

Charter of A-WEB*

PREAMBLE

We, as the Election Management Bodies, regional election associations and international election organizations around the world,

1. Without derogating from the independence of each Management Body;
2. Realizing the need to strengthen co-operation between and among Management Bodies for the purpose of ensuring a credible electoral process in the world;
3. Committed to promoting conditions conducive to free, fair, transparent and participative elections and to the development of a democratic culture in the world;
4. Upholding human rights and committing the Association to the promotion of gender equity, the inclusion of people with disabilities and other marginalized communities, at all levels of the Association;
5. Recognizing that elections play an important part in the democratic process, resolves to establish a body to be known as the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB).

CHAPTER 1 NAME, VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Article 1 NAME

The organization shall be known as the Association of World Election Bodies, hereinafter referred to as A-WEB or the Association.

Article 2 VISION AND MISSION

The Association shall be guided by the following Vision and Mission:

Vision: To foster efficiency and effectiveness in conducting free, fair, transparent and participative elections worldwide.

Mission: To identify latest trends, challenges and developments in democratic electoral management and electoral processes and to facilitate appropriate exchange of experience and expertise among members with the objective of strengthening electoral democracy worldwide.

* The present text incorporates in the Charter, signed October 14th 2013, the revisions adopted at the 2nd General Assembly of A-WEB on August 19th 2015.

Article 3 TYPE OF ENTITY

3.1 The Association shall be a non-political, autonomous and independent association comprising election bodies around the world, which does not have the intent to interfere with the sovereignty of any country.

3.2 The official working language of the Association will be English.

Article 4 OBJECTIVES

In the fulfillment of its mission, the objectives of the Association are to:

4.1 encourage the development and promotion of a democratic culture and an environment conducive to the holding of free, fair, transparent and participative elections;

4.2 encourage the development of electoral laws that adhere to internationally accepted principles of election management;

4.3 promote supportive relationships between election management bodies and election stakeholders through open and transparent electoral practices;

4.4 facilitate access to and sharing of experiences, research, technology and technological information between and among election management bodies and election stakeholders;

4.5 support and encourage capacity building programmes of management bodies to ensure the effective discharge of their mandate;

4.6 establish relations with other organizations with similar objectives;

4.7 support and facilitate election observation programmes on the request of members; and

4.8 perform other functions that are conducive to, supportive of and in furtherance of the abovementioned objectives.

CHAPTER 2 MEMBERSHIP

Article 5 COMPOSITION

The membership of A-WEB shall consist of the national election management bodies of all countries.

Article 6 REQUESTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

6.1 National election management bodies shall submit a request for membership to the Executive Board, care of the Secretary General in writing. They shall follow the required procedures enabling them to join the Association and must agree to subscribe to its Charter.

6.2 The Secretariat shall immediately table the request for consideration at the next General Assembly, where a decision on whether to accept or reject the request will be taken.

6.3 Prior to the approval of membership requests at the General Assembly, the Executive Board may assign temporary membership to candidate organizations, and temporary members shall have identical rights and responsibilities to full members, unless otherwise decided by the Executive Board.

Article 7 RIGHTS

Members shall have the following rights:

7.1 To participate in all the activities of the Association and to take part in making decisions of the Association.

7.2 To receive services and benefits provided by the Association;

7.3 To participate in the process of electing the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, and the Executive Board members;

7.4 To approve the appointment of the Secretary General; and

7.5 To vote in the decision making processes of the General Assembly.

Article 8 RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

Members shall have the following responsibilities and functions:

8.1 To follow all decisions made in the General Assembly;

8.2 To participate in the General Assembly and exercise their vote when required to do so; and,

8.3 To pay an annual membership fee.

Article 9 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

9.1 A member will cease to be a member of the Association by resigning from it.

9.1.1 A member may resign from the Association at any time, by submitting a letter of resignation in writing to the Executive Board care of the Secretary General.

9.1.2 The Executive Board shall present the abovementioned letter of resignation to the first General Assembly to be held after its receipt for consideration by the General Assembly.

9.1.3 The resignation will come into operation upon its acceptance by the General Assembly.

9.1.4 The annual membership fees paid by the member concerned shall not be refunded.

9.1.5 Should the member seek to rejoin the Association, it shall be required to submit a fresh request for membership in accordance with the prescribed procedures.

9.2 Suspension from the Association

A member may be suspended from the Association pursuant to decisions by the General Assembly on the following grounds:

9.2.1 Failure to pay annual membership fees for a period of 3 consecutive years; or

9.2.2 Violation of the spirit in which A-WEB was established.

9.2.3 Any other conditions determined by the General Assembly.

9.2.4 Upon such suspension, any fees already paid by the member shall be forfeited to the Association.

9.3 Revocation of suspension

9.3.1 A member suspended from the Association, may on written application, have the suspension set aside by the General Assembly.

9.3.2 The application shall be made to the Executive Board which shall make recommendations to the General Assembly on the setting aside or otherwise of the suspension.

9.3.3 Two thirds of the members present and voting at the General Assembly will decide both on the suspension of a member and the setting aside or otherwise of the suspension.

9.3.4 Until the time that any setting aside of the suspension takes place the member will be deemed to be disqualified from membership of the Association.

Article 10 ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

10.1 Regional election associations shall be eligible for associate membership of the Association. They must agree to subscribe to the A-WEB Charter.

10.2 Associate members shall have the right to speak in the General Assembly, but will not have the right to vote.

10.3 Associate members may fully participate in the A-WEB programmes.

10.4 Associate members may receive financial support and other assistance in accordance with criteria to be determined by the Executive Board and approved by the General Assembly.

10.5 Requests for and approval of Associate Membership will be subject to the same process stipulated in Article 6, Requests for Membership.

Article 11 PARTNERS

11.1 A-WEB shall have as partners international election-related organizations who agree to subscribe to the A-WEB Charter.

11.2 Partners shall have the right to speak in the General Assembly, but will not have the right to vote.

11.3 Requests for and approval of Partner status will be subject to the same process as stipulated in Article 6, Request for Membership.

ARTICLE 12 OBSERVERS

Election stakeholders who have an interest in the vision, mission and objectives of A-WEB and who are approved by the Executive Board may attend the General Assembly as observers.

CHAPTER 3 ORGANS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

ARTICLE 13 ORGANS

A-WEB shall have the following organs:

- 1) The General Assembly;
- 2) The Executive Board; and
- 3) The Secretariat

ARTICLE 14 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 14.1 Composition and Functions

The General Assembly shall be the supreme decision-making body of A-WEB. It shall comprise all its members and its functions are to:

- 14.1.1 agree on the Charter and to consider and adopt amendments to the Charter;
- 14.1.2 provide final approval of policies and project plans;
- 14.1.3 consider and approve recommendations from the Executive Board;
- 14.1.4 approve membership requests;
- 14.1.5 agree on the agenda proposed by the Executive Board;
- 14.1.6 provide final approval of the budget;
- 14.1.7 approve the appointment of a registered auditing company;
- 14.1.8 provide final approval of the audited and financial report;
- 14.1.9 elect a host election management body for the General Assembly;

- 14.1.10 approve the appointment of the Secretary General;
- 14.1.11 approve the appointment of an internal Oversight and Audit Committee; and
- 14.1.12 take such action as may be considered necessary to realize the objectives of the Association.

Article 14.2 Decision-Making

- 14.2.1 A quorum shall be a majority of the members of the Association.
- 14.2.2 Decisions shall be made by consensus. Where consensus is not reached, decisions shall be made by a simple majority of the members present and voting by secret ballot.

Article 14.3 Holding the General Assembly

The General Assembly will be held once every two years.

Article 15 THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Article 15.1 Composition

The Executive Board shall consist of:

- 15.1.1 the heads, or the duly designated representatives, of not more than 10 election management bodies elected at the General Assembly, guaranteeing a well-balanced representation;
- 15.1.2 the Chairperson;
- 15.1.3 the Vice-Chairperson; and
- 15.1.4 the Secretary General

Article 15.2 Term of office

Except for the Secretary General, the Executive Board members shall serve a two-year term of office and shall serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. However, provided that a member of the Executive Board takes over the position of Chairperson or Vice Chairperson, he/she shall maintain his/her membership on the Executive Board until his/her term of offices as Chairperson or Vice Chairperson expires. Five members out of the total number of members of the Executive Board, as determined by the General Assembly, may retire after one term. Thereafter the retirement of the next group of Executive Board members will be duly staggered.

Article 15.3 Functions

The Functions of the Executive Board shall be to:

- 15.3.1 oversee the implementation of policy decisions made by the General Assembly;
- 15.3.2 consider and make recommendations to the General Assembly on any matter that will facilitate the more effective and efficient functioning of the Assembly;
- 15.3.3 ensure the proper accounting and control of the funds of the Association;
- 15.3.4 approve rules and regulations of the Secretariat;
- 15.3.5 establish an Oversight and Audit Committee;
- 15.3.6 establish any other Sub Committees as it deems fit; and
- 15.3.7 receive, consider and provide preliminary approval of the project plan prior to the approval by the General Assembly;
- 15.3.8 receive, consider and provide preliminary approval of the budget proposal prior to the approval by the General Assembly;
- 15.3.9 receive, consider and provide preliminary approval of the audit and financial report prior to the approval by the Generally Assembly; and
- 15.3.10 take any action as may be considered necessary to realize the objectives of the Association.

Article 15.4 Decision-Making

15.4.1 A quorum shall be comprised of a majority of the members of the Executive Board.

15.4.2 Decisions shall be adopted by consensus. Where consensus is not reached, a decision will be adopted by a simple majority of the members present and voting by secret ballot.

Article 15.5 The Executive Board Meeting

15.5.1 The Executive Board shall meet once a year and may hold extraordinary meetings on request by at least one third of the Executive Board members.

15.5.2 The Secretary General after consultation and with the agreement of at least one third of the Executive Board members, may also call an extraordinary meeting.

15.5.3 The Executive Board shall decide on the election management body to host the Executive Board meeting. The meeting will be held by mutual agreement between the Executive Board and the election management body concerned.

CHAPTER 4 OFFICE BEARERS

Article 16 THE CHAIRPERSON

16.1 The Chairperson shall be the head of the Association and shall hold office for a period of two years.

16.2 The Chairperson will be the head of the election management body that hosts the General Assembly.

16.3 The Chairperson at the time shall preside over the General Assembly and the Executive Board.

16.4 The Chairperson shall promote the unity and objectives of the Association.

Article 17 THE VICE CHAIRPERSON

17.1 The head of the election management body to host the next General Assembly shall serve as the Vice-Chairperson of A-WEB.

17.2 In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall act as Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson in the work of the Executive Board and General Assembly.

Article 18 THE SECRETARY GENERAL

18.1 Candidates for the next Secretary General will submit their application to the Secretariat with the recommendation of at least two members of the Executive Board twelve (12) months before the end date of the term of the Secretary General. The Secretariat will then select two of the candidates and recommend the candidates at the next Executive Board meeting. However, provided that there is a single candidate for the next Secretary General, the Secretariat may recommend the candidate to the Executive Board at their next meeting.

18.2 The Executive Board shall recommend the final nominee among candidates submitted pursuant to Article 18.1 to the General Assembly. The General Assembly then shall approve the appointment of the Secretary General.

18.3 The Executive Board may reject the recommendation of a candidate nominated by the Secretariat only once and may request the Secretariat to nominate another candidate.

18.4 The Secretary General shall be appointed to a term of office of four years and may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. The Executive Board shall make a decision on the reappointment of the Secretary General in office before the end of the term and place it on the agenda of the General Assembly for approval of their recommendation.

18.5 Roles of the Secretary General are:

18.5.1 to decide on matters assigned to him/her by either the General Assembly or the Executive Board;

18.5.2 to implement policy decisions made by the General Assembly and decisions made by the Executive Board;

18.5.3 to report on project outcomes and present them to the General Assembly after their approval by the Executive Board;

18.5.4 to oversee the entire functioning of the Secretariat;

18.5.5 to raise funds and supervise the finances of the Association; and

18.5.6 to represent A-WEB in international forums and events.

CHAPTER 5 THE SECRETARIAT

Article 19 LOCATION

19.1 The seat of the Secretariat shall be situated in the Republic of Korea.

19.2 The Secretariat shall be a permanent structure.

19.3 Regional offices may be established where necessary.

Article 20 COMPOSITION

The Secretariat's staff shall be multinational and consist of appropriately qualified individuals and shall represent a balance of nationalities, gender and people with disability.

Article 21 FUNCTIONS

The functions of the Secretariat are:

21.1 to provide the requisite support for meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board in accordance with the Charter; and

21.2 to prepare and implement project plans and budgets as directed by the Secretary General.

Article 22 INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Secretary General and staff of the Secretariat shall not be subject to any external direction or control of any person or authority other than that of A-WEB.

CHAPTER 6 FINANCE

Article 23 SOURCE OF FINANCE

23.1 Annual membership fees shall be determined by the Executive Board and approved by the General Assembly.

23.2 Contributions can be made in the form of financial and/or staff support to the A-WEB Secretariat from election management bodies, regional associations or international organizations.

23.3 Donations

23.3.1 Donations from individuals, organizations, groups or companies as approved by the Executive Board

23.3.2 Subsidies from international foundations or organizations related to democracy and elections

Article 24 OPERATION COSTS OF THE SECRETARIAT

The election management body in the country where the Secretariat is located will bear the costs for leasing and maintaining the office building and for facilitating the operation of the Secretariat.

Article 25 COSTS OF HOSTING A MEETING

The costs of holding either the General Assembly or the Executive Board meeting, shall be borne by the host election management body. A-WEB shall consider providing financial assistance upon written request.

CHAPTER 7 OVERSIGHT AND AUDIT

Article 26 OVERSIGHT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

26.1 An Oversight and Audit Committee shall be elected by the General Assembly in accordance with a proposal by the Executive Board.

26.2 The Oversight and Audit Committee shall consist of three members drawn from the A-WEB membership outside of the Executive Board. The members of the committee shall serve for a single term of three years.

Article 27 FUNCTIONS

27.1 The members of the Oversight and Audit Committee shall conduct an annual evaluation of the management of the Secretariat, the execution of programmes and the supervision of finances.

27.2 The Oversight and Audit Committee shall submit an annual report to the Executive Board and present it to the General Assembly.

27.3 The Secretariat shall provide all relevant information required by the Committee to enable it to carry out its duties.

27.4 The Secretariat may subsidize expenses incurred from the audit.

CHAPTER 8 REVISIONS

Article 28 REVISIONS

Revisions to the Charter shall be adopted by at least two thirds of the members present at the General Assembly.

Article 29 PROCEDURES

29.1 A revision to the Charter must be proposed by the Secretary General or at least 10 Executive Board members, and endorsed by the Executive Board.

29.2 The proposed amendment shall be submitted to the Secretary General at least 45 days prior to the General Assembly. The Secretary General shall circulate it to members of the General Assembly at least 30 days prior to the General Assembly.

CHAPTER 9 DISSOLUTION

Article 30 RESOLUTION FOR DISSOLUTION OF A-WEB

A resolution for dissolution of the Association shall be adopted by at least two thirds of the members of the Association voting in person at the General Assembly by secret ballot.

Article 31 THE DISPOSAL OF ASSETS

31.1 Upon the dissolution of the Association, the General Assembly shall further decide on the disposal of assets and on the payment of the liabilities of the Association.

31.2 The office building and premises of the Secretariat shall be transferred to the election management body which has the original right to claim possession.

CHAPTER 10 TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Article 32 EFFECTIVENESS AND TRANSITION

32.1 The present Charter shall come into force immediately after its adoption at the Inaugural Assembly.

32.2 The first Chairperson shall be elected at the Inaugural Assembly.

32.3 All election management bodies present at the Inaugural Assembly shall be founder members unless they expressly state otherwise.