII. The Regional Elections Committee shall prepare reports on committee activities for the General Meeting.

XIV. The regional Elections Committee will communicate and work with the IFSW Elections Committee and the Secretary General on regular basis.

XV. The Regional Elections Committee shall formally present the results of the regional election to the IFSW Elections Committee.

XVI. The Elections Officer shall formally present the results of the regional elections to the General Assembly.

d) The Elections Committee shall determine eligibility for re-election and shall advise those holding elected office, as Executive Committee Officers or as additional Member nominated by each Region, of the limitations of service under the Constitution.

e) Nominations from organisations, only of their own members, shall be sent to the Elections Committee, accompanied by the written consent of the nominees and their curricula vitae in a form to be determined by the Elections Committee, not less than 50 days before the date set for counting the ballot.

In the case of Co-ordinating Bodies only one nominee for the organisation can be put forward. In the event of disagreement the matter is to be resolved by the Co-ordinating body.

f) The Elections Committee shall prepare the necessary ballots for the elections, and the curricula vitae of those whose names are in the ballots. These shall be presented in a standard form as determined by the Elections Committee. Where necessary because of multiple nominations, or at the discretion of the Elections Officer, the Elections Committee shall prepare separate ballots with the object of ensuring that Officer and subsequently Executive Committee posts are filled.

g) The Elections Officer shall submit the nominations and the curricula vitae to the Secretary General not less than 40 days before the date set for counting the ballot. She or he shall also indicate where any nominations have been received late, and where by virtue of only one valid nomination being received that person may be elected unopposed to a particular office.

h) The Secretary General shall send the list of nominations and curricula vitae to Members and to Members of the Executive Committee, not less than 30 days before the date set for counting the ballot.

i) Nominations received by the Elections Officer less than 50 days before the date set for counting the ballot shall be accepted only upon a proposal to the General Meeting by the Elections Officer which is supported by a three quarters majority of those organisations represented at the meeting.

j) Exceptions from this g) are elections following an unscheduled change of office, where an executive position becomes vacant less than 120 days before the date set for the General Meeting, eventually during the General Meeting. In this case The Elections Committee announces a shorter timeframe (subject to b), d), f) and g)) for any such unscheduled election, eventually within the General Meeting.

k) The elections shall be divided into three sections: the elections of the President, the Treasurer, and the elections of the elections committee.

l) The result of the elections, save the number of votes cast on each candidate shall be announced by the Elections Officer after each section of the Elections.

m) The ballots and the results of all the elections shall be recorded and kept by the Elections Committee until the subsequent General Meeting.

By Law 12 PROCEDURE IN GENERAL MEETINGS (Article 14)

a) At the beginning of a meeting, the President shall indicate guidance as to the mode of procedure. The President shall direct the discussion, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote, and announce decisions. The President shall rule on points of order, and shall have the power to propose adjournment or closure of the debate, or adjournment or suspension of the meeting. The President will be assisted in this role by the appointed Parliamentarian.

b) Resolutions shall be moved and seconded, and debate allowed to the question under consideration. The President may call to order a speaker whose remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion and may call for the withdrawal of such remarks.

c) Any person may at any time during the discussion raise a point of order which shall be decided immediately by the President. Any dissent from the ruling of the President shall be expressed in the form of a motion. A motion of dissent shall be put to the vote immediately, and the ruling of the President shall stand unless a three quarters majority of those organisations represented in person at the meeting and eligible to vote support the motion of dissent.

d) A motion for closure of any debate, proposed and seconded, shall be put to the vote without further debate.

e) The time allowed to each speaker on any proposal shall be limited to five minutes unless an extension is permitted by the meeting. When a speaker has spoken for the allotted time, the President shall call her/him to order without delay. The proposer of a motion shall nevertheless be entitled to exercise a right of reply to the debate. This time shall not exceed five minutes. The President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the meeting, declare the list closed.

f) Voting on proposals, seconded and discussed, and on procedural motions, shall be by a show of hands and counting of those for the proposal, those against the proposal, and those abstaining. Secret voting shall be carried out for elections, and for such other issues as the General Meeting may decide by majority vote of those organisations represented in person. Proxy votes may be exercised with the exception of procedural motions.

g) When a Member wishes to vote by post at a General Meeting on matters already circulated, the postal vote, facsimile vote or electronic vote shall be conveyed to be received by the Secretary General not less than ten days before the date set for the commencement of the General Meeting. The vote (for/against or abstention) shall not be announced until the vote of those present shall have been taken.

By Law 13 POSTAL BALLOTS (Article 16)

a) Where a decision is to be made by the General Meeting by post, completed postal ballot forms shall be accepted by the Secretary General from Members not later than 30 days from the date on which they were posted from the Secretariat.

b) Postal ballot is taken to include transmission by post, fax and email.

By Law 14 CALCULATION OF ANNUAL DUES (Article 17)

In making its recommendations to the General Meeting, the Executive Committee shall consider the advice of the Secretary General, the Treasurer and any committee formed to assist it. It shall also take into account:

I) the proposed budget;

II) the minimum subscription set;

III) the ability of some Members to pay the minimum dues;

IV) previous relevant resolutions of the General Meeting.

By Law 15 DURATION OF TERMS OF OFFICE (Article 11)

a) Executive Committee Members shall take office at the end of the biennial General

Meeting at which they are elected. They cease to hold office at the end of the General Meeting correlating with their term in office, a period normally of four years. Where Executive Committee Members are elected not at a General Meeting, they shall take office immediately: and they cease to hold office at the end of the subsequent General Meeting.

b) Executive Committee Members whose whereabouts have not been made known to the Secretary General, or who have not communicated to the Secretary General over a period of not less than 120 days shall be considered to have resigned the position to which they were elected. Executive Committee Members shall make arrangements to maintain communications with the Secretary General for periods of absence of less than this duration.

By Law 16 DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES (Article 17)

a) The President, Treasurer, Vice Presidents and members at Large shall fulfil their duties in accordance with the position description as determined by the Executive Committee from time to time.

b) All Main Representatives shall fulfil their duties in accordance with the position description as determined by the Executive Committee from time to time.

By Law 17 DUTIES OF VICE-PRESIDENT (Article 11)

a) The Vice-President of a Region shall maintain close contact with, and co-operation with all Members of the Region. The Vice-President shall encourage their participation in Federation matters and in assisting each other. The Vice-President shall offer support and advice as requested by Members.

b) With the agreement of Members, Vice-Presidents may communicate directly with individuals or groups in countries within the Region.

By Law 18 TRANSFER BETWEEN REGIONS (Article 22)

a) Members wishing to transfer from their assigned Region to an alternative Region shall submit their request for transfer to the Vice-President of the Region to which they belong and to the Vice-President of the Region to which they wish to be transferred. Copies of the request shall be sent to the President and the Secretary General.

b) Within 30 days of the receipt of the request, the Vice-Presidents of both Regions concerned shall seek the views in writing of the organisations in their Region. Members shall be allowed a maximum of 90 days to make their views known to the Vice- Presidents.

c) The Vice-Presidents' own views, together with copies of responses to the Vice-Presidents made by members, shall be sent to the Secretary General, and made available at the Executive Committee meeting which considers the transfer request.

d) The transfer request shall be agreed by the Executive Committee if it is approved by a three quarters majority of the Executive Committee. If a transfer request fails to gain the support of such a majority, the Executive Committee shall submit the request to the next General Meeting for discussion and voting.

By Law 19 SECRETARY GENERAL AND OTHER STAFF (Article 12)

The Secretary General is the Chief Executive Officer of the Federation and is

responsible for day to day management of the Federation's affairs. Other staff, if appointed, shall operate subject to the advice and supervision of the Secretary General. The Secretary General shall co-operate with the performance appraisal process conducted by the Personnel Committee as outlined in Article 17 of the Constitution. Staff are appointed by the Secretary General, with the prior approval of the Personnel Committee. The Secretary General may consult the Vice-Presidents regarding appointments or other staff matters, including the appointment of Regional Assistant Secretaries General.

By Law 20 OPERATION OF THE SECRETARIAT: GENERAL (Article 12)

a) The Secretariat shall provide regular information on its activities to Members and to Members of the Executive Committee. It is responsible for distributing the minutes of Executive Committee meetings and General Meetings within 90 days of the end of such meetings. It is responsible for the issue of invitations for participation at meetings, seminars, and other gatherings organised by the Federation, unless this is undertaken by other bodies, or individuals. It is responsible for the preparation of agendas for such meetings, unless this is undertaken by other bodies or individuals, subject to the approval of the President in the case of General Meetings and Executive Committee meetings.

b) The Secretariat shall provide consultative help and support when requested by Members, as well as co-operating on subjects of international interest involving one or more Members or other organisations, and shall report on such help, support and co-operation to the President, or, where the subject is confined to one Region, the relevant Vice-President.

c) The Secretariat may develop printed communications to Members in the form of circulars, newsletters, bulletins, and magazines, or any other means as may be determined by the Executive Committee or the General Meeting, subject to expenditure being within the budget.

By Law 21 METHOD OF PAYMENT OF DUES (Article 26)

a) Any Members unable to pay its subscription by 31 March in any year shall be required to make a request, with adequate documentary support, to the Secretary General for consideration and approval by the Executive Committee. It may request:

- I) time to pay;
- II) a waiver of the full amount;
- III) a reduction of the full amount.

b) Any Members whose past dues are unpaid, and whose dues for the current year are unpaid at the time of the opening of the General Meeting, shall forfeit the right to vote at that General Meeting, unless any request under a) above is under consideration.

c) Failure to pay full dues for two consecutive calendar years entails transfer to provisional membership for Members. The only exception may be if the Secretary General has by 31 December in the second year received notification of temporary and exceptional local circumstances which make it impossible for an organisations to pay in full, supported by a statement by the Vice-President for the relevant Region.

d) The Secretary-General shall in conjunction with the Treasurer, be responsible for the accounts for annual dues being sent to Members for the ensuing year.

By Law 22 AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS (Article 27)

The Secretary General as delegated by the Treasurer shall be responsible for the preparation of all financial documents necessary for the audit. The audit shall be completed in time for the circulation of the balance sheet, certified by the Auditor, to Members, and the Executive Committee. This shall be done not less than 40 days before the General Meeting, and not less than 30 days before the Executive Committee meeting.

By Law 23 INTERPRETATION

a) These By Laws are to be read and implemented in conjunction with the Articles of the International Federation of Social workers.

b) These By Laws may be amended, altered or added to by a three quarter majority at the Executive Committee or by decision of the General Meeting, following consideration of proposals submitted by the Executive Committee.

These By Laws are adopted to take effect from 29 July 2006.