Commonwealth Nurses Federation

Constitution

As approved at the General Meeting held in Malta 29-30 April 2011

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH NURSES FEDERATION AS APPROVED AT THE GENERAL MEETING HELD IN MALTA 29-30 APRIL 2011

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CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH NURSES FEDERATION AS APPROVED AT THE GENERAL MEETING HELD IN MALTA 29-30 APRIL 2011

ARTICLE 1: NAME

1.1 The Association shall be known as The Commonwealth Nurses Federation (CNF).

1.2 The term 'nurse' as used in the title shall include those persons holding a statutory nursing or midwifery qualification from a Commonwealth country.

ARTICLE 2: DESCRIPTION

2.1 The CNF is a federation of Commonwealth national nursing associations which have been formally admitted into membership and which have objects in accord with those of the CNF.

ARTICLE 3: PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of the CNF is to contribute to the improved health of citizens of the Commonwealth by fostering access to nursing education, influencing health policy, developing nursing networks and strengthening nursing leadership.

ARTICLE 4: OBJECTS

4. The CNF has formal objects which are:

4.1 To maintain, facilitate and develop Commonwealth nursing networks.

4.2 To foster membership among all countries of the Commonwealth and to collaborate in its work with a range of international organisations, such as the International Council of Nurses.

4.3 To assist national nursing associations throughout the Commonwealth to improve the standards of nursing and competency of nurses.

4.4 To assist nurses within the countries of the Commonwealth to develop leadership roles in health matters and health policy.

4.5 To influence the development of health policy throughout the countries of the Commonwealth.

4.6 To seek and to receive appropriate grants, subscriptions, donations and gifts for the benefit of nursing and nurses within the countries of the Commonwealth.

4.7 To do all such other lawful things as may be conducive or incidental to any of the objectives set out above.

ARTICLE 5: FUNCTIONS

5. The CNF functions are:

5.1 To maintain, facilitate and develop Commonwealth nursing networks by:

5.1.1 Communicating nursing trends and issues related to health policy issues in the countries of the Commonwealth.

5.1.2 Promoting co-operation and co-ordinated activities between member associations in a particular Region and also between Regions.

5.1.3 Co-operating and collaborating with other Commonwealth professional groups to bring about inter-professional interchange in particular Regions and also between Regions.

5.2 To assist, in collaboration with other organisations as appropriate, national nursing associations throughout the Commonwealth to improve nursing standards and the competency of nurses by:

5.2.1 Sharing educational priorities and developing access to current nursing knowledge.

5.2.2 Sharing research findings and where possible, undertaking collaborative projects in a particular Region and between Regions.

5.2.3 Encouraging the provision of scholarships to enable nurses to undertake advanced studies within their own country where possible, or further afield if necessary.

5.3 To assist nurses within the countries of the Commonwealth to develop leadership roles by:

5.3.1 Encouraging the development of leadership development programmes within the countries of the Commonwealth.

5.3.2 Promoting the value of nursing's role in development throughout the Commonwealth and demonstrating the cost effectiveness of professionally qualified nurses.

5.3.3 Lobbying for a more effective role for nurses at government level throughout the countries of the Commonwealth.

5.4 To influence the development of health policy throughout the countries of the Commonwealth by:

5.4.1 Offering CNF networks as a resource on key areas of health policy.

5.4.2 Promoting understanding of the unique role of the nurse, especially in developing countries.

5.4.3 The analysis of health policy proposals and their implications for nursing, in order to influence the Commonwealth Health Ministers' meetings, thereby promoting a significant nursing contribution to Commonwealth health policy.

5.5 To seek and to receive appropriate grants, subscriptions, donations and gifts for the benefit of nursing and nurses within the countries of the Commonwealth by:

5.5.1 Setting subscription rates for member associations, which help the CNF to carry out its objectives.

5.5.2 Actively seeking funding from other sources.

ARTICLE 6: MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Full membership shall be open to the national nursing association in each Commonwealth country. Such an association shall have objectives, which are in accord with those of the CNF. Where more than one association exists the Board shall have absolute discretion in determining which association is to be accepted into full membership.

6.2 Affiliate membership, with no voting rights, may be granted to any group of nurses who satisfy the Board that, in a Commonwealth country where no national nursing association exists, they are working towards establishing an association whose objectives would accord with those of the CNF.

6.3 Applications for full membership shall be considered by the Board, which shall be authorised to accept or reject applications from associations on the basis of the following criteria:

6.3.1 The association's constitution, regulations or rules should define objects which are not in conflict with the purpose and objects of the CNF as set out in Articles 3 and 4.

6.3.2 If the association is a section of another health workers organisation, the section should have its own separate regulations, which are not in conflict with the purpose and objectives of the CNF as set out in Articles 3 and 4.

6.3.3 The association should be controlled by nurses gaining its authority from its members and speak on nursing matters.

6.3.4 The association should be the most representative of nurses in the country, according to the definition of a nurse in Article 1.

6.4 Any association wishing to withdraw from membership shall give twelve months notice in writing to the CNF's Executive Secretary.

6.5 In the event of any country leaving the Commonwealth the CNF Board shall make a recommendation, to be confirmed by a vote of the CNF full membership, regarding the continuation of the existing membership in the CNF of the CNF member in that country.

ARTICLE 7: GOVERNING BODY

7.1 The management of the CNF's affairs shall be vested in a Board (the Board), which consists of the President, Vice-President and six regional members, one each from the following regions:

* East, Central and Southern Africa
* West Africa
* Atlantic
* Pacific
* Asia
* Europe

All these shall be voting members of the Board.
In addition, an Honorary Treasurer and an Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the Board. Neither position has voting rights.

7.2 Only full member associations, which have paid subscriptions for one year prior to elections, are eligible to submit nominations and vote in the elections.

7.3 Elected members shall each serve for a period of four years and shall be eligible to serve for two consecutive terms.

7.4 In the event of a vacancy and/or inability to serve as Board member, the position shall be filled in the following manner:

7.4.1 In the case of the President, the duties shall be assumed by the Vice President.

7.4.2 In the case of the Vice President, the Board shall elect a member from among their ranks to assume the duties of this officer until the next elections.

7.4.3 In the case of Regional members, the candidate from the same region who received the second highest number of votes shall normally be appointed by the Board. In the event of there being no one in this position, the Board shall fill the vacancy following consultation with full member associations in the region in which the vacancy occurred, pending an election.

7.5 If at the time of an election no valid nomination is received in respect of any Region, the Board shall attempt to make an appointment to fill such a vacancy following consultation with full member associations in the region concerned.

ARTICLE 8: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

8.1 All correspondence in relation to nominations, elections and voting will be by electronic means or by post if the member does not have access to electronic communication or if the member requests to receive communication by post.

8.2 Full member associations may nominate candidates for President or Vice President and Regional members of the Board fulfilling the following requirements:

8.2.1 Every nominee must be a nurse, a member of a full member association and have consented to serve if elected.

8.2.2 Candidates must be nominated by their own full member associations and, in addition, must have at least one supporting letter from another full member association in their Region, if standing as Regional members, or from any two other full member associations, if standing for Vice-President or President.

8.3 Nomination procedures are as follows:

8.3.1 Each full member association may propose one name for President or one name for Vice President, and one name for the Board member in their Region.

8.3.2 No person may be nominated for more than one position in the same election.

8.3.3 Each full member association that proposes a name for election shall provide appropriate biographical details concerning the nominee.

8.3.4 At least six months before an election, the CNF Executive Secretary shall send out nomination and consent to serve forms.

8.3.5 Completed nomination forms shall be signed by the President and a designated officer of the nominating association and shall be returned to the Executive Secretary together with the biographical data and consent to serve forms at least four months prior to an election.

8.3.6 The Executive Secretary will draw up a list of all valid nominations from the completed nomination forms. If there are any positions without valid nominations, the Executive Secretary shall bring this to the attention of member associations requesting more nominees, before proceeding with the electoral process.

8.3.7 For the election of Regional members a list of valid nominations shall be sent to each full member association in each Region, at least two months prior to the deadline for the return of voting forms.

8.3.8 The election of President and Vice President shall follow a similar timetable and the complete list shall be sent to each full member association, together with proxy voting forms, at least two months prior to the full meeting of the CNF at which the election takes place.

8.4 Election procedures are as follows:

8.4.1 The full member associations shall elect the President and Vice President at a full meeting of the CNF every four years, with provision for a proxy voting system for those unable to attend.

8.4.2 The full member associations shall elect Regional Board members every four years by postal ballot. Such elections will be staggered so that the Board does not change completely at one time.

8.4.3 Each full member association shall be entitled to one voting form. The national association President is normally the voting representative for a postal ballot. Where elections take place at a full CNF meeting the national association can nominate its voting representative.

8.4.4 Voting shall be by secret ballot.

8.4.5 Each full member association shall be entitled to vote for President and for Vice President.

8.4.6 Each full member association shall be entitled to vote for the Board member for its particular Region only.

8.4.7 All ballot papers for a position shall be retained until after any subsequent election for that position.

8.4.8 The persons elected shall be those receiving the highest number of votes in the appropriate section of the ballot. If two candidates receive an equal number of votes, the President will cast her or his vote.

ARTICLE 9: OFFICERS OF THE FEDERATION

9.1 The President:

9.1.1 Shall be nominated and elected by the full member associations and shall officially assume office at the end of the CNF meeting at which she or he is elected.

9.1.2 Shall serve for a four year period and shall be eligible for re-election for the same office for a second term only.

9.1.3 Shall act as Chair of the Board and any full meetings of the CNF.

9.2 The Vice President:

9.2.1 Shall be nominated and elected by the full member associations and shall officially assume office at the end of the CNF meeting at which she or he is elected.

9.2.2 Shall serve for a period of four years and shall be eligible for re-election to the same office for a second term only.

9.2.3 In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall act as Chair of the Board and any full meetings of the CNF.

9.3 The Honorary Treasurer:

9.3.1 Shall be appointed by the Board.

9.3.2 Shall serve for a period of four years and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

9.3.3 Shall be a person, not necessarily a nurse, with considerable financial experience.

9.4 The Executive Secretary:

9.4.1 Shall be its chief executive officer.

9.4.2 Shall be a salaried post and the powers of appointment, of fixing salary and conditions of service and of termination of appointment shall be undertaken by the Board.

9.4.3 The initial appointment shall be for a period of two years and subject to re-appointment by the Board.

ARTICLE 10: PROXY VOTING SYSTEM

10.1 Votes may be given personally or in the event of a poll either personally or by proxy. The proxy voting form, which shall be valid only for the meeting specified therein, shall be signed and forwarded to the CNF Executive Secretary prior to the commencement of the meeting at which the person named proposes to vote. An official form of proxy will be supplied and that form must be used.

ARTICLE 11: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

11.1 The President, the Vice President, the Honorary Treasurer and the Executive Secretary, shall together form an Executive Committee of which the President shall be the Chair.

11.2 The Executive Committee is empowered to act on behalf of the Board on matters of urgency arising between meetings of the Board where shortage of time makes reference to all Board members impractical.

11.3 The Executive Committee shall be required to inform the Board of decisions reached and action taken for ratification by the Board.

11.4 The Executive Committee shall be required to give detailed consideration on behalf of the Board to any matters, which the Board shall determine, and to make recommendations.

ARTICLE 12: MEETINGS OF THE FEDERATION

12.1 The Board shall meet at least every two years. In the interim, any business shall normally be transacted by correspondence either postal or electronic.

12.2 An emergency meeting of the Board can be called in between ordinary meetings if the importance of the business so warrants. At least three members of the Board, one of whom would normally be the President but not necessarily, must agree before an emergency meeting can be called.

12.3 Agenda items should be submitted by Board members to the Executive Secretary no less than one month prior to a Board meeting. The Executive Secretary shall send out the final agenda to Board members no less than two weeks prior to the Board meeting. The Executive Secretary shall keep a record of this despatch and, as long as these conditions are met, failure to receive such notice shall not invalidate the meeting or any of the proceedings.

12.4 Funding shall be sought to facilitate the attendance of Board members at the Board meetings.

12.5 A quorum for Board meetings shall be four out of eight elected members. All decisions shall be taken by a simple majority. In the event of an equal number of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote.

12.6 The President shall take the Chair at all meetings of the Board except that, in the unavoidable absence of the President, the Vice President shall act as Chair. In the event of the absence of both the President and Vice President the Board shall elect a Chair from among those Board members present at the time.

12.7 The Executive Secretary shall distribute Board minutes, after approval by the President, within two months of the Board Meeting.

12.8 Agenda items for the full meetings of the CNF should be submitted by any association in membership, to the Executive Secretary no less than three months prior to the meeting and the Executive Secretary should send out the final agenda no less than one month prior to the full meeting. The Executive Secretary shall keep a record of this despatch and, as long as these conditions are met, failure to receive such notice shall not invalidate the meeting or any of the proceedings.

12.9 A quorum for full CNF meetings shall be one quarter of the associations in full membership, representing countries in at least three different Regions.

12.10 Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, all decisions shall be taken by a simple majority. In the event of an equal number of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote.

ARTICLE 13: SECRETARIAT

13.1 The location of the Secretariat shall be determined by the Board in consultation with the CNF Executive Secretary.

13.2 It shall be the responsibility of the CNF Executive Secretary to undertake, initiate and organise relevant work arising from the pursuit of the objectives of the CNF as set out in Article 4.

ARTICLE 14: REGIONAL ORGANISATION

14.1 Each Region of the CNF is entitled to establish a Regional council, composed of representatives of each full member association in the Region. The purpose of the council will be to determine activities and initiate projects within the Region.

14.2 Regional councils shall report on their activities, through their Board member, to the Secretariat.

14.3 Regional councils are encouraged to cooperate with other health disciplines in the development of health care programmes.

ARTICLE 15: SUBSCRIPTIONS AND OTHER INCOME

15.1 Full member associations shall pay membership subscriptions, on an annual basis, of an amount as shall, from time to time, be reviewed and recommended by the Board, following membership consultation.

15.2 Affiliate members shall pay reduced membership subscriptions, on an annual basis, of an amount as shall from time to time be reviewed and recommended by the Board.

15.3 The CNF shall seek to attract funds from the Commonwealth Foundation and other sources for the maintenance of its work and for the establishment of scholarships, the furtherance of projects, and attendance at workshops and meetings.

15.4 The Board shall be informed of the annual budget of the CNF which shall be prepared by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Honorary Treasurer.

15.5 The accounts of the CNF shall be the subject of annual audit by a professional auditor appointed by the Board. The accounts shall be presented to the Board and full meetings for approval.

ARTICLE 16: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

16.1 The Board may make alterations, amendments or additions to this Constitution. Agreement to effect such changes shall be confirmed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the full member associations present and voting at a full CNF meeting, with provision for a proxy voting system for those unable to attend.

16.2 Proposals for changes to this constitution shall be put in writing by any full member association, to a full meeting of the CNF and considered at that time. Such proposals must be seconded by another full member association. Agreement to effect such changes shall be in accordance with the procedure set out in Article 16.1.

ARTICLE 17: INTERPRETATION

17.1 Any question of interpretation of any clause in this Constitution shall be decided by the Executive Committee based on legal advice in the country where the Secretariat is located.

ARTICLE 18: DISSOLUTION

18.1 A resolution for the dissolution of the CNF must be carried by a two thirds majority of the CNF member associations, having been put to a full meeting of the CNF and decided at that time, with provision for a proxy voting system for those unable to attend. If carried the CNF shall cease to exist within one year.

18.2 Any assets held by the CNF at the time of its dissolution after all liabilities have been met shall be disposed of in the following manner:

18.2.1 Where these assets may have derived from grants made by the Commonwealth Foundation or any other funding body, they shall be returned to that body.

18.2.2 Any remaining assets shall be transferred to an association or other body whose sphere of activity is within the Commonwealth and whose aims and objectives accord with those of the CNF before its dissolution.