

# **Charter of the Association of World Election Bodies**

(as amended on August 31, 2017)

## **PREAMBLE**

We, election management bodies, regional election associations, and international election organizations around the world,

1. Without derogating from the independence of each election management body,
2. Realizing the need to strengthen cooperation between and among election 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 to the promotion of gender equality and the inclusion of people with disabilities and other marginalized communities in the electoral process,
5. Recognizing that elections play an important part in the democratic process,

resolve to establish a body to be known as the Association of World Election Bodies.

## **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 the 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

### **Article 3 TYPE OF ENTITY**

3.1 The Association shall be a non-political, autonomous, and independent association comprised of election management bodies around the world and shall not interfere with the sovereignty of any country.

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

### **Article 4 OBJECTIVES**

For the fulfillment of its mission, the Association shall have the objectives 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;
- 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 programs of election management bodies to ensure the effective discharge of their mandates;
- 4.6 establish relations with other organizations with similar objectives;
- 4.7 support and facilitate election observation programs at the request of members;
- 4.8 conduct international cooperation projects to support election management bodies; and,
- 4.9 perform other functions that are conducive to, supportive of, and in furtherance of the abovementioned objectives.

## **CHAPTER 2 MEMBERSHIP**

### **Article 5 COMPOSITION**

Membership shall consist of national election management bodies from around the world. When there is no national election management body, or elections in a country are conducted by multiple national election management bodies, one or more sub-national or national election management bodies of the country may join A-WEB as members. In such cases, members from that country shall have one (1) vote collectively.

### **Article 6 REQUESTS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

- 6.1 National election management bodies shall submit a request for membership in writing to the Executive Board, care of the Secretary General, and shall agree to subscribe to this Charter.
- 6.2 The Secretariat shall table the request for consideration at the next General Assembly, where a decision on whether to accept or reject the request shall be taken.
- 6.3 Prior to the approval of membership by the General Assembly, the Executive Board may assign temporary membership to candidate organizations, and temporary members shall have identical rights and responsibilities to those of full members, unless otherwise decided by the Executive Board.

### **Article 7 RIGHTS**

Members shall have the rights to:

- 7.1 participate in all activities of the Association;
- 7.2 receive services and benefits provided by the Association;
- 7.3 participate in the process of electing the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, and the Executive Board members;
- 7.4 decide on the appointment of the Secretary General; and,
- 7.5 vote in the decision-making processes of the General Assembly.

### **Article 8 RESPONSIBILITIES**

Members shall have the responsibilities to:

8.1 follow all decisions made by the General Assembly;

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

8.3 pay an annual membership fee.

## **Article 9 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

9.1 A member may cease to be a member of the Association by submitting an official letter of resignation to the Executive Board, care of the Secretary General.

9.1.1 The resignation will come into effect upon its receipt by the Executive Board.

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

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

9.1.4 Should the member seek to rejoin the Association, it shall submit a new request for membership in accordance with the prescribed procedures.

### 9.2 Suspension from the Association

A member may be suspended from the Association and shall forfeit all the fees already paid pursuant to decisions by two-thirds of the members present and voting at the General Assembly on the following grounds:

9.2.1 Failure to pay the membership fee for a period of three (3) consecutive years unless an application for exemption from the membership fee requirement is accepted by the Executive Board; or

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

### 9.3 Revocation of Suspension

9.3.1 A member suspended from the Association may submit a request for revocation of the suspension in writing to 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 revocation of the suspension.

9.3.3 Two-thirds of the members present and voting at the General Assembly shall decide on the revocation of suspension of a member.

9.3.4 A suspended member shall not have the right to vote during the period of suspension.

## **Article 10 ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

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

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

10.3 Associate members may fully participate in A-WEB programs.

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

10.5 Requests for and approval of associate membership shall be subject to the same process stipulated in Article 6 Requests for Membership.

## **Article 11 PARTNERS**

11.1 A-WEB may 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 at the General Assembly, but shall not have the right to vote.

11.3 For the purpose of establishing partnership, the Secretariat may sign a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation with international election-related organizations.

11.4. The Secretary General shall report to the General Assembly on the newly established partnership.

## **ARTICLE 12 OBSERVERS**

Election stakeholders who have an interest in the vision, mission, and objectives of A-WEB may attend the General Assembly as observers upon invitation by the Secretariat.

## **CHAPTER 3 ORGANS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS**

### **ARTICLE 13 ORGANS**

A-WEB shall have the following organs:

13.1 The General Assembly;

13.2 The Executive Board; and,

13.3 The Secretariat.

### **ARTICLE 14 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

#### 14.1 Composition and Functions

The General Assembly shall be the supreme decision-making body of A-WEB. It shall be comprised of all 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 consider and approve policies of the Association;

14.1.3 consider and approve recommendations from the Executive Board;

14.1.4 deliberate and decide on membership status;

14.1.5 decide on the agenda proposed by the Executive Board;

14.1.6 elect a host election management body for the General Assembly;

14.1.7 confirm the members of the Executive Board;

14.1.8 approve the appointment of the Secretary General; and,

14.1.9 discuss and make decisions on items deemed necessary to realize the objectives of the Association.

#### 14.2 Decision-Making

14.2.1 A quorum shall be a majority of the members of the Association. Members unable to participate in the General Assembly may delegate their right to vote to one of the participating members or the Secretary General. In this case, the member shall be deemed present at the meeting.

14.2.2 Decisions shall be made by consensus. Where consensus is not reached, decisions shall be made by a majority of the members present.

#### 14.3 Holding the General Assembly

Except for the unavoidable circumstances, the General Assembly shall be held every two (2) years after the month of August.

## **Article 15 THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### 15.1 Composition

15.1.1 The Executive Board shall be comprised of no more than twenty (20) member organizations and the Secretary General. The twenty (20) member organizations shall include the organization of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and the immediate former Chairperson.

15.1.2 Geographical distribution of seats in the Executive Board shall proportionally reflect the number of members from Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania, where at least one (1) seat shall be reserved for each region. In this case, the total number of seats to be proportionally distributed to each region shall not include the seats taken by the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, the immediate former Chairperson, and members appointed pursuant to sub-paragraph 15.2.3.

### 15.2 Appointment and Term of Office

15.2.1 Candidates for membership of the Executive Board representing each region stipulated in sub-paragraph 15.1.2 shall be nominated by a majority of members from each region present at the General Assembly and shall be confirmed as members of the Executive Board by a majority of all members present at the General Assembly.

15.2.2 The Executive Board members' term of office begins upon the appointment by the General Assembly and lasts until the appointment of the next Executive Board by the following General Assembly, with members being able to serve up to two (2) consecutive terms.

15.2.3 After deliberation and approval by the Executive Board members, the Secretary General may recommend to the General Assembly members who have made considerable contributions to the realization of the vision and mission of A-WEB as candidates for membership of the Executive Board. In this case, the provision on term limit stipulated in sub-paragraph 15.2.2 shall not apply to those appointed under this provision.

### 15.3 Functions

The Functions of the Executive Board are 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 endorse amendments to the Charter;

15.3.5 approve rules and regulations of the Secretariat;

15.3.6 appoint members of the Oversight and Audit Committee;

15.3.7 make decisions on the appointment of the Secretary General;

15.3.8 establish any other sub-committees as it deems necessary;

15.3.9 receive, consider, and approve project plans;

15.3.10 receive, consider, and approve budget proposals;

15.3.11 receive, consider, and approve items required to be approved by or reported to the General Assembly as stipulated in the Charter; and,

15.3.12 discuss and make decisions on items deemed necessary to realize the objectives of the Association.

### 15.4 Decision-Making

15.4.1 A quorum shall be comprised of a majority of the members of the Executive Board. If a member is unable to attend a meeting the member may submit, in writing, to the Secretariat its decision on the proposed agenda items or delegate its voting right to another Executive Board member. In this case, the member shall be deemed present at the meeting.

15.4.2 Decisions shall be adopted by consensus. Where consensus is not reached, a decision shall be adopted by a majority of the members present.

#### 15.5 The Executive Board Meeting

15.5.1 Except for unavoidable circumstances, the Executive Board shall meet once a year before the month of April and shall decide the host of the next Executive Board meeting under mutual agreement.

15.5.2 The Secretary General may call an extraordinary meeting with the consent of at least one-third of the Board members or endorsement of the Chairperson.

### **CHAPTER 4 OFFICE BEARERS**

#### **Article 16 THE CHAIRPERSON**

16.1 The head of the election management body that hosts the General Assembly shall be the Chairperson.

16.2 The Chairperson shall be the head of the Association and shall hold the office from the opening ceremony of the General Assembly held in his/her country until the opening ceremony of the next General Assembly.

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

16.4 The Chairperson shall promote the unity 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.

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 When the vacancy of Secretary General occurs or is expected, candidates for the next Secretary General shall submit their application to the Secretariat with the recommendation of at least two (2) members of the Executive Board no later than ninety (90) days prior to the General Assembly. The Secretariat shall then select two (2) candidates based on merit and recommend them to the Executive Board. However, when there is a single candidate for the next Secretary General, the Secretariat may recommend the candidate to the Executive Board.

18.2 The Executive Board shall nominate the final candidate for approval by the General Assembly.

18.3 The Executive Board may reject a candidate recommended by the Secretariat only once and may request the Secretariat to recommend another candidate.

18.4 The Secretary General shall be appointed to a term of office of four (4) years. The Executive Board shall determine the reappointment of the Secretary General in office at the regular Executive Board meeting of the year during which the term of office expires and table it on the agenda for the General Assembly for approval.

18.5 Roles of the Secretary General are to:

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

18.5.2 implement decisions made by the General Assembly or the Executive Board;

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

18.5.4 oversee the entire functioning of the Secretariat;

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

18.5.6 represent A-WEB in international forums and events.

## **CHAPTER 5 THE SECRETARIAT**

### **Article 19 LOCATION**

19.1 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 staff of the Secretariat shall be multinational and consist of appropriately qualified individuals of all genders and include people with disability.

### **Article 21 FUNCTIONS**

The functions of the Secretariat are to:

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

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

### **Article 22 INDEPENDENCE**

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 SOURCES OF FUNDS**

The sources of funds of the Association are:

23.1 The annual membership fee as determined by the Executive Board and approved by the General Assembly;

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

23.3 Donations made by individuals, organizations, groups, companies, international foundations or organizations related to democracy and elections as approved by the Executive Board; and,

23.4 Assistance from Official Development Assistance agencies to fund projects implemented by A-WEB.

## **Article 24 OPERATION COSTS OF THE SECRETARIAT**

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

## **Article 25 COSTS OF HOLDING A MEETING**

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

## **CHAPTER 7 OVERSIGHT AND AUDIT**

### **Article 26 OVERSIGHT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

26.1 Members of the Oversight and Audit Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Board.

26.2 The Oversight and Audit Committee shall consist of three (3) members from the A-WEB membership outside of the Executive Board. The members of the committee shall serve for a single term of three (3) years.

26.3 Any member interested in becoming a member of the Committee shall express their intention in writing to the Executive Board, care of the Secretary General.

### **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 programs, 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 functions.

27.4 The Secretariat may subsidize expenses incurred from the audit.

## **CHAPTER 8 AMENDMENTS**

### **Article 28 AMENDMENTS**

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

### **Article 29 PROCEDURES**

29.1 An amendment to the Charter may be proposed by no less than ten (10) members or the Secretary General, and shall be endorsed by the Executive Board.

29.2 Members proposing the amendment(s) shall submit the proposal to the Secretary General no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the General Assembly.

29.3 The proposal for amendment(s) shall be circulated to all members no later than thirty(30) days prior to the General Assembly.



## **CHAPTER 9 DISSOLUTION**

### **Article 30 RESOLUTION FOR DISSOLUTION**

A resolution for the dissolution of the Association shall be adopted by at least two-thirds of the members present 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 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 founding members unless they expressly state otherwise.

### **ADDENDA [August 19, 2015]**

1. Amendments to this Charter shall come into effect at the moment of their adoption by the General Assembly.

2. Decisions made by the General Assembly or the Executive Board prior to the adoption of these amendments shall be deemed made in accordance with this amended Charter.

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