



CONSTITUTION OF COMHAD

(Amended in 2016)

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 International President/ 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 Commonwealth 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 of every year.** 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 of regional Vice President the Executive Committee will recommend and select an appointment.
 - iv) The International 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 Founder Dr. V.R. Pandurangi.
- ii. A General Assembly will be held preferably 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 International President, who will normally have already been an International President Elect for one full term of three years 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 International President is unable to conduct General Body meets, International President Elect or Immediate Past International President or any one of the other regional Vice Presidents can be requested for holding the General Body meeting with the approval of Executive Committee.
- iv. At the General Assembly, on the third year of the EC, the International President Elect of the Association shall be elected in the following manner by rotation as far as possible for equal representation of the region:
 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 International 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. Five Additional **Executive Board Members** from 54 Commonwealth Countries will be nominated by the present Executive Committee and their term in the office will be for three years. However, they will not have any voting powers in the Executive Committee either in meeting or in decisions.
- vi. In the event that the International President is unable to attend the General Assembly for any reason, the Executive Committee shall select a Chair for the meeting from International President Elect or Immediate Past International President or amongst the Regional Vice-Presidents.

- vii. There will be two Ex-officio members (i.e. Past International President and Past Secretary General) in the Executive Committee and they will have voting powers and their terms will be for three years.
- viii. 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 International President and International 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.
- ix. **CRITERIA FOR INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT OF COMHAD:**
 - 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 International 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 International 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 & eligible COMHAD member candidate for the post of International President of the COMHAD from any region having availability which will be ratified and approved in general assembly of COMHAD.
 - 5. Term of the International President will be for three years.

x. **CRITERIA FOR INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 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 of COMHAD (full term of three years has to be completed on the relevant date),
3. The post of the International 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 & eligible COMHAD member candidate for the post of International 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 International President Elect will be for three years.
6. The International President Elect of COMHAD will start functioning as International President of COMHAD after completion of his/ her full term of three years as an International President Elect.

xi. **POWERS OF INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT ELECT:**

- 1) If due to some unavoidable reasons the International President of COMHAD is unable to conduct Executive Committee Meetings or General Body Meetings, in that event the International President Elect or Immediate Past International President can be requested to hold meeting with prior formal approval of the Executive Committee.
- 2) The International President Elect will render his/ her full cooperation and assistance to smooth functioning of the Executive Committee of the COMHAD.
- 3) The International 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 International President Elect of the COMHAD is preparatory to one to take over leadership of the organization as International 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 present International President of COMHAD and Executive Committee of COMHAD.
- 7) The position is also to chair all the activities, sessions, meetings in the absence of the International President with formal approval by the Executive Committee. This is to maintain the continuity of the activities of provisional body without wasting time for electing new International President in the conference that elect a new Executive Committee.
- 8) Since the post created is new one (on the 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 International President Elect and adopt it in the constitution.

xii. **CRITERIA FOR INTERNATIONAL 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 International Vice President will be given to the Secretary General of the COMHAD who has successfully completed three years term.
- 3) The term of the International Vice President shall be for one full term of three years and in case of non-availability of a suitable & eligible candidate the term can be extended for another full term of three years by the Executive Committee and General Assembly of COMHAD.

xiii. **FUNCTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT:**

- 1) International Vice President will hold the office for one full term of three years renewable for further period of three years subject to approval of General Assembly or Executive Committee of COMHAD.

- 2) In absence of International President or International President Elect of the COMHAD, the International 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 Committee only.
- 3) While working as President of the meeting in place of the International President or International President Elect the Vice President cannot *suo motu* take any important decision without prior approval of the International President or Executive Committee of COMHAD.
- 4) The Vice President can resolve small issues with the consent/ approval of the International President or other majority members of the Executive Committee.
- 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.

xiv. **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.
- 4) The term of the Secretary General shall be for one full term of three years and in case of non-availability of a suitable & eligible candidate the term can be extended for another full term of three years by the Executive Committee and General Assembly of COMHAD.

xv. **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 International President and Executive Committee of COMHAD.

xvi. **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.
- 3) The term of the Treasurer shall be for one full term of three years and in case of non-availability of a suitable & eligible candidate the term can be extended for another full term of three years by the Executive Committee and General Assembly of COMHAD.

xvii. **JOINT SECRETARIES OF COMHAD:**

- Two Joint Secretaries may be selected to assist in the day-to-day running of COMHAD.
 - (a) The Joint Secretary to the International President will be selected by the International President from national COMHAD members in his/ her own country, with formal approval of Executive Committee of COMHAD.
 - (b) The Joint Secretary to the Secretary-General will be selected by the Secretary-General from national COMHAD members in his/ her own country with formal approval of Executive Committee of COMHAD.

- (C) The term of the Joint Secretaries shall be for one full term of three years and in case of non-availability of a suitable & eligible candidate the term can be extended for another full term of three years by the Executive Committee and General Assembly of COMHAD.

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

- The Executive Committee shall be empowered to nominate a non-executive Honorary Representative who shall be resident in UK and will be able to attend and report upon relevant meetings held at the Commonwealth Headquarters in London, as per the instructions of International President and Executive Committee of COMHAD.

xix. **CRITERIA FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS OF COMHAD:**

1. He / she will be regular paid member of COMHAD association at least for 3 years at the time of nomination.
2. Renewal of the nomination should be clear in all respects.
3. Priority of nomination will be given preferably zone-wise (Asia, Africa, Caribbean, Canada, Europe, Pacific)

xx. **FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE:**

- There shall be a Finance Sub Committee consisting of International President/International 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 of COMHAD 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 minimum four members of the Executive Committee (EC) of COMHAD. 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 within time limit.

ARTICLE 5

ADMINISTRATION:

- i. The COMHAD working address will be that of the International President/ 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 International President or 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 International President, International 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 two members, to the Secretary General at least two 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 **one month in advance**. Notices for meetings of

the Executive Committee (which may be by teleconference or by E-mail) shall be served upon its members **one month in advance**.

ARTICLE 11

LEGAL ADVISORS OF COMMAND:

- 1) Legal Advisors shall be selected for one full term of three years by the Executive Committee based on the recommendations of International 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.
- 6) The term of the Legal Advisor shall be for one full term of three years and can be extended for another term by Executive Committee and General Assembly of COMHAD.

AUDITOR OF COMMAND:

- 1) He/ she shall be selected by the Executive Committee based on the recommendations of the International 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.
- 3) The term of the Auditor of COMHAD shall be for one full term of three years and can be extended for another term by Executive Committee and General Assembly of COMHAD.

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 consist of: National President -1, National Vice President-2, Hon. Secretary -1, Joint Secretary-2, Treasurer-1, Members-5, Representatives of Central Body- 2 (International President and Hon. Secretary General), 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 National President, Secretary and Treasurer. For any transactions, cheques must be signed by the Treasurer and either the National President or 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 in all its functions/amendments.

(This constitution of COMHAD (Commonwealth Association for Health and Disabilities) with all the amendments was placed before Executive Committee and General Body Meeting of COMHAD, dated 5th December, 2015 held at NAGPUR (INDIA), and was unanimously passed.)

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