

# CONGO RULES AND PROCEDURES AS ADOPTED BY THE CSVGC

## Article 1 - Name

The name of the Committee shall be "The Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns " (henceforth referred to as the "Committee") The Committee is established as a standing Committee under the auspices of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative relationship with the United Nations and these By-Laws and Rules are consistent with the Rules of the NGO Conference.

## Article 2 – Mission

The Committee seeks to make a contribution to the spiritual dimension, values and rights based perspective of the work of the United Nations agenda.

## Article 3 - Aims

To participate in the work of the United Nations and in international conferences;

To encourage a spiritual perspective within the international community, facilitating written and oral submissions for inclusion in United Nations declarations and programmes of action relating to spirituality, values, justice and peace at all levels;

To promote the right to lead a spiritual or religious way of life in full respect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

To support and exploring the link between science and spirituality, by presenting evidence-based knowledge to demonstrate the causal effect of the spiritual dimension on personal and global change;

To advocate for a global Forum on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns;

To provide for the exchange of views on matters relating to spirituality, values and global concerns and wishes to facilitate dialogue by convening and promoting programmes and events in order to offer solutions which stem from responsible cooperation and integrity.

We acknowledge the sacred in all traditions, cultures and religions.

To publish a series of documents on seminars and meetings, thereby demonstrating a commitment to keep the knowledge and wisdom of the spiritual perspective alive and transmitted throughout time.

## Article 4 - Structure

The Committee consists of:

a) Membership   b) Annual General Meeting   c) Officers   d) Sub-committees or Working Groups

## Article 5 – Membership

**Full Membership** in the Committee is open to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) holding consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), having full or associate (paid-up) membership status with CoNGO. Only NGOs who have paid their annual membership fee to the Committee can nominate a delegate to stand for office and have one vote\* No Member is to hold more than one office on the Board.

**Associate Membership** in the Committee consists of organisations with/without ECOSOC accreditation having associate (paid-up) CoNGO membership and having paid their membership fee for the Committee. Associate Members are not eligible to hold office but have one vote\*

**Absentee Members** are organisations with/without ECOSOC accreditation with (?) CoNGO membership and having paid 50% of the membership fee for the Committee. Absentee Members are not eligible to hold office but have one vote\* (?)

vote\* means one vote per position, e.g. 1 vote1 for Secretary, 1 for Treasurer with a total of 3 votes

**Observers** to Meetings or to the AGM may be allowed to take the floor and may be invited by the Officers from ECOSOC accredited NGOs without Committee membership - the United Nations system - governments and civil society organisations

**All Members** need to be willing to include the spiritual and values dimensions in their work and policies.

**Yearly Membership Fees:** CHF 50 or as otherwise determined by the Committee. Fees from NGOs from 1<sup>st</sup> World countries CHF 25

### **Article 6 – Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting (henceforth referred to as the 'AGM') is the sovereign organ of the Committee. The AGM shall meet at least once a year. The AGM shall elect its officers, with due attention to the need for a balanced representation of gender, organisations, having regard to the geographical basis or political or other orientation of the membership and their various fields of action. No Member may represent more than 10 Member organisations. The Treasurer shall present the previous year's account for approval. The Sub-Committees / Working Groups report on their activities. Propose and present ideas for new events.

### **Article 7 – The Officers**

Only representatives from NGOs with ECOSOC accreditation and membership of CoNGO can be part of the Board as this Committee is a standing committee of CoNGO. The CSVGC Board shall be made up of the following Officers:

a Chair - a Secretary - a Treasurer - a Programme Coordinator

The Committee has flexibility in terms of choosing to have other officers.

Officers serve in their personal capacity and are eligible for re-election, subject to the provision that membership of the Council shall be limited to two consecutive periods of three years *in any one position or office\**

In the event that an Officer being unable to complete his/her term of office, the Officers shall appoint his/her successor from among its members by an absolute majority.

Any immediate out-going officers may remain members in their personal capacities for the remainder of the year.

The officers meet at least 4 times a year.

Meetings of the Officers shall be open to Members of the Committee. Such members shall be entitled to speak with the consent of the Chairperson. Under exceptional circumstances the Officers may decide to hold a closed meeting.

### **Article 8 – Responsibilities of the Officers**

#### **Responsibilities of the Chair Co-Chairs to decide between them division of tasks)**

- Fluency in English (written and spoken)
- Knowledge of the French language (possibly written and certainly spoken)
- Local residency or able to attend at least 80% of the Committee Meetings in any calendar year (or at least 50% if co-chairing)
- Provide leadership to accomplish aims of Committee
- Act as the principal spokesperson/spokespeople responsible for conveying the views and positions of the Committee's membership, as expressed through the GA and the Council, to ECOSOC, the UN Secretariat, other UN organs and representatives of UN Member States as well as to CoNGO – as per prior agreement by Committee membership
- Attend Meetings or represent Committee as required (as noted in minutes)
- Chair Meetings
- Write official letters on behalf of the Committee, these are to be agreed upon by membership
- Write yearly Report for Committee and CoNGO Board

- Verify yearly accounts with Treasurer for Committee and to be appended to yearly Report to CoNGO Board
- Circulate papers to officers, members, organizations
- Prepare and print official communications, these are to be agreed upon by membership
- Call meetings, set place & time and reserve appropriate room
- Prepare and send draft Agenda to the Secretary for verification/changes/additions before Secretary sends it to the membership
- Check Draft Minutes received by Secretary, add changes, corrections and send to Secretary for sending to members
- Organises mailings with Officers and group members
- Participate in other Officer responsibilities and tasks (e.g. takes Minutes when necessary)
- Working Group land Sub-Committee liaison: together with all other officers

### **Responsibilities of the Secretary (Secretaries to decide between them division of tasks)**

- Fluency in English (written and spoken)
- Knowledge of the French language (ideally written but certainly spoken)
- Local residency or able to attend at least 80% of Committee Meetings in any calendar year (or at least 50% if co-chairing)
- Attends Meetings or represents Committee as required (as noted in minutes)
- Chairs Meetings in absence of the Chair/s
- Helps Chair/s to draft official letters, if necessary
- Follows up of meetings administratively and maintains an accurate e-mail and membership lists
- Sends Treasurer twice a year updated e-mail and membership lists
- Checks that draft agenda received by Chairs includes correct information based on previous minutes, unfinished and new business and sends it to the membership
- Takes Minutes (this could rotate between Secretaries , Officers and Members)
- Prints copies of Draft Agenda and Draft Minutes for meetings
- Keeps and files records
- Coordinates (if Committee has a website) with the Webmaster after content changes are agreed to by the Officers, unless otherwise decided upon, e.g. if a separate person is chosen to be web-liaison
- Organises mailings with Officers and membership
- Working Group land Sub-Committee liaison: together with all other officers

### **Responsibilities of the Treasurer/s**

- Fluency in either English or French (written and spoken)
- Attends Meetings or represents the Committee as required (as noted in minutes)
- Chairs Meetings in absence of the Chair/s or Secretary
- Holds the accounts with receipts and account statements
- Reports regularly to the Officers on income and outflow
- Pays Committee's bills
- Updates e-mail and membership list based on information received twice yearly from Secretary
- Prepares membership mail-outs and monitors annual membership fees
- Prepares an annual budget
- Prepares an annual financial report for the Officers, Committee and to be appended to yearly Report for CoNGO Board
- Proposes fundraising ideas
- Organises mailings with Officers and group members
- Takes Minutes when necessary
- Working Group land Sub-Committee liaison: together with all other officers

The Committee may also decide to co-opt a Programme Coordinator if it is planning some or a series of events.

### **Responsibilities of the Programme Coordinator**

- Fluency in English (written and spoken)
- Knowledge of the French language (spoken)
- To be able to attend the Committee's meetings at least 80% of the meetings in any calendar year
- Proposes and organises events as decided by Members and Officers
- Reservation of appropriate rooms for such events
- Provides a Report of such events

- As an elected Officer partakes in other Officer responsibilities and tasks
- Working Group liaison with all other officers
- Attend Meetings or represent CSVGC as required by officers / members
- Working Group liaison: together with all other officers.

Among other officers a Committee may choose to have: Outreach Liaison (one for Francophonie and one for Rest of the World) , a Website-Coordinator etc.

### **Article 9 - Sub-Committees or Working Groups**

Sub-Committees (CS) or Working Groups (WG) may be established to further a particular area/focus under the auspices of the CSVGC either at the AGM or by the Officers at the request of ten or more Members, which shall specify whether the sub-committee is to be a standing or fixed- term S-C or WG. When a decision has been taken to establish such a S-G/WG, the Officers shall notify the Members of the CSVGC and invite all Members to an initial meeting. Individuals chairing a S-C/WG do so in their personal capacity.

Groups of NGOs in consultative status that have already been established outside the framework of the CSVGC may be accepted by decision of the Officers as S-G/WG of the CSVGC, provided they agree to accept the rules applying to the CSVGC.

A SC/WG set up under the auspices of CSVGC is required to establish rules and procedures for membership, for voting, for the periodic election of officers among members of the S-C/WG who are representatives of organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, for the keeping of meeting records, for the handling of monies which will include an annual financial report to be made available to its membership and to the CSVGC Officers, and for the conduct of their work, in a manner consistent with the rules of the CONGO.

SG / WG shall not act, nor claim to act, in the name of the CSVGC, or of the Officers.

SC/WG Conveners shall report regularly to the Programme Coordinator, who will then brief the Officers.

The SC/WG Conveners are fully responsible for the group, for the reservation of rooms and for submitting all required reports to the CSVGC through the Programme Coordinator.

According to the funds at its disposal, the Officers may give financial assistance to a S-C/WG, which may also levy an annual subscription from its member or participating organisations

In order to give more guidance in practice the Officers have agreed to the following:

- All suggestions for the establishment of a SC/WG must be approved by the Officers in agreement with the general terms of CONGO and CSVGC as above.
- A paper on the philosophy, motivation and background for setting up a S-C/WG must be submitted for prior approval to the Officers. No proselytization will be allowed.
- The S-C/WG must have at least three members, meet at least four times a year and report regularly to the Officers and submit an annual report to the Annual General Meeting.
- In case of conflicts and major disagreements the S-C/WG Convener will be responsible to establish a mediation procedure, but the CSVGC cannot be held responsible for specific theological or spiritual practice or financial arrangement not previously approved by the Officers;
- In the case of major disagreements which are not being resolved by the S-C/WG Conveners the S-C/WG can appeal to the CSVGC Officers
- The Officers reserve the right at any time to take steps to dissolve any S-C/WG for actions that they believe are not compatible with the aims of the CSVGC.

### **Article 10 – Administrative and Operational Support**

The officers may, subject to available finance, establish an office or offices and engage staff for the purpose of assisting the elected officers.

The staff shall report to the officers, who shall be responsible for its supervision and shall report accordingly to the Officers.

Engagement or contracting of staff, subject to available finance, shall be the responsibility of the officers, subject to the laws applicable at the site of United Nations Headquarters or other UN Centres.

### **Article 11 - Finance**

**Membership Fee:** Each Member of the CSVGC shall pay an annual membership fee, to be established by the AGM. Annual membership shall be from January 1 to December 31. If an alteration in economic or financial circumstances makes it impossible for the CSVGC to continue operating at its anticipated level without an increase in the annual membership fee, the Officers shall be entitled to revise the annual membership fee for a future year or years.

In order to be eligible to vote at the General Assembly, an organisation in consultative status that is a member of the CSVGC, must have paid annual membership dues for each year since the previous AGM. An organisation newly admitted to consultative status that has paid annual membership dues during the year of admission shall be eligible to vote.

**Donations:** The CSVGC, its sub-committees and working groups, may accept donations, subject to the approval by the Officers, and will be accountable for the disbursements, and will provide an annual financial statement to the CONGO Board and to its own Members in a clear and transparent fashion on the utilisation of such funds;

**Fundraising:** The Officers may take steps to facilitate the raising of funds, including support for the establishment in accordance with national laws applicable at UN centres, or elsewhere as appropriate, for the purpose of promoting its aims within the United Nations system

To this end the Officers may decide to establish a Fundraising Group composed of a chairperson appointed by the Officers, the Treasurer, and at least two other members, for the purpose of:

To prepare guidelines for the raising of funds in the name of the Committee, the sub-committees or the working groups, and for reporting to the Officers and to the Members in a clear and transparent fashion on the utilization of such funds;

The Fundraising Group shall arrange for a record to be maintained of in-kind contributions to the work of the Committee by officers and other members of the Committee.

**Bank Accounts:** The Committee shall maintain bank accounts in Geneva or other centres, as deemed necessary by the Officers.

**The Treasurer** shall prepare an annual financial report and an annual budget and submit report thereon to the Officers, to the next AGM and to CONGO. It is the Treasurer's responsibility to hold the accounts of the Committee with receipts and account statements, regularly report to the Officers on income and outflow, pay CSVGC bills, prepare, mail out and monitor annual membership fees and to propose fundraising ideas.

### **Article 12 – Elections**

Not less than 2 months before an AGM, and when elections are due, the Officers shall appoint 2 persons to serve as the Election Group, of whom not more than one shall be representatives of members of the Board. A member of the Election Group may not be a candidate and may not vote.

Not less than 2 months before an AGM, the **Election Group** shall invite nominations for election to the Officers from the Members (Art 5). Nominations must be proposed by a member organisation. The written consent of the nominated organisation must be received by the Election Group not later than the deadline set by the officers for nominations. No member organisation may propose a maximum of more than 5 organisations. The Election Group shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of the organisations that have validly nominated candidates. To be valid each candidate must specify their willingness to serve.

The list of nominations shall be circulated to all Members at least 1 month prior to the AGM, and the Election Group shall at the same time draw attention to the interests which appear to them to be under-represented or not represented at all among the nominations received by the due date.

Votes need to be received 14 days prior to the Election date

**Member** - NGO organisations having consultative status with the UN through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), having (paid up) full membership status with CoNGO - *and* having paid CHF 40 for a 2 year (2009+2010) membership fee for the Committee on Development -can nominate a delegate to stand for office and have one vote.

**Associate Members** and **absentee Members** – NGO organisations with/without ECOSOC accreditation but with paid-up associate CoNGO membership - and having paid - *and* having paid CHF 40 for a 2 year (2009+2010) membership fee for the Committee on Development - shall not be eligible to hold office but will have one vote (1 vote each for 2 Chairs, for 2 Secretaries, for 2 Treasurers , meaning a total of 6 votes)

**Voting** - all members, associate members and absentee members (as per above criteria) have one vote per office. In the case of the 2010 elections this means 1 vote each for 2 Chairs, for 2 Secretaries, for 2 Treasurers , amounting to a total of 6 votes. Members are not obliged to vote for each candidate and have the right to abstain.

**Committee Members representing more than one ECOSOC accredited NGO with full CoNGO membership status** should clarify in the name of which organization they make their nominations and cast their votes.

**Officers** - while representing their NGO on the Committee, serve in their personal capacity and are eligible for re-election, subject to the provision that membership of the Board shall be limited to two consecutive periods of three years.

**Committee Board** - no Member organisation is to hold more than one office on the Committee Board.

**Self-nominations** by Member organisations are not valid.

**Self-voting** by Member by organisations is not valid.

**No Member is to hold more than one office on the Committee Board.**

**Article 13 - Voting** The Election Group shall:

a) By letter or e-mail

- write to the Members giving date of AGM
- asking for nomination of candidates for office of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and possibly Programme Coordinator. The Board, out of its own choice or asked by its membership, has flexibility in terms of choosing to have other officers.
- give all Members information on Officers' duties, on Election and Voting procedures or make this available via the Committee's website ([http://www.csvgc-geneva.org/congo\\_rules.html](http://www.csvgc-geneva.org/congo_rules.html))
- set date by which nominations have to be received by the Election Group

b) When nominations have been received, prepare and send by letter or e-mail the list of candidates for the position of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Programme Coordinator and any other office that might have been requested. This list shall give the names and member organization to which the candidate belongs.

c) Set date by which votes have to be received by the Election Group.

d) On receipt of votes prepare a list of candidates for the position of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Programme Coordinator and any other office which might have been requested. This list shall give the names and member organisation to which the candidate belongs together with the names of the nominating and supporting organisations.

e) Send not later than 7 days before the AGM a letter or e-mail to all members with the final list of the candidates that have been voted for.

f) At AGM: ask if there are any objections from the floor with regards voting procedures, votes or candidates and deal with them as required.

g) Files, archives, documents and all accounts inclusive of invoices and receipts to be handed over to newly elected Officers.

**Self-voting** by Member by organisations is not valid.

Time-line: see example at bottom of document.

**Article 14 - Amendments** These Rules shall be binding on the AGM and may not be waived or otherwise departed from. The Rules can be amended only as provided here under. A proposal to amend these Rules may be made by a Full Member. Only the AGM can decide upon any such proposal. Proposed amendments shall be notified to the Council and shall be circulated to all Members of the CSVGC Committee at least two months\* before the AGM. In order to take effect a proposed amendment must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in the AGM.

Full text revised by Trevor Davies and Vita de Waal – July 2007

\* Amendment Proposed by Trevor Davies on November 11, 2008 This was accepted by the membership and confirmed at the 2009 AGM.

1. Article 7 para3 states "*Officers serve in their personal capacity and are eligible for re-election, subject to the provision that membership of the Council shall be limited to two consecutive periods of three years*" it is proposed that the phrase "*in any one position or office*" be added

2. Article 14 Amendments states "*Proposed Amendments shall be notified to the Council and circulated to all members of the CSVGC Committee at least three months before the AGM.*" It is proposed that the period be reduce to *two months* to give more flexibility in view of the fact that we are a small committee.

## ELECTIONS

### Example of a two month election time-line:

As per Membership decisions taken at February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 Committee Meeting

• **AGM called on April 26, 2010** • Election Group appointed • 3 members of the Election Group who may not be candidates and may not vote • 6 officers to be nominated: 2 Chairs, 2 Secretaries and 2 Treasurers.

**Before February 25:** the Election Group will send an explanatory letter to the Committee's membership inviting NGOs to put nominations forward for the election of officers addressed to ....

**By March 14:** the nominations are to be received. If insufficient nominations have been put forward it may be necessary to call for further nominations after March 14.

**By March 24:** the nominations list is to be submitted to the membership for voting. Prior to that the Election Group has to verify NGO's ECOSOC/CoNGO status; verify with nominated candidates their willingness to serve in the proposed capacity; invite nominated people to prepare a (max) 150 word paragraph, giving brief details of the organization which they represent followed by a brief autobiographical note; ask those being nominated for Chair to also add up to 10 key-words of what they think the Committee should focus on during their period as an officer. The Election Group then has to add this information together with CVs, clarifications on voting procedures and point out if there is a fair representation related to different interest groups.

**By April 10:** the votes need to be received by the Election Group. If 3 candidates have received the same amount of votes, the membership is asked to vote a second time to gain clarity between the 3 NGOs who have an equal amount of votes.

**Before April 17:** Absentee voting is accepted provided the letter or e-mail is received before April 17.

**By April 19:** the list of candidates and votes are to be circulated to the membership.

**On April 26, at the AGM:** the results are read out and members are asked if there are any objections.

### **Example of a letter to Committee Members asking for Nominations**

Dear Colleagues,

An election group has been asked to serve for the elections to be held at the AGM on April 26, 2010. The Election Group is composed of the following representatives: *name of person – NGO name*, *name of person – NGO name*, and *name of person – NGO name*.

Each (NGO) member of the Committee on ..... can send the NGO and name of person they wish to nominate to: *specify e-mail address*

Deadline for returning your nominations is **March 14, 2010**

#### **Nominations:**

**Chair** – Name of Representative.....

Name of Organisation.....

**Co-Chair** – Name of Representative.....

Name of Organisation.....

**Secretary** - Name of Representative.....

Name of Organisation.....

**Co-Secretary** - Name of Representative.....

Name of Organisation.....

**Treasurer** - Name of Representative.....

Name of Organisation.....

**Nominating Organisation and Name of Representative**.....

We thank you in advance for your nominations and look forward to hearing from you.

For the Election Group

### **Brief recapitulation of Rules related to Membership, Nominations and Voting**

#### **CoNGO NGO Committees:**

- Committee Membership is open to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) holding consultative status with ECOSOC and having full or associate (paid-up) membership status with CoNGO
- The Committee elects a Chairperson (or more), a Secretary (or more), a Treasurer (or more), and also may decide also to have a Programme Coordinator, a Website Liaison and Outreach Liaison/s.
- Members on the Board, though representing their organisation in the Committee, serve in their personal capacity.
- Board members must represent an NGO that has membership in the Committee. Membership of the Board shall be limited to two consecutive periods of three years.

### **Appointing a NGO Delegate to stand for Office:**

- **Member** - NGO organisations having consultative status with the UN through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), having (paid up) full membership status with CoNGO - *and* having paid CHF 40 for a 2 year (2009+2010) membership fee for the Committee on Development -can nominate a delegate to stand for office and have one vote.
- **Associate Members** and **absentee Members** – NGO organisations with/without ECOSOC accreditation but with paid-up associate CoNGO membership - and having paid - *and* having paid CHF 40 for a 2 year (2009+2010) membership fee for the Committee on Development - shall not be eligible to hold office but will have one vote (1 vote each for 2 Chairs, for 2 Secretaries, for 2 Treasurers , meaning a total of 6 votes)
- **Voting** - all members, associate members and absentee members (as per above criteria) have one vote per office. In the case of the 2010 elections this means 1 vote each for 2 Chairs, for 2 Secretaries, for 2 Treasurers , amounting to a total of 6 votes. Members are not obliged to vote for each candidate and have the right to abstain.
- **Committee Members representing more than one ECOSOC accredited NGO with full CoNGO membership status** should clarify in the name of which organization they make their nominations and cast their votes.
- **Officers** - while representing their NGO on the Committee, serve in their personal capacity and are eligible for re-election, subject to the provision that membership of the Board shall be limited to two consecutive periods of three years.
- **Committee Board** - no Member organisation is to hold more than one office on the.
- **Self-nominations** by Member organisations are not valid.
- **Self-voting** by Member by organisations is not valid.