



World YWCA

World Young Women's Christian Association

CONSTITUTION

**English Version
Updated 2003**

The following text of the Constitution and Bye-Laws was formally adopted by the Council of the World Young Women's Christian Association in session at Royal Holloway College, England, on September 6, 1955, and amended at the Council in session at Cuernavaca, Mexico, on October 2, 1959; at Nyborg Strand, Denmark, on October 1, 1963; at Melbourne, Australia, on August 25, 1967; at Accra, Ghana, on August 19, 1971; at Vancouver, Canada, on July 17, 1975; at Athens, Greece, on September 10, 1979; at Singapore, on November 11-12, 1983; at Phoenix, Arizona, USA, on September 2, 1987; at Stavanger, Norway, on July 30, 1991; at Seoul, Korea, on July 11, 1995; at Cairo, Egypt, on July 24, 1999, and at Brisbane, Australia on July 10, 2003. By action of the Council the English text as printed is the official version for all legal purposes.

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CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

Preamble

The World Young Women's Christian Association,

having been founded and subsequently developed by women from many lands who regarded knowledge of the Bible and of the traditions of the Christian faith, prayer and service as essential elements in Christian living,

sharing their convictions and being resolved to apply them in its continuing work through which women and girls come to know more of the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and to express it in responsible action for all people,

endeavouring to build a worldwide community of women and girls committed to the Christian purpose of justice, equality and freedom,

believing that unity among and respect for the dignity of all people is the will of God, and desiring as a women's lay Christian movement to promote unity among Christians and reconciliation and peace in the world,

recognising the equal value in God's sight of all human beings without distinction of any kind, i.e. race, nationality, class or religion, and seeking through respect and understanding, to promote the rights of all people,

accepting that the universe is God's creation for all and that its resources must be used with integrity,

hereby reaffirms these principles and declares this to be its Constitution.

Article I -- Name and Logo

This organisation shall be called the World Young Women's Christian Association, hereinafter referred to as the "World YWCA".

The logo shall be a circle containing a blue triangle symbolising concern for the development of body, mind and spirit.

Article II -- Basis

Faith in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord and Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit.

Article III - Aim

The World YWCA unites associations which are working in accordance with its basis, and with its principles as expressed in the Preamble and meet the requirements for affiliation; it seeks to coordinate them into a world movement; it acts on their behalf in matters for which it has received authority.

Article IV - Functions

The World YWCA

- brings women and girls of different traditions, through its affiliated associations, into a worldwide community which is based on Christian principles, and dedicated to the development of their full potential,
- provides a channel for the sharing of resources and the exchange of experience among its affiliated associations,
- helps its affiliated associations with the development of their leadership and programme,
- identifies and promotes work to meet emerging needs,
- represents the world movement, expressing the mandate given by its principles, policies and World Council decisions,

- works for basic human rights for all peoples, for improved social and economic conditions and for international understanding,
- acts in cooperation with other international governmental and non-governmental organisations and voluntary movements in matters of common concern,
- undertakes and sponsors in times of emergency, international humanitarian, welfare, and relief work, in accordance with Christian principles, irrespective of differences such as religious, social, political, national or racial differences.

Article V -- Affiliation

Section 1 - Conditions of Affiliation

- (a) Christian purpose in accordance with the basis and principles of the World YWCA;
- (b) leadership by women committed to the Christian purpose of the World YWCA and as representative as possible of the community;
- (c) a membership organisation.

Section 2 - Status of Affiliation

The following may be affiliated to the World YWCA:

- National associations which have accepted in full the privileges and responsibilities of affiliation;
- National associations which, because of special circumstances in their own situation, do not meet all the requirements and obligations of affiliation;
- Associations working towards national status;
- Associations of small island states and territories, which by their limited size, have no current potential to work toward

national status and can only participate in a world movement in corporate membership with others, as a geographic group.

The status of an affiliated association shall be determined by the World Council on the recommendation of the Executive Committee in accordance with standards stated in the Bye-Laws.

The World Council shall have the power to add other definitions of affiliation to the above as need may arise, determining representation and participation in World Council.

Section 3 - Obligations and Responsibilities of Affiliation

- (a) To help the World YWCA to achieve its purpose as a world movement.
- (b) To quote the basis of the World YWCA in their constitutions, and to submit these constitutions, and subsequent amendments, to the World YWCA for approval.
- (c) To contribute to the financial support of the World YWCA in accordance with a plan approved by the World Council.
- (d) To safeguard the reputation of the World YWCA through the practice of good management and accountability.
- (e) To keep the World YWCA informed by periodical reports of current work and developments in accordance with a plan approved by its Council.
- (f) To promote and implement World YWCA Statements of Policy.
- (g) To ensure that all boards and committees include young women.

Section 4 - Change of Status

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for reviewing, in consultation with the association concerned, the status of any association either on its own initiative or as requested by the

association. It shall also be responsible for recommending any change of status for decision by the World Council.

Section 5 - Disaffiliation

Should an association cease to fulfil the conditions, obligations and responsibilities of affiliation, notice must be given to all affiliated associations not less than one year before the World Council meeting. The World Council, after thorough investigation, may decide with a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the vote cast, which must also represent a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the affiliated associations, that the said association be no longer affiliated.

In the event that an association is disaffiliated, the disaffiliated association shall immediately discontinue use of the name and the logo of the "YWCA" or "Young Women's Christian Association".

Article VI -- World Council

The legislative power of the World YWCA shall be vested in its Council, referred to in this Constitution and Bye-Laws as the "World Council".

There shall be regular meetings of the World Council as specified in the Bye-Laws.

Section 1 – Attendance

- (a) Delegates of affiliated associations who shall be women members active in the life of their association,
- (b) The Officers and other Executive Committee members of the World YWCA, Designated Staff members of the World YWCA,
- (c) Visitors and observers invited by the Executive Committee as specified in the Bye-Laws.

Section 2 – Representation

- (a) Affiliated national associations having 15,000 members or fewer, up to six delegates including the National President and National General Secretary. Those with more than 15,000

members: six delegates (as above) plus one additional delegate for each additional 15,000 members (or part thereof) to a maximum of six additional delegates.

- (b) Associations working towards national status, up to three delegates including the President and General Secretary.
- (c) Associations of small island states and territories as provided in Article V, Section 2, up to three delegates.

Section 3 - Voting Rights

- (a) The delegates of affiliated associations have voting rights as specified in the Bye-Laws,
- (b) The Officers and other Executive Committee members of the World YWCA have voting rights as specified in the Bye-Laws,
- (c) Staff members of the World YWCA do not have voting rights,
- (d) Visitors and observers do not have voting rights.

Article VII -- Executive Committee

In the intervals between Council meetings, responsibility for the business of the World YWCA shall be carried by an Executive Committee and officers elected by the World Council.

The elected Executive Committee including the elected Officers shall consist of a maximum of 20 women of whom at least 25 % shall be young women of the age of 30 or under when elected. Due regard should also be given in the election process to racial, national and geographical diversity.

The immediate past World President shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee for the single term following her presidency without right to vote.

The General Secretary shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee without right to vote.

The Executive Committee shall appoint the sub-committees specified in the Bye-Laws.

Article VIII -- Officers

Section 1

The Officers of the World YWCA, who shall serve as the Officers of the Executive Committee, shall be elected with a view to securing representation from the geographical areas in which there are national associations. They shall be:

The President

Five Vice-Presidents who shall be elected from among the members of the Executive Committee

The Treasurer

Section 2

The General Secretary is also an Officer of the World YWCA.

Article IX -- Elections

Section 1 - Nominating Committee

There shall be a Nominating Committee of the World YWCA, the members of which shall be elected at each World Council as provided in the Bye-Laws.

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for setting up and implementing election procedures after they have been approved by the World Council. It shall carry responsibility until elections have been held.

Section 2 - Election Procedure

Officers of the World YWCA, other members of the Executive Committee and members of the Nominating Committee shall be elected by ballot at the World Council by a majority vote. Officers and

other Executive Committee members shall serve until their successors are elected and take office.

Section 3 - Vacancies

The Executive Committee shall fill by cooption any vacancy occurring in any elected position except for the positions of President and Treasurer, during the period between World Councils with a candidate from the same region as the vacating member. Such vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote at the first regular or special meeting of the Executive Committee following the vacancy, or sooner by postal ballot. Cooption shall count as a period of service in calculating eligibility for re-election if it covers at least two years.

Article X -- Meetings

World conferences, regional conferences or consultations relating to special subjects shall be called by the World Council or Executive Committee as needed. Such bodies shall have power to make recommendations to the World Council.

Article XI -- Finance and Property

Section 1

The funds of the World YWCA shall come from:

- (a) regular contributions of its affiliated associations, in accordance with a plan approved by the World Council;
- (b) donations, subscriptions and legacies;
- (c) income from sale of its publications and other material, from its operations and investments, and from any other sources approved by the Executive Committee.

Section 2

The funds specified in Section 1 above alone guarantee the liabilities of the World YWCA, to the exclusion of all personal financial responsibility

on the part of its officers, committee members, staff and affiliated associations.

Section 3

The World YWCA shall have the right to acquire, purchase, lease, hold, sell, mortgage or encumber real and personal property in any part of the world, and all such property shall be held in the name of the World YWCA.

Article XII -- Powers

The provisions of this Constitution shall not be considered as conferring on the World Council or the Executive Committee any power to interfere with the domestic affairs of any affiliated association.

Article XIII -- Legal Status, Headquarters, Signature

Section 1

The World YWCA is an incorporated body and possesses civil personality in accordance with Article 60 and following of the Swiss Civil Code.

Section 2

The permanent office of the World YWCA shall be at Geneva, Switzerland.

Section 3

The World YWCA shall be bound by such signatures of its Officers and members of staff and in such circumstances as shall be determined from time to time by the Executive Committee.

Article XIV -- Dissolution

- (a) The World YWCA may be dissolved by a resolution at a World Council or at an Extraordinary Meeting of the World Council passed by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast which must represent not less than two-thirds (2/3) of all affiliated associations and be representative of all geographical areas.

The quorum for dissolution shall be as specified in the Bye-Laws. Voting on such a resolution shall be by affiliated association vote as specified in the Bye-Laws.

- (b) In the event of dissolution or winding up of the World YWCA, all of its remaining assets after payment of liabilities shall be distributed to such of its affiliated national YWCAs as exist at the time of dissolution or winding up unless they waive their privilege. The manner of such distribution shall be determined by the Executive Committee together with such trustee(s) as may be appointed by the World Council.

Article XV -- Amendments

This Constitution, including the Preamble, may be amended at any World Council by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast, which must represent not less than two-thirds (2/3) of affiliated associations.

Proposal for such an amendment may be made by the Executive Committee or an affiliated association.

Notice of such proposal shall be mailed to every affiliated association by the World YWCA at least one year before the World Council at which the amendment is put to the vote.

An amendment will take effect immediately upon conclusion of the World Council at which it is adopted.

BYE-LAWS

Article I -- Affiliation

The following are the factors to be taken into consideration in determining affiliation of associations:

1. National associations are those which meet the following requirements:

- (a) a Constitution approved by the World YWCA;
- (b) a name and a logo not inconsistent with that of the World YWCA;
- (c) provision for members to participate fully in determining policy;
- (d) local branches, centres or groups in relation to the potentiality of the country, promise of continuity and plans for further development;
- (e) commitment to the advancement of women and girls;
- (f) programme consistent with the principles set out in the Preamble of the World YWCA Constitution;
- (g) a plan for the provision of financial self-support;
- (h) commitment to educate members on and to work towards the implementation of the World YWCA Statements of Policy.

2. Associations in the initial stages of development are those which do not meet all the requirements listed for national association (a) to (h) but give evidence that they are working towards national status and towards meeting the above-mentioned requirements.

3. Geographic groups are those associations in corporate membership which do not meet all the requirements (a) to (h) nor have the current potential for individual national affiliation.

Article II -- World Council

Section 1 - Task

The World Council shall:

- (a) consider and approve the rules of procedure for the meeting prepared by the Executive Committee;

- (b) consider and approve a report from the Executive Committee on the work done since the last World Council;
- (c) consider and approve an account of the management of funds of the World YWCA since the last World Council;
- (d) ratify the appointment of the General Secretary;
- (e) decide on requests for affiliation and for recognition, each affiliated association having received a report from the Executive Committee on such requests three months previously;
- (f) consider and decide on proposals by the Executive Committee and/or national associations for the amendment of the Constitution and Bye-Laws;
- (g) decide on the general policies for the coming period with reference to the work of the Executive Committee and the means to be taken to fulfil the purpose of the World YWCA;
- (h) consider and approve the general lines of the budget for the period until the next Council meeting;
- (i) elect officers, other members of the Executive Committee and members of the Nominating Committee;
- (j) review and revise as necessary the criteria for nomination of officers and other members of the World Executive Committee;
- (k) indicate the considerations that should determine the place and date of the next World Council.

Section 2 - Meetings

The World Council shall meet at least once in four years, due notice thereof and the agenda having been posted to be received by all affiliated associations six months in advance.

An Extraordinary Meeting of the World Council shall be held if called for by one-fifth (1/5) of the affiliated associations, due notice having been sent three months in advance.

Section 3 - Resolutions

Resolutions of the World Council shall be passed by a majority of the votes cast unless otherwise stated in this Constitution or Bye-Laws. In the event of a tie, the President shall have the deciding vote.

Section 4 - Quorum

At least one delegate each from three-fifths (3/5) of the affiliated associations shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the World Council.

In the event of this quorum not being present, any resolution passed shall be submitted to all absent affiliated associations for ratification, and shall not be acted upon until ratified by a sufficient number to make the required quorum.

In the event of a motion of dissolution, a quorum shall be not less than two-thirds (2/3) of all affiliated associations, and be representative of all geographical areas.

Sections 5 - Attendance

Should an affiliated association submit a valid reason for the inability of either its president or general secretary to attend the World Council meeting in that capacity, the Executive Committee of the World YWCA shall grant the right of proxy to a woman member of similar experience nominated by the national association.

The Executive Committee is empowered to invite visitors, observers, consultants, area coordinators and representatives of organisations to meetings of the World Council, due regard being paid to the size of the meeting and the number of delegates expected.

Article III -- Voting Rights at World Council

1. Associations

- (a) Voting on affiliation, calling of Extraordinary Meetings, amendments to the Constitution and Bye-Laws:
- all delegates of national associations which have accepted in full the privileges and responsibilities of affiliation,
 - half the delegates of national associations which do not meet all the requirements and responsibilities of affiliation,
 - one delegate from an association working towards national status,

- one delegate from a geographic group in corporate membership.
- (b) On a motion of dissolution, each affiliated association shall have one vote as per Article XIV of the Constitution.
- (c) On all other matters ALL delegates may vote.

2. World YWCA

Members of the Executive Committee including Officers shall have the right to vote except on the acceptance of the report prepared by the Committee on their work and the report on their management of the funds of the World YWCA.

3. No delegate, or member of the World YWCA Executive Committee shall be entitled to exercise more than one vote.

4. There shall be no votes in absentia.

Article IV -- Executive Committee

Section 1 - Responsibilities

The Executive Committee shall:

- (a) carry out the general policy as determined by the World Council;
- (b) consider and if appropriate approve any alternative wording of the Basis submitted by a national association for inclusion in its own Constitution, provided that it is consistent with Article II of the World YWCA Constitution;
- (c) keep affiliated associations regularly informed of its work;
- (d) be responsible for identifying emerging needs and deciding how to meet them;
- (e) be responsible to the World Council for its work and for the management of the funds of the World YWCA;
- (f) present a financial report to the World Council;
- (g) submit an annual audited financial statement to all affiliated associations;
- (h) be responsible for appointment of World YWCA staff members;
- (i) have the power to suspend the affiliation of an association that has seriously infringed Article V Section 3 (d) of the Constitution

on such terms as may be appropriate and based on standards set by the Executive Committee and ratified by the World Council.

Section 2 - Terms of Service

The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a term of four years or until the World Council following their election. They shall be eligible for re-election for one more consecutive term except in the case of the President and the Treasurer.

A member of the Executive Committee having served one term of four years may, if elected President, serve two further consecutive terms as President.

A member of the Executive Committee having served two terms consecutively may be eligible for election as President for one further consecutive term of four years.

The office of the President is for a maximum of two terms.

The Treasurer may hold her office for additional terms provided her service as a member of the Executive Committee is not thereby extended beyond four consecutive terms.

The retiring President shall become a member of the Executive Committee without vote for one term following her term of office.

Section 3 - Eligibility

In order to be eligible for membership in the Executive Committee a candidate must be a woman YWCA member of an affiliated association, experienced and active in a national or local association.

Section 4 - Meetings

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a year and provision shall be made in the budget for the attendance of members.

The Executive Committee shall have power to invite visitors and consultants to attend its meetings.

Section 5 - Quorum

Seven members of the Executive Committee must be present to constitute a quorum.

Section 6 - Sub-Committees

The Executive Committee shall appoint the following sub-committees: Finance; Secretariat; Constitution and Affiliation; and such other sub-committees as it may deem necessary. Sub-committees may include women who are not members of the Executive Committee.

Article V -- Officers

- (a) *President*--The President shall preside at business meetings of the World Council and the Executive Committee and shall perform the other duties incumbent upon her office. She shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and sub-committees.
- (b) *Vice-Presidents*--The Vice-Presidents shall assist the President in her duties and may be called to perform the same in the absence of the President.
- (c) *Treasurer*--The Treasurer shall have charge of the funds of the World YWCA. She shall present a yearly report to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have the power to appoint one or more deputy treasurers if needed who shall have the right to attend meetings of the Executive Committee without voting rights.
- (d) *General Secretary*--The General Secretary shall act as the executive officer of the World YWCA. She shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and sub-committees. She shall present a yearly report to the Executive Committee.

Article VI -- Elections

Section 1 - Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee of the World YWCA shall consist of thirteen members.

Three members shall be elected by the World Council at the end of each Council meeting, from among the members of the newly elected Executive Committee, to serve until the end of the following World Council meeting. These members cannot be candidates for the World YWCA Executive Committee at the next World Council.

Ten members shall be elected, by ballot, at the beginning of each World Council to serve throughout the period of the meeting and shall include representation by young women and be representative of each geographical area.

The three members of the Nominating Committee elected by the World Council from among the members of the Executive Committee shall ask affiliated associations to propose the name of one of their members attending the World Council to be on the ballot from which the World Council will elect the additional ten members to that Committee.

The Nominating Committee shall elect its Chairperson at its first meeting.

Section 2 - Nominations

- (a) The three members of the Nominating Committee elected by the World Council shall invite nominations for election to the Executive Committee from:
 - i) Affiliated associations;
 - ii) The Executive Committee as a body.
- (b) Before a nomination is accepted the eligibility, as per Article IV, Section 3, of these Bye-Laws, shall be certified by the affiliated association to which the nominee belongs.
- (c) In principle, if a national association is in arrears regarding payment of its affiliation fees it cannot nominate or endorse a candidate for the position of World YWCA Executive

Committee. However, if a national association cannot pay the total amount required, it will be able to propose a candidate if the following conditions are met and approved by the World YWCA Executive Committee:

- The national association has paid the minimum fee required for affiliation;
 - The national association has made an appeal to the World YWCA Executive Committee regarding its difficult circumstances and that appeal has been accepted by this body;
 - The national association has provided an accepted payment plan.
- (d) From the names received a provisional list shall be prepared and sent to all affiliated associations four months in advance of the World Council.
 - (e) At the World Council other certified names can be added to the provisional list, provided that they are approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the associations present.
 - (f) The criteria for determining the final list of candidates shall be recommended to the World Council prior to the election of the additional 10 members of the Nominating Committee.
 - (g) The final list of candidates shall be presented to the World Council by the full Nominating Committee.

Section 3 - Election Procedure

Officers of the World YWCA, other members of the Executive Committee and members of the Nominating Committee shall be elected by ballot at the Council meeting by a majority vote.

Officers and Executive Committee members shall serve until their successors are elected and take office.

The Executive Committee Officers and members elected at a World Council meeting shall take office at the conclusion of that World Council.

Article VII -- Financial Audit and Accountability

The accounts of the World YWCA shall be audited annually by a certified auditor.

Expenditure of capital from the Endowment Fund must be approved by the Executive Committee.

Article VIII -- Inter-Association Relationships

Area federations may be set up for the purposes of consultation by neighbouring countries without prejudicing the direct relationship of the associations concerned to the World YWCA.

Article IX -- Amendments

These Bye-Laws may be amended at any meeting of the World Council by three-fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast which must represent two-thirds (2/3) of the affiliated associations.

Proposal for such an amendment may be made by the Executive Committee or an affiliated association.

Notice of such proposal shall be mailed to every affiliated association by the World YWCA at least six months before the meeting at which the amendment is put to the vote.

An amendment will take effect immediately upon conclusion of the World Council at which it is adopted.

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2004