



CONSTITUTION OF THE BARBADOS NATIONAL UNION OF FISHERFOLK ORGANISATIONS

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Last amended at AGM on 12 July 2006

1. Objectives, Responsibilities and Membership

1.1. Name

The name of this Union shall be the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations (hereinafter referred to as the "Union")

1.2. Address of the Union

1.2.1. The address of the Union shall be C/o Fisheries Division, Princess Alice Highway, Bridgetown or as shall be determined by the General Body of the Union at a General Meeting.

1.2.2. Any change of address shall be intimated to the Chief Fisheries Officer within seven days of such change.

1.3. Objectives

The objectives of the Union shall be to fulfil the requirements of its Members, with a view to improving their socio-economic conditions based on sustainable development of fisheries.

1.4. Authority

To achieve the above objectives, the Union shall have the authority to:

- 1.4.1. Acquire or purchase or rent capital items and equipment used in the fishing industry, such as, boats, engines, fishing gear and spare parts,
- 1.4.2. Sell, hire or supply on credit capital items such as boats, engines fishing gear and spare parts,
- 1.4.3. Acquire the required fixed assets,
- 1.4.4. Supply the necessary inputs and to provide facilities for the members to engage in the fishing industry,
- 1.4.5. Train the members in activities pertaining to the fishing industry and related matters,
- 1.4.6. Initiate and develop economically efficient methods of fishing and marketing of fish and fishery products,
- 1.4.7. Negotiate with government or other local or international agencies on matters of interest to members,
- 1.4.8. Organise activities to the general welfare of the members,
- 1.4.9. Engage in fisheries resources management and conservation, and,
- 1.4.10. Engage in all other activities incidental to the aforesaid objectives.

1.5. Area of Operation

The area of operation of the Union shall be Barbados, but without restriction to involvement in regional and international bodies compatible with the objectives of the Union.

1.6. Membership

- 1.6.1. The membership of the Union shall be in the following categories:
- (i) full membership is open to any registered Fisherfolk Organisation in Barbados, and full members are entitled to vote at general meetings through delegates who are eligible to hold any post on the Board of Directors;

- (ii) associate membership is open to any individual earning an income from the fishing industry, who is not a member of any Fisherfolk Organisation, and associate members are entitled to vote at general meetings but participation on the Board of Directors is restricted;
- (iii) affiliate membership is open to any individual who does not earn an income from the fishing industry, and affiliate members are not entitled to vote at general meetings or on the Board of Directors in which their participation is restricted;
- (iv) sponsoring membership is open to any individual, business or other organisation that provides a donation to the Union equal or in excess of the fee for this category of membership, and sponsoring members are not entitled to vote at general meetings or to participate on the Board of Directors.

1.6.2. No Fisherfolk Organisation, individual or other entity shall be a member of the Union unless it has:

- (i) fulfilled membership criteria as provided herein,
- (ii) completed the membership application form, and,
- (iii) paid the membership fee.

1.7. Membership Fee

1.7.1 The annual membership fee shall be:

- (i) one hundred dollars (\$100) for full members
- (ii) fifty dollars (\$50) for associate members
- (iii) thirty dollars (\$30) for affiliate members
- (iv) five hundred dollars (\$500) for sponsoring members

1.7.2. Annual membership fees, categories and criteria for membership may be set by resolution of the General Body passed with a simple majority at any General Meeting.

1.8. Entry to the Membership

1.8.1. The Secretary of an eligible Fisherfolk Organisation shall fill in duplicate the membership form and forward it with a copy of the resolution passed at a general meeting of that Organisation for obtaining the membership, duly certified by the President and Secretary, and the membership fee to the Board of Directors through the Secretary of the Union.

1.8.2. All other eligible applicants shall fill in duplicate the membership form, and forward it with the membership fee to the Board of Directors through the Secretary of the Union.

1.8.3. The Board of Directors of the Union may enrol members, and inform the General Body at the next General Meeting.

1.9. Membership Register

1.9.1. The Union shall maintain a register of the members by filing the originals of the applications for membership in serial order. The copy of the application shall be filed in an individual file, maintained in respect of each member.

1.9.2. The membership register shall have the following information:

- (i) The full name, address and other contact information of the member,
- (ii) Date of application for membership,
- (iii) Registration number of the member,
- (iv) Date of admission to membership, and
- (v) The date of cancellation of membership (if any).

1.10. Cancellation of Membership

The membership shall be cancelled due to one or more of the following:

- (i) Non payment of membership fee for a period of one year,
- (ii) Cancellation of registration under the laws of Barbados,
- (iii) Non conformity with membership criteria,
- (iv) On written resignation from membership and,
- (v) Expulsion from membership.

1.11. Expulsion from Membership

Any member that acts in contravention to this Constitution or wilfully disrupts the progress of the Union shall be liable to expulsion after being given fourteen (14) days to explain charges communicated to the member in writing by the Secretary. If the explanation on charges is not satisfactory in the opinion of the Board of Directors or the explanation is not submitted prior to the lapse of fourteen (14) days, the matter should be reported at a General Meeting with the observations of the Board. The attendance at this general meeting shall be not less than one half of the total full and associate membership, and the expulsion of the member shall be effected with a two-thirds majority or more at a vote taken for the purpose. In the case any member that is not a full member, a unanimous decision of the Board of Directors to effect expulsion of the member shall make the calling of a General Meeting unnecessary, and expulsion may be effected on the basis of the Board decision.

2. Funds

The capital of the Union shall consist of the following:

- (i) The Membership Fees of the Members,
- (ii) Funds obtained from non-members and deposits,
- (iii) Profits from business activities,
- (iv) Donations from government or other Organisations, and,
- (v) Any other funds received or earned in accordance with this Constitution.

3. Maximum Credit Limit

At general meetings, the Union shall determine from time to time the maximum limit of credit that should be obtained for the fulfilment of the objectives.

4. Utilisation of Funds

- 4.1. The funds of the Union shall be used to achieve its objectives.
- 4.2. By resolutions passed at general meetings, the Union shall maintain bank accounts as necessary. The signatories to the accounts shall be the President or the Vice President and the Treasurer.
- 4.3. The funds collected by the Union shall be deposited in a bank account as soon as practicable, in any case not later than the following working day.

5. Security Fund

The Union shall have a security fund to be used in case of emergency as determined by the Board of Directors. As soon as practicable, in any case not later than one month, a complete report outlining the circumstances under which the expenditure was incurred shall be forwarded at a general meeting for approval. A portion of any profits and donations may be deposited in the security fund as shall be determined at a general meeting.

6. Financial Year

The financial year of the Union is from First (1st) of January to Thirty-first (31st) of December of that year.

7. General Body of the Union

- 7.1. There shall be a General Body of the Union constituted of all members. Each full member, shall specifically nominate in writing up to five (5) delegates with one vote each for the purpose of representing the member in the General Body. All others are individual members, some of whom may represent organisation interests. The power of the Union is vested fully in the General Body.
- 7.2. Before the expiry of three (3) months after the end of the financial year, the Board of Directors shall summon the Annual General Meeting of the Union.
- 7.3. The first General Meeting shall be called the Inaugural General Meeting. Except for the Annual General Meeting, all other meetings of the general body shall be called Special General Meetings.
- 7.4. A general meeting of the Organisation shall be summoned by the President or the Board of Directors.
- 7.5. When the President or the Board of Directors informs the Secretary in writing, the Secretary shall summon a general meeting.
- 7.6. When one thirds of the full and associate membership or not less than ten (10) full and associate members request in writing the Board of Directors shall summon a special general meeting within one month. Such request shall contain the resolutions to be forwarded at the special general meeting and shall be included in the notice calling for the Special General Meeting.

- 7.7. A written notice of at least seven (7) days indicating the resolutions shall be given in the case of special general meetings.
- 7.8. In the case of the annual general meeting, at least twenty one (21) days' notice shall be given in writing to the eligible members. The resolutions to be taken up at the annual general meeting shall be circulated among eligible members at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. If a member wishes to forward a resolution at the annual general meeting, such resolution shall be sent to the Secretary in duplicate at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. Such resolutions shall be included in the agenda of the annual general meeting.
- 7.9. In case of a resolution to amend this Constitution, such resolution with a brief explanation shall be brought to the notice of the eligible members at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. The resolution shall be included in the agenda and shall be circulated at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

8. Quorum

- 8.1. The quorum for the general meeting shall be (10) full and/or associate members..
- 8.2. The business of the general meeting is conducted by resolutions. At a meeting where there is a proper quorum, a resolution shall be passed with a simple majority. To amend a resolution passed at a general meeting within a period of six (6) months shall require at least two-thirds majority.
- 8.3. To elect Directors for the Board, the nominations duly proposed and seconded by members shall be forwarded to the general meeting. Each delegate representing each full member and each associate member present shall be able to cast one vote per candidate for each available position on the Board of Directors. Affiliate and sponsoring members are not entitled to vote, but associate and affiliate members may be nominated for certain positions on the Board. Candidates polling the highest number of votes shall be elected.
- 8.4. Each full member attending the general meeting shall be represented by up to five delegates nominated as in 7 above and each delegate shall have one vote. The vote shall be taken either by the show of hands or secret ballot and shall be determined by the person chairing the general meeting in consultation with the general body.
- 8.5. If the President is absent at the general meeting, the Vice President shall chair the meeting and if both are absent, a Chairman shall be selected from among the delegates of full members present by consensus.
- 8.6. If decisions are put to a vote, and the votes cast are equal, the chairman of the general meeting shall have the deciding vote.
- 8.7. It is the duty of the Secretary of the Union to invite the Chief Fisheries Officer or his representative to general meetings.

Notwithstanding this provision, the Chief Fisheries Officer or his representative shall have the authority to attend only the general meetings of the Union as he wishes.

9. Records of Meetings

At a general meeting, once a decision on any agenda item is arrived at, it shall be recorded as a brief statement in the Minute Book where minutes are maintained by the Secretary, read to the general body and signed by the Secretary and the President or the person chairing the meeting. The Secretary shall forward the minutes of every general meeting to the first committee meeting held immediately thereafter.

10. Powers and Duties of the General Body

- 10.1. The election of not less than five (5) or more than seven (7) members to the Board of Directors and when necessary, their suspension and removal,
- 10.2. Consideration of the annual budget, audit report and observations of the Chief Fisheries Officer on the activities of the Union,
- 10.3. To uphold the provisions of the Constitution with respect to the funds,
- 10.4. Amendments to the Constitution when necessary,
- 10.5. The confirmation of the membership of new members, taking decisions on appeals of members and expulsion of members,
- 10.6. Determination of the maximum credit limit of the Union,
- 10.7. The determination of credit limit of members,
- 10.8. Consideration of the annual report of the Board of Directors for the previous year and the work programme for the following year,
- 10.9. Decision to dispose of or write-off bad debts or non recoverable assets of the Union,
- 10.10. To authorise the Board of directors to purchase, sell, mortgage, rent, lease, repair or deal with appropriately any land, buildings, fishing boats, gear, equipment and any other assets to achieve the objectives of the Union,
- 10.11. To authorise the Board of Directors or any special sub-committee to negotiate with government and other Organisations on behalf of the membership in matters pertaining to the objectives of the Union,
- 10.12. To appoint special committee of women for the welfare of women where necessary,
- 10.13. To decide on the policy on credit to members, and,
- 10.14. To decide on any other matter for achieving the objectives of the Union.

11. The Board of Directors

- 11.1. There shall be a Board of Directors to the Union, hereinafter called the "Board" with a membership of not more than seven (7) persons

elected to perform the duties of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Assistant Secretary/Public Relations Officer, Projects Officer and Membership Officer if all positions are filled. Associate and affiliate members are eligible only to fill the latter three positions if nominated and elected.

11.2. The Board shall be elected by the general body at the inaugural general meeting or an annual general meeting for a period of one year until the next annual general meeting. If the annual general meeting is not held due to any reason, the Board may continue until a new Board is appointed. However, it shall be the duty of the general body to elect a new Board before the expiry of eighteen (18) months from the date of the appointment of the Board.

11.3. A person who:

- (i) is of age less than 18 years,
 - (ii) has been declared bankrupt by a court of law,
 - (iii) if representing a full member Fisherfolk Organisation, is not a properly authorised delegate ,
 - (iv) is a paid employee of the Union or of a full member Fisherfolk Organisation,
 - (v) is involved in the purchase of an asset of the Union or a full member Fisherfolk Organisation or has entered into an agreement with the Union or a full member Fisherfolk Organisation with respect to supply of items or other financial transactions, or,
 - (vi) has defaulted the payment of his membership fee to the full member Fisherfolk Organisation
- shall not be eligible to be elected to the Board.

11.4. An elected Board member shall lose his/her post on the Board due to any of the following reasons:

- (i) loss of membership in the Union of the full member Fisherfolk Organisation,
- (ii) a written notice of thirty (30) days to the Secretary resigning from the Board,
- (iii) removal from the post by a no confidence motion duly passed at a general meeting.

11.5. The office of an elected Board member shall end at the following annual general meeting and could be re-elected if he /she continues to be a member. A Board member or the whole Board shall not be re-elected before the expiry of at least one year, if they have resigned from their posts without serving the full term of office.

11.6. After the death or the resignation of a Board Member, the Board shall arrange for a special general meeting to be held as soon as possible for the filling of the vacancy.

12. The Business of the Board of Directors

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and the decisions of the General Body, the Board shall undertake the following activities:

- 12.1. Selection of suitable Board members to fill the vacancies of the Board. Such selected Board members shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.
- 12.2. Finding financial resources to implement the work programmes of the Union within the limits determined by the General Body of the Union and to decide conditions under which these financial resources shall be spent.
- 12.3. Employment of persons to implement the work programme as necessary.
- 12.4. Acquisition of fixed assets for the Union.
- 12.5. Sale of fixed assets as determined by the General Body.
- 12.6. Formulation of suitable credit schemes for the membership.
- 12.7. Appointment of sub-committees as required to achieve the objectives of the Union.
- 12.8. Appointment of suitable persons for the custody of finances of the Union

13. The Duties of the Board of Directors

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and the decisions of the General Body, the Board shall undertake the following:

- 13.1. Summoning of the annual general meeting and as required, other meetings of the general body.
- 13.2. Consideration of the proposals and advice of the membership and issuing instructions to the management for implementation.
- 13.3. Maintenance of all records of the Union including financial documents with a balance sheet of assets and liabilities of the Union and table them at the annual general meeting with an audit report.
- 13.4. Submission of an annual budget and work programme for the ensuing year to the annual general meeting at least two months before the commencement of the financial year.
- 13.5. Ensuring that the Union achieves its objectives.

14. The Minutes of the Board Meetings

All the discussions of the Board meetings and the decisions arrived thereof shall be recorded and the signatures of the member who chaired and the other committee members present shall be obtained at the end of the meeting.

15. President and the Vice President

- 15.1. The General Meeting shall appoint among the delegates of the full members present a President and a Vice President. They shall

function until the following annual general meeting or removal from office in accordance with this Constitution or resignation by letter sent to the Secretary with at least thirty (30) days' notice, whichever occurs earlier.

- 15.2. The President of the Union shall also be the President of the Board. He/she shall preside at the general meetings and Board meetings when present. The President shall be responsible for upholding the Constitution of the Union and the implementation of the decisions of the general and Board meetings effectively.
- 15.3. The Vice President of the Union shall also be the Vice President of the Board and shall preside at general and Board meetings when the President is absent. When the President is overseas or ill, the Vice President may act for the President.

16. Secretary and Assistant Secretary

- 16.1. The General Meeting shall elect a delegate of a full member, an associate member, an affiliate member or appoint an employee as the Secretary. When an employee is appointed as the Secretary, he/she shall not have a vote at the meetings of the Union. The Secretary shall summon general meetings and Board meetings when instructed to do so by an authorised person and shall record the minutes of these meetings. Further, in this respect, he/she shall act in accordance with the directives given by the President or the Board.
- 16.2. The Secretary shall maintain a register of the Board members. It shall contain the name of the member and the Organisation, date of election to the Board, how elected and the date of termination and shall forward such information to the Chief Fisheries Officer within fourteen (14) days after the inaugural general meeting or an annual general meeting. If there is a change in the Board, it shall be brought to the notice of the Chief Fisheries Officer, in writing, within seven (7) days.
- 16.3. The same provisions in this section apply to the Assistant Secretary who shall assist the Secretary, perform the duties of the Secretary in his/her absence, and perform the duties of Public Relations Officer of the Union at all times.

17. Projects Officer

The General Meeting shall elect a delegate of a full member, an associate member or an affiliate member or appoint an employee as the Projects Officer. When an employee is appointed as the Projects Officer, he/she shall not have a vote at the meetings of the Union. The Projects Officer shall assist with project planning, implementation and evaluation in the Union and in full member Fisherfolk Organisations.

18. Membership Officer

The General Meeting shall elect a delegate of a full member, an associate member or an affiliate member as the Membership Officer to liaise with all categories of existing members, and to ensure that membership services and growth meet the needs of the Union.

19. Manager / Treasurer

The Board shall appoint a Manager. He/she shall be the Chief Executive Officer and shall be responsible to the Board for the efficient functioning of the Union. In case that the Board cannot employ a manager at the commencement of operations, a Treasurer to perform financial functions of the Union shall be elected from among the delegates of full members, associate members or affiliate members by the General Meeting until a Manager is appointed.

20. Business Activities

To achieve the objectives of the Union and as approved at a general meeting, business activities such as, sale of fuel, provisions for fishing trips, fishing gear, boats and other equipment and related activities, may be undertaken by the Board. Only cash sales shall be transacted. However, the members may be given credit facilities.

21. The Seal of the Union

The seal of the Union shall be in the custody of the Secretary.

22. Standing Orders of the Board

The Board shall formulate standing orders on the following subjects:

- (i) Membership enrolment
- (ii) Utilisation of the funds of the Union
- (iii) Collection of funds and control
- (iv) Business activities
- (v) Development activities for women in the community
- (vi) Code of conduct for Board members
- (vii) Membership drive, education and extension

23. Amendments to the Constitution

23.1. The Constitution of the Union shall be amended by a resolution at a general meeting with a vote of two thirds majority of the total membership present.

23.2. The resolution shall be included in the notice calling for the general meeting and at least fourteen days' notice shall be given prior to the meeting.

23.3. The Constitution and any amendments thereof shall be registered with the Chief Fisheries Officer.

24. Liquidation

The Union shall be liquidated only with a written notice of the Chief Fisheries Officer upon clear evidence that the Union had ceased to function.

25. Interpretation

In this Constitution, unless otherwise specified:

"Board" means, the directing body of the Union or the Board of Directors

"Board Member " means, a member of the Board of Directors,

"Chief Fisheries Officer" means the person appointed under section 3(1) of the Fisheries Act, 1993-6

"Delegate" means, a person nominated by a Fisherfolk Organisation to represent that organisation at the meetings of the Union.

"Members" means persons and organisations in the categories of membership determined by the General Body from time to time,

"Registrar of Cooperative Societies" means, the person appointed under Cooperative Societies Act, 1990-23

The above Constitution of the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations was adopted at the Inaugural General Meeting held on this Tenth day of the month of March, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Nine at Bridgetown and first amended at the General Meeting held on this Twelfth day of the month of July, Two Thousand and Six at Bridgetown.