

THE CONSTITUTION

OF THE

**AFRICAN WOMEN LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION**

(AWLA)

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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Association of Women Lawyers in Africa

ARTICLE 1
NAME

The Official name of this Association shall in be:

The Africa Women Lawyers Association; and in French, Association de Femme Jurists Un Afrique.

In abbreviated form the Association may be referred to as AWLA.

ARTICLE II
ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS

Section 1. The Association shall have a headquarters housing a Secretariat, and which shall be located in Nairobi, Kenya.

Section 2. Each member country shall have a country representative who shall co-ordinate the activities of AWLA within their respective countries.

ARTICLE III
NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Association, which shall be registered within its host country, will be non-governmental, non-partisan, non-political, non-sectarian and not for profit.

ARTICLE IV
OBJECTS

Section 1. The objects of the Association are to: -

- a) Strengthen networking and between African women Lawyers;
- b) Share information and lobby for gender equality in Africa through legislative reform, public education and advocacy;
- c) Promote the principles and aims of the United Nations, The Organization of African Unity and the Africa Commission on Human and People's Rights;
- d) Enhance the legal status of women in Africa.
- e) To do all such other things as are or may be deemed incidental or conducive to the attainment of any or all of the objects and exercise any or all of the powers of the Association.

Section 2. To realize the objects the following specific activities will be held:

- a) Disseminating of knowledge of the laws affecting women in Africa through information sharing, and organizing meetings for the purposes of sharing such information;
- b) Advancing opportunities for women in the political, civil and educational fields as well as in industry, business and the professions, particularly the legal profession, by lobbying African governments to provide special measures to achieve the same;
- c) Advocating for legislation removing all forms of discrimination against Women in Africa;
- d) Promoting equal rights of women under the laws and for human rights for all in Africa;
- e) Strengthening the institutional capacity of member organizations;
- f) Providing an open forum for discussion of all matters affecting women in Africa;
- g) Raising funds by any lawful means and to apply the same towards the attainment of the objects of the Association;

- h) Providing professional, advisory and consultancy services in legal policy, research, planning and management to any other body or sector that may require such services;
- l) Assisting in the setting up of AWLA focal points in countries where none exist.

ARTICLE V
MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Association shall consist of women's Lawyer Organizations and individual women lawyers in different African countries.

Section 1. Women's Lawyers Organizations shall be Organizations :

- a) Registered under the laws of their respective countries, where applicable;
- b) Having objects that are similar and conducive to those of AWLA;
- c) Providing legal services to women;
- d) Involved in lobbying and advocacy on women's rights issues in their respective countries;
- e) Having a membership composing of individual women lawyers.

Section 2. Individual members shall be women:

- a) Admitted to the practice of law in their respective country; or,
- b) Graduates of law from a recognized University;

Section 3. Voting Rights.

- a) In the case of Elections, or regarding other matters requiring adjudication by vote, each country represented in the membership of the Association shall have two votes, one for organizations and the other for individuals respectively. All countries shall have the right to vote in accordance with this Constitution.
- b) Member countries may vote by proxy and a member may be elected in absentia.

Section 3. Application for membership:

- (a) Each Applicant must apply in writing to The Board.
- (b) Each Applicant shall be proposed and seconded by fully paid up members.
- (c) The information contained in the application shall be presented to all members of Board at its next meeting at which the application will be considered.

ARTICLE VI
ENTRY AND SUBSCRIPTION FEES

Section 1. Entrance Fees:

There shall be an entrance fee for organizational and individual membership of the Association, which fee shall be set by the General Assembly from time to time and which shall be paid before an applicant for membership, is registered as a Member of the Association.

Section 2 Annual Subscriptions:

- a) The annual subscriptions for organizational and individual membership shall be set at the discretion of the Board from time to time, subject to the approval of the General Assembly. Any changes in dues and fees to the membership at the General Assembly of Association.
- b) Any member who fails to pay the annual subscription within a period of 24 months or the General Assembly held within that year, whichever comes first, shall automatically cease to be a member of the Association.

- c) The Board may however at its discretion reinstate such a member upon payment of the full amount in arrears and a reinstatement and late penalty fee.
- d) Any member desiring to resign from the Association shall submit notice of resignation to the Secretary, which said resignation shall take effect from the date of receipt of such notice.

ARTICLE VII
BOARD

Section 1.

- a) For the proper management of the affairs of the Association there shall be an elected Board consisting of nine persons, all of whom shall be members from different countries and with an equal distribution on sub-regional basis.
- b) The Board shall be responsible for making organizational policy and oversee the implementation of the same.

Section 2

- a) All members of the Board shall be elected every two years by members of the Association at the appropriate General Assembly, convened for such purpose.
- b) Where such a General Assembly does not fill in all the vacancies, for any reason, the Board will have the discretion to nominate members to fill the same said positions.
- c) Any member of the Board who misses three consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse, will be removed and replaced.
- d) Any member of the Board may resign at any time upon giving 30 days notice in writing.
- e) The quorum for Board meetings shall be five (5) members present in

person.

- f) The Executive Secretary shall sit on the Board in an *ex officio* position.
- g) The Board of the Association shall consists of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer who shall be the office bearers of the Association and five (5) other members.
- h) All officers of the Board shall hold office from the date of election and shall serve for two years or until their successors shall have been duly elected and shall be eligible for re-election for a subsequent term. Provided that in no case shall any officer serve for more than two consecutive terms.

ARTICLE VIII
DUTIES OF THE OFFICE BEARERS

Section 1

The duties of the Board office bearers shall be such as are implied by their respective titles and as is stated in this Constitution. All officers shall make a permanent record of their work at shall turn it over to their successors at the expiration of their term of office.

Section 2

- a) The Chairperson shall, unless prevented by illness or other sufficient cause, preside over all meetings of the Board and all General Assemblies of the Association and shall submit a report of the activities of the Association to the Annual General Assembly.
- b) The Chairperson shall act as liaison officer between the Association and its affiliates, and head delegations of the Association. She shall perform all other duties as usually pertains to the office of Chairperson.
- c) The Chairperson may from time to time, delegate duties to any member of the Board.

Section 3

The Secretary shall issue notices convening all meetings of the Board and all General Assemblies and other meetings of the organization and shall be responsible for keeping minutes of all such meetings for the preservation of all records of the proceedings of the Association and of the Board.

Section 4.

- a) The Vice Chairperson shall perform any duties of the Chairperson in her absence.
- b) In the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson at any meeting, a member selected by the Board shall take the chair.

Section 5.

- a) The Treasurer shall receive and disburse, under the directions of the Board, and in consultation with the Chairperson, all moneys belonging to the Organization and shall issue receipts for all moneys received by here and preserve vouchers for all moneys paid out by her.
- b) The Treasurer shall submit a narrative report of transactions, audited accounts and bank statements to the General Assembly at each of its ordinary meetings.
- c) There shall be at least two (2) signatories to the Association's Bank accounts of whom one will be the Executive Secretary.

Section 6

Vacancies occurring in any office of the Board shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term, by the country to whom that member belongs. Should an elected officer be incapable of discharging the duties of her office, her country shall designate a replacement for the duration of her incapacity.

Section 7.

The Board will present a written report to the General Assembly to be discussed and approved by the same.

Section 8.

Special Conventions and Seminars may be held at such place and date as may be determined by the Board to discuss a limited programme on specific subjects within the organizations objects.

ARTICLE IX
ELECTIONS

Section 1

- a) All elective positions in Board shall be filled at the appropriate General Assembly which is convened for that purpose;
- b) Such election shall be held every two years or until The Board members successors are elected or appointed.
- c) Elections shall be held by Secret Ballot.

ARTICLE X
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Section 1

- a) The Annual General Assembly shall be held every two (2) years. Notice in writing of such Assembly, accompanied by the agenda for the meeting shall be sent to all members not less that 90 days before the date of the meeting.
- b) The quorum necessary for such General Assembly shall be not less than one half of the member countries duly registered and present at such meeting.
- c) Resolution shall be decided by a simple majority by a show of hands and approved by the General Assembly. In case of equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.

ARTICLE XI
AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- a) Amendments to the Constitution of the Association must be approved by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at a General Assembly of the Association.
- b) Notice of intention to move such an amendment must be given to the Board at least 90 days prior to the date of such meeting.
- c) Copy of such intended amendment shall be circulated to member countries 60 days prior to the date of such meeting

ARTICLE XII
SECRETARIAT

Section 1. For the implementation and running of the Associations objects and programmes there shall be a Secretariat headed by an Executive Secretary.

Section 2. The Executive Secretary shall supervise, under the direction of the Board the implementation and execution of policy of the Association and any other matter as she may be directed to attend to by the Board.

Section 2. The Secretariat shall be based at the Associations Headquarters.

ARTICLE XIII
TRUSTEES

Section 1. All land, buildings and other immovable property and all funds, investments and securities which shall be acquired by the Association shall have vested in the names of not less than three Trustees who shall be appointed from members of the Board.

ARTICLE XIV
FUNDS

Section 1. The Funds of the Organization shall be used for the implementation of the objects of the organization.

Section 2. Funds of the Association shall be:

- a) Dues and subscriptions from members;
- b) Grants, donations, accretions and other forms of acquisitions;
- c) Moneys from devolution and bequests;
- d) Other sources of legitimate funding.

ARTICLE XV
DISSOLUTION

Section 1. The Association shall not be dissolved except by a resolution, passed at a General Assembly of members, of a vote polled by two-thirds members present and voting at the same meeting.

Section 2. When the dissolution of the Association has been approved by the General Assembly, no further action shall be taken by the Board or by any office bearer other than to liquidate the assets of the Association. Subject to the payment of all debts of the Association, the balance thereof shall be distributed in such manner as may be resolved by the Assembly at which the resolution for dissolution is passed.

ARTICLE XVI
INTERPRETATION

In this Constitution, words importing the feminine gender (i.e. she/her), include the masculine and (where necessary) the neuter gender, where applicable.