

The Constitution of OSSREA

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Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)

THE CONSTITUTION

OF THE ORGANISATION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

We, *Social Science Researchers from Eastern and Southern Africa*, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this thirtieth day of March 2008;

Convinced of the need to strengthen our Organisation, which we established of our free will in April 1980;

Cognisant of our professional, social and moral responsibilities to contribute towards the causes of unity, justice, social progress and economic development for our peoples;

Understanding the need to revise our Constitution in order to make it more compatible with the changing needs of our region and the level of development which our Organisation has currently attained;

Do hereby agree on this *revised Constitution of the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa* (OSSREA) which shall repeal the provisions of the April 1980 Constitution as amended in June 1983, in May 1990, August 1993 and December 2002.

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Article I

Nomenclature

The name of the Organisation shall be the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), hereinafter referred to as the Organisation.

Article II

Language

The official language of the Organisation shall be English HOWEVER the Congress (hereinafter provided for) may approve the use of any other additional official languages as and when the need arises.

Article III

Headquarters

The Headquarters of the Organisation shall be at Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. However, the Congress may, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and for justifiable reasons, decide to transfer the Headquarters to any other city in Eastern and Southern Africa.

Article IV

Objectives

The Organisation shall have the following objectives:

1. To encourage and promote interest in the study of and research in the social sciences in Eastern and Southern Africa;
2. To promote collaborative research and facilitate the exchange of ideas and scholarly publications between individuals as well as institutions engaged in the study of and research in the social sciences;
3. To promote transdisciplinary collaborative research involving social scientists and professionals from other disciplines.
4. To promote the training of Africans in the social sciences and to encourage the establishment of institutions dedicated to this goal;
5. To work in close co-operation with other individuals and institutions in Africa and elsewhere that are engaged in the study of and research in the social sciences;
6. To solicit funds necessary for the running of the activities of the Organisation and for the attainment of its objectives in such a manner and upon such conditions as the Executive Committee may from time to time determine;
7. To establish a Special Fund ('the Fund') to be utilised for purposes of providing research grants and training fellowships that are consistent with the objectives of the Organisation set forth in this Article;

8. To promote dialogue and interaction between social science researchers and policy makers in Eastern and Southern Africa with a view to enhancing the impact of social science research on policy-making and development planning;
9. To promote relations and co-operation between social science researchers in Eastern and Southern Africa and African development institutions; and
10. To facilitate the incorporation of the findings of social science research into the policy-making processes in Eastern and Southern African countries.

Article V

Membership

1. Membership of the Organisation shall be of three categories:

- a) **Full membership**

Full membership of the Organisation shall be open to any scholar or institution, with or without affiliation to a University or any other higher learning establishment in Eastern and Southern Africa, engaged in the study of or research in the social sciences and related fields upon payment of membership fees and yearly subscription charges.

- b) **Associate Membership**

Associate membership of the Organisation shall be open to any other person or institution engaged or interested in the study of the social sciences and related subjects anywhere in Africa or elsewhere upon payment of membership fees and yearly subscription charges.

- c) **Honorary Membership**

Honorary membership may be conferred upon any person who, in the opinion of the Congress, has made outstanding contributions towards the realisation of the objectives of the Organisation. An honorary member may not be required to pay membership fees.

2. A full member shall have all the rights and privileges inherent in the Organisation including, but not limited to, the right to vote in the meetings of the Congress and the right to offer himself or herself for election to any of the organs of the Organisation. Institutions admitted to full membership shall only have one vote and shall not offer themselves for election.
3. A full member shall be preferred to any other equally qualified candidate (s) in matters concerning the appointment to fill any vacant office post within OSSREA.
4. A full member shall be preferred to any other equally qualified candidate (s) in matters related to being selected as a beneficiary of any OSSREA research grants and training programmes.
5. An associate or an honorary member may attend and participate in any meeting of the Congress but shall not have the right to vote or the right to offer himself or herself for election to any of the organs of the Organisation nor shall his or her presence be taken into account in determining a quorum.
6. A member, whether full, associate or honorary, shall be bound by the provisions of this Constitution and by the resolutions of the Congress, the Executive Committee and/or such other Committees and Commissions as the Congress may from time to time establish.
7. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, membership fees and annual subscription charges, as well as variations and reviews thereof, shall be determined by the Business Meeting of the Congress.

Article VI

Organisational Structure

The Organisation shall have the following organs:

- a) A Congress;
- b) An Executive Committee;
- c) A Secretariat
- d) Such other Committees and/or Commissions as the Congress may establish from time to time upon such terms and on such conditions as it may deem appropriate; and
- e) Chapters in member states.

Article VII

The Congress

1. The Congress shall be the highest decision making organ in all matters pertaining to the Organisation.
2. The Congress shall meet every three years or at such other shorter intervals as the Executive Committee may determine or as justifiably requested by at least two-thirds of national committees in the member countries.
3. The Congress shall perform its functions through the conduct of two separate proceedings, namely, the Conference and the Business Meeting.
4. The Conference shall be a forum for the exchange of ideas and views on a wide-range of social science issues.

5. All policy decisions of the Organisation shall be made at the Business Meetings of the Congress.
6. The Business Meeting may be attended or observed without invitation by members, staff of OSSREA and other guests invited by the Executive Committee. Such participants or observers shall not possess a voting right.
7. The record-keeping activity of the Congress shall be the responsibility of the Organisation's Executive Director.
8. Each Chapter shall be represented in the Business Meeting by maximum of three (3) members consisting of the Liaison Officer plus two other members endorsed by the National Executive Committee. The quorum of such a Business Meeting shall be two-thirds of the registered and voting Chapter members present.
9. Each Chapter shall have three (3) votes irrespective of the number of the participants representing each Chapter in the Business Meeting of the Congress.
10. If the Liaison officer is unable to attend the Congress he/she shall be represented by another national executive committee member. Information about representation shall be communicated to the Secretariat at least two weeks before the scheduled next meeting of the Congress.
11. All decisions of the Business Meeting shall be passed by a simple majority vote.

Article VIII

The Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the implementation of policies and resolutions adopted by the Congress as well as for overseeing general affairs of the Organisation.
2. The Executive Committee shall be constituted of:
 - a) The President;

- b) Three Vice-Presidents, one of whom shall be a citizen or permanent resident of the country in which the Organisation has its Headquarters (hereinafter 'the Resident Vice-President'). At least one of the Vice-Presidents shall be a woman;
 - c) Three Members at least one of whom shall be a woman; and
 - d) The Executive Director as non-voting member and Secretary of the Executive Committee.
3. With the exception of the Executive Director, members of the Executive Committee shall be nominated from among the full members of the Organisation and elected by the Business Meeting of the Congress for a period of three years and may stand for re-election for one more term only.
 4. It shall be a condition for election to and continuing to serve in the Executive Committee that a person be a citizen of and resident in an Eastern or Southern African Country as defined in Article XV/III (2).
 5. Elections to become a member of the Executive Committee shall be held by secret ballot.
 6. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a year to:
 - a) give effective direction to the Organisation;
 - b) review past performance of the organization from the last Executive Committee meeting to the present meeting;
 - c) adopt progress reports and financial statements;
 - d) consider future plans of action;
 - e) deliberate upon issues that require the attention of the Congress; and
 - f) perform such other functions as the Congress may from time to time confer upon it or which the Executive

- Committee may deem necessary and expedient to carry out for the proper and effective functioning of the Organisation.
7. Decisions of the Executive Committee shall be passed by consensus. If consensus is not attained, simple majority vote shall be sufficient in a two-thirds quorum.
 8. The Executive Committee may, for the necessary and proper functioning of the Organisation, give such general or specific directives to the Executive Director, Liaison Officers, National Chapters and such other organs as may from time to time be established in accordance with this Constitution.
 9. The Executive Committee may establish Commissions and/or Committees to assist in the conduct of the general or specific business purposes of the Organisation.
 10. The Executive Committee may from time to time make such rules and regulations as it deems necessary for the effective and proper functioning of the Organisation.

Article IX

The President and the Vice Presidents

1. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Congress and the Executive Committee with a deliberative and casting vote.
2. Any one of the Vice-Presidents may preside over meetings of the Congress and the Executive Committee in the absence of the President.
3. The President and the Vice-Presidents may perform such other functions as may be assigned to them by the Congress.
4. The duties and responsibilities of the above office bearers shall be carried out in accordance with the rules and

regulations made by the Executive Committee as provided for under Article VIII (9) of this Constitution.

Article X

The Secretariat

1. The Organization shall have a Secretariat headed by the Executive Director consisting of the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, Directors, Coordinators and other technical and administrative support staff deployed as per the Organizational Structure of the Organization.
2. The Secretariat shall have the following duties and functions:
 - a) Assist all OSSREA governance organs in fulfilling their institutional duties and realizing OSSREA's institutional objectives;
 - b) Undertake all administrative, financial, protocol and legal affairs of the Organization under the guidance of the Executive Director;
 - c) Assist in preparation, publishing and dissemination of OSSREA publications;
 - d) Handle and arrange all aspects of preparation and logistics for missions, meetings, conferences, workshops and other events to be organized under the auspices of the Secretariat;
 - e) Assist in development of research and capacity building programmes and compiling of financial and progress reports to donors and partners;

- f) Perform any other related tasks that may be assigned by the Executive Committee from time to time.

Article XI

The Executive Director

1. The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. The appointment shall be for a period of three years and upon such terms and on such conditions as the Executive Committee may from time to time set. The appointment may be renewed for one more term only.
2. As the Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Director shall direct the day-to-day activities of the Organisation and shall represent the Organisation in all its dealings with third parties.
3. Without limitation to the generality of the foregoing sub-Article, the Executive Director shall:
 - a) produce or cause to be produced the newsletter of the Organisation;
 - b) publish or cause to be published the proceedings of the Congress and the bi-annual journal of the Organisation;
 - c) draw up the work programmes of the Organisation for consideration and/or adoption by the Executive Committee and the Business Meeting of the Congress;
 - d) co-ordinate the activities of Commissions and/or committees that may be established in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 (9) of this Constitution;
 - e) act as Treasurer of the Organisation and operate its bank accounts in line with guidelines to be issued by

the Executive Committee PROVIDED that no disbursements other than those necessary for the day-to-day running of the Organisation may be made by him or her prior to obtaining the approval of the President, the Resident Vice-President or the Executive Committee;

- f) without prejudice to applicable laws of the country where the Organisation has its Headquarters and having due regard to the general policies set by the Congress, hire, administer, promote, discipline, suspend or dismiss the employees of the Organisation in strict consultation of the Human Resources manual, PROVIDED that such power shall be exercised subject to the approval of the President acting in consultation with the Resident Vice-President; and
- g) submit the annual activity report and audited financial statements of the Organisation to the Executive Committee, to the Business Meeting of the Congress and Annual Meeting of the Liaison Officers.

Article XII

The Deputy Executive Director

1. The Deputy Executive Director shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. The appointment shall be for a period of three years and upon such terms and on such conditions as the Executive Committee may from time to time set. The appointment may be renewed for one more term only.
2. The Deputy Executive Director is accountable to the Executive Director and has the following duties and functions:

- a) Deputize the Executive Director in his/her absence.
- b) Play a leading role in the development and design of new research programmes;
- c) Be responsible for managing grant awards, training and capacity building projects;
- d) Devise fund-raising strategies and mechanisms taking into account the changing development priorities;
- e) Play a supervisory role in the administration of research, capacity building and consultancy projects;
- f) Support the Executive Director in providing intellectual leadership;
- g) Contribute to the making of OSSREA's strategic initiatives and vision; and
- h) Perform any other related tasks that may be assigned by the Executive Director from time to time.

Article XIII

Chapters of the Organisation

1. There shall be established in each member country of the Organisation a National Chapter, which shall assist the Secretariat of the Organisation in the dissemination of information, the promotion of membership, the conduct of country-specific activities and the collection of membership fees.
2. Each Chapter shall be run by a National Executive Committee of at least three (3) members, one of whom shall be the Liaison Officer.

3. The National Executive Committee shall be elected by the members of the National Chapter.
4. The day-to-day activities of Chapters shall be carried out by the Liaison Officer in close collaboration with the National Executive Committee.
5. The Liaison Officer shall be elected by the members of the National Chapter subject to approval by the Executive Committee.
6. The immediate accountability of liaison officers shall be to the Executive Director of OSSREA.
7. A Liaison Officer shall be a citizen or resident of any member state of the Organisation.
8. The duties and responsibilities of Liaison Officers shall be determined by the rules and regulations laid down by the Organisation's Executive Committee.
9. In a country where there are more than one higher education or research institutions that are members of the Organisation, one contact person may represent each particular institution within that Chapter.

Article XIV

Suspension or Removal from Office

1. Any member of the Executive Committee shall be suspended or removed from office by the Congress or the Executive Committee on any of the following grounds: corruption, dishonesty, incapacity to discharge his or her duties, or any other ground that the Congress may determine to be inconsistent with the objectives of the Organisation or with this Constitution.
2. The Executive Committee can, by a majority vote, suspend or remove the Executive Director and appoint the Deputy Executive Director or another person as Acting Executive Director. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be reported to the next Congress.
3. A Liaison Officer shall be suspended or removed from office by the Executive Committee on any of the following grounds: corruption, dishonesty, incapacity to discharge his or her duties, or any other ground that the National Chapter may determine to be inconsistent with the objectives of the Organisation or with this Constitution.
4. The Executive Committee may from time to time make such rules and regulations as it deems necessary to govern the conduct of the Executive Director, his/her deputy and other OSSREA officials. These rules and regulations shall be communicated to each Chapter.

Article XV

Finance and Audit

1. The financial sources of the Organisation shall consist of fees to be collected from its members, government grants, donations from international organisations, non-governmental organisations and the business community, gratuitous advances and legacies from individuals and such other sources as the Executive Committee may from time to time determine.
2. The property and finances of the Organisation shall be administered and maintained in strict compliance with internationally accepted standards of financial management.
3. The Auditor of the Organisation shall be appointed by the Business Meeting of the Congress upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and shall have unrestricted access to the accounts, books, papers and documents of the Organisation.

Article XVI

Amendments

1. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Business Meeting of the Congress.
2. Any motion to amend this Constitution shall be submitted to the Executive Director at least six months before the date of the next Business Meeting or at such shorter notice as the circumstances may warrant, provided that the proposals for amendments are circulated to all members at least one month before the holding of the Business Meeting.

Article XVII

Dissolution

1. The Organisation may not be dissolved except by a resolution of the Business Meeting of the Congress supported by three-fourths of the National Chapter members who paid up their membership dues.
2. In the event of dissolution, the assets of the Organisation shall be handed over to any non-profit making educational or research institution in Eastern and Southern Africa to be chosen by the Business Meeting.
3. Proposals to dissolve the Organisation shall be submitted to the Executive Director at least six months prior to the convening of the Business Meeting and shall be circulated to all voting members at least one month before the said meeting.

Article XVIII

Interpretation

1. For purposes of matters that may take place within the Organisation, the ultimate power to interpret the Constitution shall be vested in the Business Meeting of the Congress PROVIDED that it may delegate this power to the Executive Committee as it sees fit.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-Article (1) of this Article, the phrase 'Eastern and Southern Africa' shall be interpreted to include the following countries:

Angola
Botswana
Burundi
Comoro Islands
Djibouti
Ethiopia
Eritrea
Kenya
Lesotho
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Rwanda
Seychelles
Somalia
South Africa
Sudan
Swaziland
Tanzania
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

AND any other country, whose membership is accepted by the Congress.

Done in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this Thirtieth day of March in the year Two Thousand and Eight.