

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 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) having consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), having full (paid-up) membership status with CoNGO Member and who are willing to include the spiritual and values dimension in their work and policies.

Committee Membership

i) Full Member Organisations (henceforth referred to as "Member") having consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and having full membership status with the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) and having paid the Committee membership fee can nominate a delegate to stand for office and have the right to one vote

ii) Associate CoNGO Members - having consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and having associate membership status with the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) and having paid the Committee membership fee can not stand for office, but can nominate a delegate to stand for office and have the right to one vote

iii) Associate Members of the NGO Committee - NGO organisations having formal relationships with the UN system, including DPI, with accreditation to UN Conferences and NGOs accredited to treaty bodies with paid-up Committee membership shall have the right to actively participate in all meetings but shall not have the right to nominate candidates or to vote.

Absentee Members - while taking part in the activities of the Committee 'from a distance' they will not be eligible to hold office. Depending on categories, e.g. i) or ii) or iii) voting rules apply.

Observers at the AGM or to Meetings may be allowed to take the floor and may be invited by the Officers from • NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, which are not Members of the CSVGC • the United Nations system • governments • and civil society organisations. Observers will not be eligible to hold office or vote.

Yearly Membership Fees - To be established yearly at AGM. Currently CHF 50

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 5 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

The CSVGC shall be made up of the following Officers:

a Chair - a Secretary - a Treasurer

The Committee has flexibility in terms of choosing to have other officers, e.g. one or more Co-Chairs, one or more Secretaries, one or more Outreach Officers (e.g. 1 Francophonie - French and 1 Rest of World – English), one or more Programme Co-ordinators etc

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*** (see amendments)

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 participate at least in 80% of the Committee's yearly meetings.

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

- Fluency in English or French (written and spoken)
- Knowledge of another language, e.g. either French or English (ideally written, 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)
- Chairs meetings
- Provides leadership to accomplish aims of Committee
- Acts as the principal spokesperson responsible for conveying the views and positions of the Committee, as expressed through its membership and Board to ECOSOC, the UN Secretariat, other UN organs and representatives of UN Member States as well as to CoNGO
- Writes official letters
- Writes yearly Report for Committee and CoNGO Board
- Verifies yearly accounts (with Treasurer) for Committee and for to yearly Report to CoNGO Board
- Calls meetings, set place & time and reserve appropriate room
- Prepares Agenda of Meeting based on previous minutes, unfinished and new business and sends draft Agenda to Officers for verification/changes/addition before Secretary sends it to the membership
- Organises mailings with Officers and membership
- Attends Meetings or represent CSVGC as required by officers/members (as noted in minutes)
- Liaises with Working Group and Sub-Committees, together with all other officers

Responsibilities of the Secretary

- Fluency in English or French (written and spoken)
- Knowledge of another language, e.g. either French or English (ideally written, certainly spoken)
- Local residency or able to attend at least 80% of Committee Meetings in any calendar year
- Chairs meetings in absence of the Chair/s
- Drafts official letters together with Chair/s
- Takes Minutes (this could rotate between Secretary / Members)
- Sends draft minutes to Officers for review before sending to Membership once corrected
- Circulates papers to officers, members, organisations
- Keeps and files records
- Prepares and prints official communications
- Follows up on meetings administratively and maintains an accurate and regularly updated membership list
- Liaises with the Webmaster after web-content changes or additions are agreed to by the members /Officers
- As an elected Officer partakes in other Officer responsibilities and tasks
- Organises mailings with Officers and membership
- Attends Meetings or represent CSVGC as required by officers/members (as noted in minutes)
- Liaises with Working Group and Sub-Committees, together with all other officers

Responsibilities of the Programme Coordinator

- Fluency in English or French (written and spoken)
- Knowledge of another language, e.g. either French or English (ideally written, certainly spoken)
- Local residency or able to attend at least 80% of Committee Meetings in any calendar year
- Proposes and organises events as decided by Members and Officers
- Reserves appropriate rooms for such events
- Provides a Report of such events
- As an elected Officer partakes in other Officer responsibilities and tasks
- Organises mailings with Officers and membership
- Attends Meetings or represent CSVGC as required by officers/members (as noted in minutes)
- Liaises with Working Group and Sub-Committees, together with all other officers

Responsibilities of the Treasurer

- Fluency in English or French (written and spoken)
- Knowledge of another language, e.g. either French or English (ideally written, certainly spoken)
- Local residency or able to attend at least 80% of Committee Meetings in any calendar year
- Fluency in English or French (written and spoken)
- Knowledge of another language, e.g. either French or English (ideally written, certainly spoken)
- Local residency or able to attend at least 80% of Committee Meetings in any calendar year
- Chairs meetings in the absence of any of the other officers
- Deals with annual Membership subscriptions and fees
- Holds the accounts with receipts and account statements

- Reports regularly to the Officers on income and outflow
- Pays Committee's bills
- Prepares membership mail-outs and monitors annual membership fees
- Prepares an annual budget
- Prepares an annual financial report for the Officers, Committee and for yearly Report to CoNGO Board
- Proposes fundraising ideas
- As an elected Officer partakes in other Officer responsibilities and tasks
- Organises mailings with Officers and membership
- Attends Meetings or represent CSVGC as required by officers/members (as noted in minutes)
- Liaises with Working Group and Sub-Committees, together with all other officers

Article 9 - Terms of Reference of Sub-Committees or Working Groups

Sub-Committees (C-S) or Working Groups (WG) may be established to further a particular area/focus under the auspices of the Committee either at the AGM or by the Officers at the request of 50% of membership (or of ten or more Members) which shall specify whether it is to be a 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 Committee 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 Committee may be accepted by decision of the Officers as S-G/WG of the Committee, provided they agree to accept the rules applying to the Committee.

A S-C/WG set up under the auspices of the Committee 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 Committee Officers, and for the conduct of their work, in a manner consistent with the rules of the CONGO.

Sub-committees / Working Groups shall not act, nor claim to act, in the name of the Committee, or of the Officers.

S-C/WG Conveners shall report regularly to the Programme Coordinator of the Committee, who will then brief the Officers.

The S-C/WG Conveners are fully responsible for the group, for the reservation of rooms and for submitting all required reports to the Committee 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 S-C/WG must be approved by the Officers in agreement with the general terms of CONGO and Committee 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 proselytizing 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 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 that are not being resolved by the S-C/WG Conveners the S-C/WG can appeal to the Committee 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 Committee

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 Committee 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 Committee 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 Committee, 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 Committee, 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. There shall be 2 or 3 signatories.

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. The Treasurer verifies yearly at the AGM that members agree with annual membership fee. It is the Treasurer's responsibility to hold the accounts of the Committee with invoices, receipts and account statements, regularly report to the Officers on income and outflow, pay Committee 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 2-3 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. Self-nominations by Member organisations are not valid. 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 confirm their willingness to serve on the Board.

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.

Self-voting by Member by organisations is not valid.

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

i) Full Member having consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and having full membership status with the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) and having paid the Committee membership fee may be nominated for office, can appoint a delegate to stand for office and has one vote ‘

ii) Associate CoNGO Member - having consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and having associate membership status with the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) and having paid the Committee membership fee is not eligible to stand for office, but can nominate a delegate to stand for office and has the right to one vote

iii) Associate Members of the NGO Committee - NGO organisations having formal relationships with the UN system, including DPI, with accreditation to UN Conferences and NGOs accredited to treaty bodies with paid-up Committee membership shall have the right to actively participate in all meetings but shall not be eligible to stand for office nor have the right to nominate candidates but they do have a vote.

Absentee Members - while taking part in the activities of the Committee ‘from a distance’ they will not be eligible to hold office. Depending on categories, e.g. i) or ii) or iii) voting rules apply.

Observers at the AGM or to Meetings may be allowed to take the floor and may be invited by the Officers from • NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, which are not Members of the CSVGC • the United Nations system • governments • and civil society organisations. They are not eligible to stand for office, nor can they nominate a delegate to stand for office and do not have a vote.

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

Self-nominations or self-voting by Member by organisations are not valid.

Article 13 – Election Group

The Election Group shall:

a) By letter or e-mail

- write to the Members giving date of AGM
- ask for nomination of candidates for office of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Program 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)
- 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 Program Coordinator and any other office that might have been requested. This list shall give the names of the candidate and member organization to which the candidate belongs.

c) Set precise date by which votes have to be received by the Election Group, this to be not later than 14 days prior to the Election date.

d) On receipt of votes prepare a 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 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.

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

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

Article 13 - Voting

Decisions at the AGM and at meetings shall be taken by consensus.

Where it is necessary to take a vote, each Member organisation having paid its annual membership fees shall have one vote.

An organisation newly admitted to consultative status having paid annual membership dues during the year of admission shall be eligible to vote.

E-mail votes will be accepted as long as from voter's personal e-mail address

Absentee voting is accepted providing the letter or e-mail is received by the date set by the Officers.

Please also see Article 12 (Elections) points i) ii) and iii)

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 hereunder.

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- on 1/07/07

Text revised and simplified in March 2010 by Lydia Hansen and Vita de Waal

* Amendment Proposed by Trevor Davies on November 11, 2008 - Committee membership voted and confirmed text 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 12 para2 states "**Not less than 2 months* before an AGM, the Election Group shall invite nominations for election to the Officers from the Members**" 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.

3. 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.