



CONSTITUTION OF COMHAD

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)**

ARTICLE 1

NAME OF ASSOCIATION :

The name of the Association shall be the “**Commonwealth Association for Health and Disability**” (hereinafter referred to and called as “**COMHAD**” for the sake of brevity)

ADDRESS OF COMHAD :

- The working address of COMHAD will be that of the Secretary General, who will be expected to provide the necessary office facilities.

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 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, symposiums, publications, communications, demonstration and other projects, training exercises and professional exchange and development programmes.

ARTICLE 3

MEMBERSHIP :

- 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, who is having clean record in all respects.
- iii. At the relevant time he/ she should not have involved in any criminal dispute or he / she should not have convicted by any Court of Law.

- iv. 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.

APPROVAL :

- 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.

VOTING RIGHTS :

- All members may vote on matters put before the General Assembly.
 - i) Voting on all proposals may be in person or by post or e-voting.
 - ii) All governing members of the executive committee shall be entitled to vote.
 - iii) In absence of nomination for such a representative regional Vice Presidents and the Executive Committee will recommend and select an appointment.
 - iv) The President Elect, Secretary General and Treasurer may be elected from any member country of the Commonwealth.
 - v) The Secretary General and Treasurer will normally reside in the same country in order to facilitate the administration of COMHAD.

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

ARTICLE 4**GOVERNANCE :**

- i. COMHAD shall have 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 President Elect for one year and prior regional Vice President for one full term of three years will stand down after the period of his/ her Presidency. If due to some reasons the President is unable to conduct General Body meets, President Elect or any one of the other regional Vice Presidents can be requested 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 Elect of the Association shall be elected in the following manner by rotation as a rule :
 1. Vice President (Asia),
 2. Vice President (Africa)
 3. Vice President (Caribbean and Canada)
 4. Vice President (Europe)
 5. Vice President (Pacific)
 6. Secretary General

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 President Elect or 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 and President Elect:
 1. Vice President (Asia),
 2. Vice President (Africa)
 3. Vice President (Caribbean and Canada)
 4. Vice President (Europe)

5. Vice President (Pacific)
6. Secretary General
7. Joint Secretary-I (President),
8. Joint Secretary-II (Secretary General)
9. Treasurer.

vii. **CRITERIA FOR PRESIDENT OF COMHAD :**

1. He / she should be regular paid member of COMHAD for more than six years with clean record in all respects.
Henceforth will be designated as INTERNATIONAL to ease use of National President of COMHAD of respective country .
2. He / she should be holding office at least one full term of one year as President Elect and one full term of three years as Vice President of COMHAD (term has to be completed on the relevant date),
3. The post of the President shall be rotating amongst the following if feasible as shown below :
 - a. Vice President (Asia),
 - b. Vice President (Africa)
 - c. Vice President (Caribbean and Canada)
 - d. Vice President (Europe)
 - e. Vice President (Pacific)
 - f. Secretary General
4. In case of non-availability of the suitable candidate or not applied for the Executive Committee of the COMHAD shall have powers to recommend a suitable COMHAD member candidate for the post of President of the COMHAD from any region having availability which will be ratified and approved in general assembly of COMHAD.
5. Term of the President will be for three years.

viii. **CRITERIA FOR PRESIDENT COMHAD ELECT :**

1. He / she should be regular paid member of COMHAD for more than six years with clean record in all respects.
2. He / she should be holding office at least one full term of three years as Vice President or Secretary General of COMHAD (term has to be completed on the relevant date),
3. The post of the President Elect shall be rotating amongst the following, if feasible, as shown below :
 - a. Vice President (Asia),

- b. Vice President (Africa)
 - c. Vice President (Caribbean and Canada)
 - d. Vice President (Europe)
 - e. Vice President (Pacific)
 - f. Secretary General
4. In case of non-availability of the suitable candidate or not applied for the Executive Committee of the COMHAD shall have powers to recommend a suitable COMHAD member candidate for the post of President Elect of the COMHAD from any region having availability which will be ratified and approved in general assembly of COMHAD.
5. Term of the President Elect will be for one year.
6. The President Elect of COMHAD will start functioning as President of COMHAD after completion of his/ her full term of one year as a President Elect.

ix. **POWERS OF PRESIDENT COMHAD ELECT :**

- 1) If due to some unavoidable reasons the President of COMHAD is unable to conduct Executive Committee Meetings or General Body Meetings, in that event the President Elect can be requested to hold meeting with prior approval of the executive body only.
- 2) The President Elect will render his/ her full cooperation and assistance to smooth functioning of the executive body of the COMHAD.
- 3) The President Elect will advise as and when called for and identify all the priority issues, suitability of the members, availability of grants and other such problems that arises from the working of the association.
- 4) To maintain continuity of the COMHAD activities.
- 5) Position of the President Elect of the COMHAD is preparatory to one to take over leadership of the organization as President and therefore, to remain informed about the activities of the organization.
- 6) The position is also to carryout responsibility of the COMHAD organization as designated by the sitting President.

- 7) The position is also to chair all the activities, sessions, meetings in the absence of the President with formal approval by the EC. This is to maintain the continuity of the activities of provisional body without wasting time for electing new President in the conference that elect a new executive body. Since the post created is new one (on date 20th January 2013 in General Body Meeting held at Dhaka Bangladesh) and has to be incorporated in the constitution of the COMHAD it will be necessary to continue function of the President Elect and adopt it in the constitution.

x. **CRITERIA FOR VICE PRESIDENT :**

- 1) He/ she will be regular paid member of the Association/ COMHAD at least for three years which ought to have been completed till the date of application for the said post.
- 2) Priority for the post of Vice President will be given to the Secretary General of the COMHAD who has successfully completed three years' term.

xi. **FUNCTIONS OF VICE PRESIDENT :**

- 1) Vice President will hold office for three years renewable for further period of three years subject to approval of general body or executive body.
- 2) In absence of President or President Elect of the COMHAD the Vice President will hold meetings of general assembly, in that event the Vice President can be requested to hold meeting with prior approval of the executive body only.
- 3) While working as President of the meeting in place of the President or President Elect the Vice President cannot *suo motu* take any important decision without prior approval of the President or Executive Body of COMHAD.
- 4) The Vice President can resolve small issues with the consent/ approval of the President or other majority members of the executive body.
- 5) 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, availability 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.

xii. **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SECRETARY GENERAL :**

- 1) He/ she will be regular paid member of the Association/COMHAD at least for three years which is to be completed till date of application for the said post.
- 2) Priority for the Secretary General's post will be given to the members holding executive post like Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of other various committees.
- 3) Record of the person must be clean in all respects.

xiii. **FUNCTIONS OF SECRETARY GENERAL :**

- 1) Maintain and manage office of COMHAD.
- 2) Organize meetings of the COMHAD.
- 3) Prior notices/ agendas be sent to all the executive members at proper time and at proper places.
- 4) Writing of minutes of meetings and maintain it throughout.
- 5) Send communications etc. for getting in touch with the executive members regarding activities/ progress of the COMHAD,
- 6) Any other duty assigned by the COMHAD.

xiv. **CRITERIA FOR TREASURER :**

- 1) He/ she will be regular paid member of the Association/COMHAD at least for three years which is to be completed till date of application for the said post.
- 2) Priority for the post of Treasurer will be given to the members having knowledge of accounts etc. and having clean record in all respects.

xv. **JOINT SECRETARIES OF COMHAD :**

- Two non-executive Joint Secretaries may be selected to assist in the day-to-day running of COMHAD.

- (a) The Joint Secretary to the President will be selected by the President from national COMHAD members in his/ her own country.
- (b) The Joint Secretary to the Secretary-General will be selected by the Secretary-General from national COMHAD members in his/ her own country.

xvi. **HONORARY REPRESENTATIVE (U.K.) :**

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

xvii. **FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE :**

- There shall be a Finance Sub Committee consisting of President or President Elect, 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.
- 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.

QUORUM FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

- 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.

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 the 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, President Elect, 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 organization 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 ADVISORS OF COMMAND :

- 1) Legal Advisors shall be selected by the Executive Committee based on the recommendations of President and Secretary-General of COMHAD. This will be placed in the General Assembly for approval, after approval by Executive Committee.

- 2) After due approval as legal advisor of the COMHAD and after his/her selection as Legal Advisor his/ her name should be incorporated in all official documents of COMHAD,
- 3) Legal Advisor of the COMHAD is entitled to attend all the proceedings of COMHAD, on official invitation,
- 4) Secretary General will take care and see that all the important meetings should be attended by the Legal Advisor of COMHAD for smooth functioning.
- 5) The Legal Advisor shall render his honorary legal services for smooth functioning / governance of the COMHAD.

AUDITOR OF COMMAND :

- 1) He/ she shall be selected by the Executive Committee based on the recommendations of the President and Secretary General of COMHAD. This will be placed in general assembly for approval after approval by Executive Committee.
- 2) In the event that annual income of COMHAD is more 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

COMHAD NATIONAL CHAPTERS :

- i. National Chapters throughout the Commonwealth are encouraged to be organized in accordance with the principles of COMHAD laid down in Article 2.
- ii. The Executive Committee of the National Chapters will consists of : President-1, Vice President-1, Secretary -1, Joint Secretary-2, Treasurer-1, Members-3, Representative of Central Body-1 (either a member of the Central Executive Committee or any general member of COMHAD designated by the Central Executive Committee), Advisors-5.
- iii. All functional matters of National Chapters will be in accordance with 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 COMHAD, dated 20th January, 2013 held at DHAKA, Bangladesh, and was unanimously passed.)

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