

Rules of Procedure of the International Conference of NGOs

(adopted on 12 December 2012)

I. OBJECTIVES

Rule 1 - Objectives

1.1 The International Conference of NGOs, hereafter referred to as “the Conference”, is defined in Section XI.1 of the Directives concerning UNESCO’s partnership with non-governmental organizations, adopted by the General Conference at its 36th session (36 C/Res. 108) (hereafter referred to as “the Directives”).

1.2 The Conference aims at:

- (i) examining the procedures for consultation and co-operation between UNESCO and NGOs in official partnership to further improve them;
- (ii) fostering dialogue and mutual understanding among NGOs so as to enhance the efficacy of their contribution to UNESCO’s programme, bringing NGOs having common interests closer together and facilitating implementation of jointly prepared studies and projects;
- (iii) analyzing the main trends of UNESCO’s programme, and conducting a collective consultation on the main lines of its future programmes and its Medium-Term Strategy;
- (iv) gathering advice and suggestions from NGOs in official partnership on the priority fields of UNESCO’s programme, and conducting in particular a collective consultation regarding the Director-General’s preliminary proposals about the Draft Programme and Budget and Draft Medium-Term Strategy.

1.3 The Conference shall listen to the view of the Director-General of UNESCO or to his/her representative regarding the suggestions and recommendations of the Conference on UNESCO’s programme.

1.4 The Conference shall transmit its recommendations to the Director-General of UNESCO.

1.5 The Conference shall not be a substitute for the direct co-operative relations that NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO maintain.

II. SESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

Rule 2 – Frequency, Dates and Venue of the Conference

1.1 The Conference shall meet every two years.

1.2 The dates and the venue of the session shall be fixed jointly by the Director-General of UNESCO and the Chairperson of the Conference, so as to insure the best possible visibility of the partnership between UNESCO and NGOs, and facilitate the contribution of NGOs to the planning and implementation of UNESCO’s programme.

- 1.3 The session of the Conference shall be held at UNESCO Headquarters or in any Member State of the Organization, provided that the State undertakes to take all necessary measures to admit on its territory, for the purpose of participating in the Conference, the representatives of the organizations invited as well as any other person officially invited to the meeting.

Rule 3 - Convocation

The session of the Conference shall be jointly convened by the Director-General of UNESCO and the Chairperson of the Conference, at least three months prior to its opening.

Rule 4 - Members

All NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO under the terms of the Directives shall have the right to take part in the proceedings of the Conference with the right to vote.

Rule 5 – Observers

Member States and Associate Members of UNESCO as well as Non-Member States may participate as observers in the Conference.

Rule 6 – Agenda

6.1 The provisional agenda of the session shall be prepared by the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee (see Rule 9) in consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO. It will be sent to all NGOs when the session is being convened.

6.2 Each session of the Conference shall be structured around a theme in connection with the priorities of UNESCO.

6.3 The Conference shall adopt its agenda at the beginning of each session.

III. BUREAU

Rule 7 – The Chairperson¹

7.1 The Conference shall elect a Chairperson from among personalities representing an NGO in official partnership with UNESCO.

7.2 The Chairperson is elected in his personal capacity for a non-renewable term of office of two years. The term of office of the Chairperson shall begin at the close of the session at which he is elected and shall end at the close of the following session.

7.3 The Chairperson shall also exercise the functions of Chairperson of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee as well as any other duties entrusted to him by the Conference.

7.4 If the Chairperson is unable to exercise his/her functions during a part or the entirety of his term of office, his duties shall be carried out by the Vice-Chairperson until he resumes his activities, and at the latest until the following Conference.

7.5 The Chairperson shall be elected by a majority vote pursuant to the procedure annexed to the present Rules.

Rule 8 – Bureau

8.1 The Conference shall elect, for the duration of its session, one or more vice-chairperson(s) and one or two rapporteur(s) from among the members of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee.

¹All the terms used in these Rules of Procedure to designate the person discharging duties or functions are to be interpreted as implying that men and women are equally eligible to fill any post or seat associated with the discharge of these duties and functions.

8.2 The Chairperson of the Conference, the vice-chairperson(s) and the other members of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall constitute the Bureau of the Conference. The Bureau shall co-ordinate the work of the Conference and of any of its subsidiary bodies, deliberate on all procedural matters, organize and supervise the conduct of elections, and, in general terms, assist the Chairperson in conducting the proceedings of the Conference.

IV. ORGANS OF THE CONFERENCE

Rule 9 – NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee

9.1 The Conference shall elect a NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee made up of ten (10) NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO: four (4) with associate status and six (6) with consultative status. In accordance with section XI.1.2 of the Directives, all of the regions, as defined by UNESCO², shall be represented by at least one NGO partner having its headquarters in that region.

9.2 The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall meet at least three times a year. In accordance with section XI.2.1(vii) of the Directives, the Committee shall organize, in consultation with the UNESCO Secretariat, a twice yearly “NGO Forum” on a UNESCO priority issue.

9.3 The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall designate a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

9.4 Members of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall be elected by a majority vote pursuant to the procedure annexed to the present Rules, for a term of office of two years only renewable once consecutively. Their term of office shall begin at the close of the session at which they are elected and shall end at the close of the following session.

9.5 Organizations proposing themselves as candidates shall specify the name of their representative and shall state their readiness to assume, if necessary, the functions of Vice-Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, as well as any other tasks.

9.6 The NGO in official partnership which presented the candidature of the newly elected Chairperson of the Conference cannot be elected to the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee.

9.7 The NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee can set up, for a fixed period of time, Joint Programmatic Commissions in agreement with UNESCO as well as working groups on specific themes to namely prepare the above-mentioned fora.

Rule 10 – Subsidiary bodies of the Conference

The Conference may establish subsidiary bodies to examine particular questions in the course of its proceedings.

V. SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE

Rule 11 – Secretariat

11.1 The Secretary of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall perform the duties of Secretary of the Conference in conjunction with the UNESCO Secretariat.

11.2 The Director-General of UNESCO decides on the staff required to assist the Conference and its organs in their proceedings.

2 See Groupings of Member States for the purpose of elections to the Executive Board (Groups I, II, III, IV, V.a and V.b)

11.3 The Secretary of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall present the activity report which is submitted for approval to the Conference. The Treasurer shall present the financial report of the Liaison Committee to the Conference.

11.4 The Director-General of UNESCO, or his/her representative, takes part in the proceedings of the Conference.

VI. CONDUCT OF DEBATES

Rule 12 - Organization of the work

12.1 Sessions of the Conference are organized in such a way that their proceedings are primarily devoted to substantive discussions.

12.2 The meetings of the Conference shall be held in public.

Rule 13 – Working languages

The official languages of the Conference shall be English and French.

Rule 14 – Decision-making

14.1 The Conference shall endeavour to arrive at its decisions by consensus; otherwise decisions shall be taken by voting by show of hands.

14.2 In the event of a vote being taken, decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of the members present and voting, except where otherwise specified in these Rules.

14.3 Each member as defined in Rule 4 of these Rules shall have one vote.

VI. ELECTIONS

Rule 15 Elections of the Chairperson and the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee

15.1 Candidatures for the office of Chairperson of the Conference and for membership of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee are addressed to the Secretary of the Liaison Committee at least thirty (30) days before the opening of the Conference. The Liaison Committee, in consultation with the UNESCO Secretariat, shall ensure that they are valid and will post them on its website. When the number of candidatures for a given category is lower than the number of seats to be filled, the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee will renew the call for candidatures for this category. The new candidatures must be submitted within ten days after the new call.

15.2 All NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO may present candidates for election and shall be entitled to vote.

15.3 Voting by proxy is allowed in accordance with the modalities indicated in the Annex to the present Rules.

15.4 The Chairperson of the Conference and the members of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall be elected by secret ballot pursuant to the procedure annexed to the present Rules.

VII. RULES OF THE CONFERENCE

Rule 16 – Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

The Conference shall adopt its Rules of Procedure by a decision taken by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

Rule 17 – Amendment of the Rules of Procedure

17.1 Amendments to the Rules of procedure of the Conference shall be made on a proposal by the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee or on a proposal presented by at least 1/10 of the members taking part in the proceedings of the Conference (including by proxy), and shall come into force after consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO and adoption by the Conference by decision taken by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting (including by proxy).

17.2 Rules which reproduce provisions of the Directives or of any other decision of the General Conference of UNESCO shall not be modified.

**Procedure for the conduct of elections by secret ballot
of the Chairperson of the Conference
and the members of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee**

Article A

Before the ballot begins, the Conference shall appoint four (4) tellers from among the organizations which are not standing for election to the office of Chairperson of the Conference or to the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, which constitute the Commission of Elections. The Chairperson of the Conference shall hand to them the list of organizations entitled to vote (including the list of organizations entitled to vote by proxy) and the list of candidates. The duties of the tellers shall be to supervise the balloting procedure, count the ballot papers, decide on the validity of a ballot paper in any case of doubt, and certify the result of each ballot. They are assisted by members of the Secretariat of the Conference.

Article B

B.1 In case of proxy vote, the organization issuing the proxy (the principal) freely decides which organization shall vote on its behalf (the agent). It shall forward to the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee the form established for that purpose, duly completed, at least three (3) working days before the date of the ballot.

B.2 An organization can be the agent of three (3) other organizations maximum.

Article C

The Secretariat of the Conference shall prepare for each organization ballot papers and envelopes, as well as relevant information concerning the balloting procedure. Ballot papers are distributed to the NGO's the day before the elections (one ballot per organization or up to four ballots in the case of organisations which have received proxies).

Article D

D.1 The ballots shall be held in a room different from the meeting room of the Conference and shall be supervised by the tellers, assisted by members of the Secretariat of the Conference.

D.2 Each organization shall choose a person to vote on its behalf and shall communicate it to the Secretariat of the Conference before the beginning of the elections, being understood that a single vote is allowed per organization (except in the case of vote by proxy where one additional vote is allowed per proxy).

D.3 Delegates may cast their vote at any time within the period indicated for the ballots. Each of them, before placing an envelope in the ballot box, shall register his name and affix his signature on the list of organizations entitled to vote.

Article E

E.1. The following shall be considered invalid:

- (a) ballot papers on which a voter has cast an affirmative vote in favour of more candidates than there are seats to be filled;
- (b) ballot papers on which the voters have revealed their identity, in particular by apposing their signature or mentioning the name of the organization they represent;
- (c) subject to the provisions (a) and (b) above, a ballot paper shall be considered valid when the tellers are satisfied as to the intention of the voter.

E.2 The absence of any ballot paper in the envelope as well as ballot papers containing no indication as to the intention of the voter shall be considered as an abstention.

Article F

F.1 After the closure of each ballot, the votes cast shall be entered on the lists prepared for that purpose.

F.2 The lists on which the tellers have recorded the results of the votes shall constitute the official record of the ballot after signature by the tellers.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Article G

G.1 Ballot papers for the election of the Chairperson shall bear the names of all the candidates in French alphabetical order, accompanied by the name of the membership organization.

G.2 The voters shall indicate the candidate for whom they wish to vote by ticking the box appearing opposite the name of each candidate. The ballot paper shall bear no other notation or sign than those required for the purpose of indicating the vote.

G.3 When the counting of the votes is completed, the representative appointed by the Commission of Elections shall announce in a plenary meeting the results of the ballot. The candidate having obtained more than half of the valid votes cast (not counting abstentions) shall be declared elected.

G.4 In case no candidate obtains the required majority, there shall be a second secret ballot restricted to those two candidates who obtained the larger number of votes. During this second ballot, the candidate having obtained the largest number of vote will be proclaimed elected. If in the second ballot the two candidates obtain the same number of votes, the Chairperson of the Conference shall decide, by drawing lots in a plenary meeting, the candidate to be considered elected.

ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NGO-UNESCO LIAISON COMMITTEE

Article H

The elections of the members of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee shall be held in two ballots, the first ballot allowing the election of six (6) organizations having each its headquarters in one of the regions defined by UNESCO, and the second ballot allowing to fill the remaining seats taking also into account the distribution of seats based on the status of partnership (association and consultation).

Article I

I.1 Ballot papers for the first ballot shall be of different colours according to regions such as defined by UNESCO¹ and bear the names of all the candidate organizations for the concerned region.

I.2 Where the number of candidates is the same as to the number of seats to be filled, the candidates shall be declared elected without the need to hold a ballot.

1 See Rule 9.1 of these Rules of Procedure (page 3)

I.3 If no organization of a given region presents a candidature, the said region shall not be represented in the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee for the duration of the concerned term of office.

I.4 The voters shall indicate the candidates for whom they wish to vote by ticking the box appearing opposite the name of each organization candidate, up to the number of seats that remain to be filled. The ballot paper shall bear no other notation or sign than those required for the purpose of indicating the vote.

I.5 When the counting of the votes is completed, the representative designated by the Commission of Election shall announce in a plenary meeting the results of the first ballot separately for each region. Is declared elected the candidate having obtained the largest number of vote by region, up to the number of vacant seats (6 seats for the first ballot).

I.6 If several candidates of the same region obtain an equal number of votes and therefore, the number of candidates remains upper to that of the seats to be filled, it is proceeded to a second secret ballot, limited to the region from which the candidates obtained the same number of votes. If in the second ballot, several candidates obtain the same number of votes, the Chairperson shall decide then, by drawing lots in a plenary meeting, which candidate shall be considered as elected.

I.7 If, at the first ballot, more than four (4) organizations in associate status obtain the largest number of votes by region, the candidate(s) with the lowest number of votes shall be considered as non-elected; there shall therefore be a tie-break secret ballot relating to the concerned region(s) and limited to candidate organizations in consultative status.

Article J

J.1 Ballot papers for the second ballot shall bear the names of all candidate organizations not elected on the first ballot, presented in two groups according to their partnership status (consultative status or associate status), unless the representation for one of these groups has already been fulfilled, and in French alphabetical order.

J.2 Where the number of candidates is the same as to the number of seats to be filled, the candidate organizations shall be declared elected without the need to hold a ballot.

J.3 The voters shall indicate the candidates for whom they wish to vote by ticking the box appearing opposite the name of each organization candidate, up to the number of seats that remain to be filled. The ballot paper shall bear no other notation or sign than those required for the purpose of indicating the vote.

J.4 When the counting of the votes is completed, the representative designated by the Commission of Election shall announce in a plenary meeting the results of the second ballot. Are declared elected the candidates having obtained the largest number of votes for each partnership category (consultation and association) up to the number of seats that remain to be filled in for each category (up to four (4) seats for associate status and six (6) for consultative status).

J.5 If two or more candidates obtain an equal number of votes and therefore, the number of the candidates remains greater than the seats to be filled, there shall be a tie-break-secret ballot, limited to the candidates having obtained the same number of votes. If during this additional ballot, two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes, the Chairperson of the Conference shall then decide between them, by drawing lots in a plenary meeting, in order to assign the remaining seat(s).