

COMHAD CONSTITUTION

C O M H A D

COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTH AND DISABILITY

(Formerly known as CAMHADD, The Commonwealth Association for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities)

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Article 1

Name

The name of the Association shall be the Commonwealth Association for Health and Disability (COMHAD).

Article 2

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Association shall be to provide education and research in health and disability for quality of life.

In the furtherance of this aim the Association will advocate and promote:

- i. Quality health care
- ii. Accessible, acceptable and affordable health care, in particular for people with disability
- iii. Professional links between workers in health and disability across the Commonwealth.
- iv. The aims and objectives will be achieved through regional and international conferences, workshops and symposiums, publications and communications, demonstration and other projects, training exercises and professional exchange and development programmes.

Article 3

Membership and Voting Rights

- i. Membership of COMHAD shall build upon, be continuous with, and transferable from its predecessor CAMHADD.
- ii. Membership shall be open to interested individuals from any country.
- iii. Membership of the Executive Committee shall be open only to individuals from Commonwealth countries. **However, those having changed citizenship, but originally coming from a Commonwealth country may be elected to the Executive Committee.**
- iv. On acceptance, each member will pay such annual subscription as may be determined by the Executive Committee. Subscriptions fall due on 1st January and all members are expected to pay promptly and remain in good standing, which will remain valid till 31st December. The subscription of membership will be the same whenever in the calendar year one is accepted as member of the organization.
- v. All members may vote on matters put before the General Assembly.

Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated as follows:

- i. By resignation.
- ii. Through default in the payment of membership subscriptions.
- iii. Where conduct is in any way damaging to the interests and good name of the Association, in which case the Secretary General will notify the member to explain his/her conduct within 30 days. If s/he fails to do so or his/her conduct or his explanation is found to be unsatisfactory, the Executive Committee is empowered to remove such a member.

Membership of the Executive Committee may be terminated if any member remains absent from three consecutive meetings, or does not respond by post or emails explaining the reasons for such absence.

Article 4

Governance

- i. COMHAD shall have as its Founding Patron Dr V.R. Pandurangi

- ii. A General Assembly will be held each year rotating in the Commonwealth countries as may be decided by the Executive Committee.

- iii. However, the General Assembly of the members of COMHAD on the third year of the Executive Committee will be held in the country of the incoming President, who will normally have already been a regional Vice President for one or two terms and will stand down after the period of his/her Presidency. If due to some reasons the President is unable to conduct General Body meets, any one of the other regional Vice-Presidents can request for holding the General Body meeting with the approval of Executive Body.

- iv. At the General Assembly, on the third year of the EC, the President-in-waiting shall be elected from the Vice Presidents of regions other than that of the incumbent President in order to rotate the Presidency and give him/her three years to organize the next General Assembly in his/her own country.

- v. In the event that the President is unable to attend the General Assembly for any reason, the Executive Committee shall select a Chair for the meeting from amongst the Regional Vice-Presidents.

- vi. At the General Assembly all members of COMHAD will be entitled to vote for an Executive Committee consisting of the following officers in addition to the **President**:

Vice President (Africa)

Vice President (Caribbean and Canada)

Vice President (Europe)

Vice President (Pacific)

Vice President (Asia)

Secretary General

Treasurer

- vii. Vice Presidents will hold office for three years, renewable for three years. Individuals will become eligible for re-election after an absence of three years.
- viii. In the first instance the Secretary General and Treasurer will be entitled to hold office for up to three three-year terms, after which the posts will be tenable for one three year term, renewable for a further three year term.
- ix. Voting on all proposals may be in person or by postal or e-voting. All members shall be entitled to vote for the Secretary General and Treasurer. Only Members from the regions in question will be entitled to nominate and vote for their regional Vice-President. In the absence of a nomination for such a representative regional Vice-President, the Executive Committee will recommend and select an appointment. The President, Secretary General and Treasurer may be elected from any member country of the Commonwealth save that the Secretary General and Treasurer will normally reside in the same country in order to facilitate the administration of COMHAD.

- x. Two non-executive Joint Secretaries may be selected to assist in the day-to-day running of COMHAD. The Joint Secretary to the President will be selected by the President from national COMHAD members in his/her own country. The Joint Secretary to the Secretary-General will be selected by the Secretary-General from national COMHAD members in his/her own country.

- xi. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to nominate a non-executive Honorary Representative who shall be resident in the UK and able to attend and report upon relevant meetings held at the Commonwealth Headquarters in London.

- xii. There shall be a Finance Sub-Committee consisting of the President, Secretary General and Treasurer, who will make recommendations as needed to the Executive Committee. The Treasurer will execute the financial decisions of the Executive Committee.

- xiii. Further Sub-Committees may be appointed and disbanded by the Executive Committee and/or the General Assembly for such purposes as may arise from time to time, for example organizational matters, research, publication and communication and fund-raising.

- xiv. A quorum for the Executive Committee shall be four members of the Executive Committee. In the event that a meeting is non-quorate, it shall be adjourned. The members of the EC present will then reunite in 15 minutes which will form the quorum who will thereafter address the agenda, submitting all proposed decisions and recommendations to the General Assembly . All approved decisions by the General Assembly will be taken as final and valid. The decisions will then be sent to the absentee EC members for endorsement.

- xv. Regional Vice Presidents will undertake to manage the regional affairs of COMHAD. They will act as Chair of regional meetings, and administer projects and activities that may take place in their regions from time to time, establishing autonomous committees as needed for the purpose. They will from time to time be called upon to advise the Executive Committee on identification of priority issues, suitability of members, advisability of grants and other such enquiries that may arise from the working of the Association or be received by the Association from time to time.

Article 5

Administration

- i. The COMHAD working address will be that of the Secretary General, COMHAD, who will be expected to provide the necessary office facilities.
- ii. For the purpose of receiving membership dues and other contributions COMHAD shall operate a Bank Account (at the country of residence of the Secretary General). For the operational facilities to be made convenient, the Treasurer will also will come from the country of residence of he Secretary General.
- iii. All cheques and internet transactions will require joint authorization by the Secretary General and Treasurer.
- iv. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for setting the annual budget. The Treasurer will prepare an audited annual statement of accounts, to be approved by the Executive Committee and circulated to all members of COMHAD.

Article 6

Finance

- i. The funds of the association shall consist of grants, contributions, membership fees, covenants and other forms of income as may be acquired from time to time. They shall be used exclusively for the aims and objectives outlined in Article 2.
- ii. The President, Secretary General and Treasurer may claim basic running costs from the organization, but no allowance will be made for capital items.
- iii. The members of the Executive Committee shall be responsible for ensuring the financial viability of COMHAD and will bear financial liability for the operations of COMHAD.
- iv. COMHAD may not enter into credit or loan agreements of any kind.

Article 7

Membership Dues

The Executive Committee shall decide the level of membership dues and inform all members of any changes that may occur from time to time in order to enable the efficient functioning of the Association and sustain the costs associated with its work. Subscriptions shall fall due on 1st January each year.

Article 8

Amendments to the Constitution

- i. Constitutional amendments can only be made through proposals to the Executive Committee and adoption by the General Assembly.
- ii. Notice of proposed amendments should be mailed by at least five members to the Secretary General at least three months prior to a meeting of the General Assembly. The Secretary General will circulate the proposed amendments to all members at least 30 days before the General Assembly.
- iii. Two thirds of the votes given thereon in the General Assembly including the postal / e-mail vote shall be necessary for approval of any amendment of the constitution.

Article 9

Dissolution

The Association shall be dissolved only by consent of at least two thirds of the Executive Committee, all members of which will be notified at least three months prior to any decision being taken. A postal or email referendum will be undertaken if necessary.

In the event of dissolution, there will be a concomitant decision on the method of dealing with the funds and other assets of the Association. These will be discharged towards organizations and associations with similar aims and objectives and the decision upon such discharge will be carried by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee.

Article 10

Notice of Meetings

Notices for meetings of the General Assembly shall be served upon members at least three months in advance. Notices for meetings of the Executive Committee (which may be by teleconference) shall be served upon its members one month in advance.

Article 11

Legal Adviser and Auditor

- i. Legal advisors and auditors shall be selected by the Executive Committee based on the recommendations of Secretary-General. This will be placed in the General Assembly for approval.
- ii. In the event that COMHAD annual income is less than £10,000 in any year, an internal audit shall be carried out by the Treasurer and one other member from a different region of COMHAD
- iii. In case the annual income is greater than £10,000, the report must be sent to the office of the Commonwealth Foundation. COMHAD will be obligated to the CF to answer any queries as may be felt by the Foundation office.

Article 12

CAMHADD National Chapters

- i. National Chapters throughout the Commonwealth are encouraged to be organized in accordance of the principles of COMHAD laid down in Article 2.
- ii. The Executive Committee of the National Chapters will consist of: President - 1, Vice President -1, Secretary – 1, Joint Secretary – 1, Treasurer -1, Members -2, Representative of Central Body -1 (Either a member of the Central Executive Committee or any general member of COMHAD designated by the central EC).
- iii. All functional matters of National Chapters will in accordance to the Constitution of the COMHAD.
- iv. The national Chapters will be able to raise funds and maintain joint accounts consisting of the President, Secretary and Treasurer. For any transactions, cheques must be signed by the treasurer and either the President and Secretary.
- v. The National Chapters will have a Constitution of their own laid down on the principles of the COMHAD Constitution.
- vi. Both the Constitution of the National Chapters of COMHAD and Executive Committee will require the endorsement of the Central Executive Committee.

[This Constitution of COMHAD (Commonwealth Association of Health and Disabilities) with all the amendments was placed before the General Body Meeting of CAMHADD (Commonwealth Association of Mental Handicap and Developmental Disabilities), dated 16th August, 2008 held at Pondicherry, India and was unanimously passed.]

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Dr. Uday Bodhankar
Secretary General COMHAD
Ramdaspath, Nagpur. 440012 M.S, INDIA
FAX : 0091- 712- 2428145 \ 2421017
Email : ubodhankar@hotmail.com
ugbodhankar@gmail.com