

Association des Ombudsmans de la Méditerranée ●

جمعية الأوبوسمان المتوسطيين ●

Asociación de Ombudsman del Mediterráneo ●

Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen ●



STATUTES

*General Assembly – Marseille, 19 December 2008;
Statutes as amended in Malta on 10th of March 2016*

PREAMBLE

Considering that mediators, ombudsmen, Diwan Al Madhalims and People's Defenders are institutions mandated to receive complaints from people who consider themselves prejudiced against by public administrations, and, as the case may be, to investigate in order to determine the legitimacy of such complaints;

Considering that these institutions, to carry out their missions properly, need to be independent of the citizens and authorities within their competence and of the authorities to which they are accountable;

Considering that this independence guarantees them freedom of action within the framework of their mandate, as well as their neutrality and efficiency;

Considering that this independence depends on the stability of the statutes governing these institutions and the sufficiency of the resources at their disposal;

The Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen and its members undertake to promote the creation of new institutions of Mediators, Ombudsmen, Diwan Al Madhalims or People's Defenders, and to consolidate existing institutions and promote and defend the independence of these institutions.

Considering also that due to changes in the function of Mediators, Ombudsmen, Diwan Al Madhalims or People's Defenders, the role of these institutions not only includes correcting injustices caused by administrative malfunctions, but also recognising, promoting and defending Human rights;

Considering that Human rights are only recognised, promoted and protected in democratic or democratising regimes by responsible governments concerned about Human rights situations and social peace;

Considering that democratic values are never fully guaranteed, that their recognition, promotion and defence must be permanent and that these values must be measured according to the effectiveness of Human rights;

The Association and its members undertake to promote and defend democracy, Human rights and social peace around the Mediterranean region, and to ensure compliance with national and international Human rights laws, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rabat Declaration.

Finally, to reinforce and promote these democratic values, the Association and its members undertake to foster international cooperation with other institutions and organisations devoted to the promotion and defence of Human rights.

Therefore, the Association and its members are adopting this preamble as ideal values that must be pursued and, as a means, subscribe to and undertake to respect the following statutes.

CHAPTER I
CREATION, NAME AND HEADQUARTERS

ARTICLE 1

CREATION AND NAME

An international association called Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen, hereinafter referred to as the Association, is hereby created.

The Association shall be governed by the law applicable in the Kingdom of Morocco.

The Association shall also be known as A.O.M. (Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen).

The Association is an organisation whose objectives and composition shall be subject to the present Statutes and resolutions adopted by its decision-making bodies pursuant to the laws of the Kingdom of Morocco.

ARTICLE 2

HEADQUARTERS

The Association's headquarters shall be:

Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen, 11 Rue El Ouchak, 90000 Tangier, The Kingdom of Morocco.

The headquarters may be moved within the country where it is established, in accordance with the local laws. If they are moved to another country, such a transfer shall be subject to the laws of the host country after the registration is changed. Any proposal to transfer the headquarters must be made in writing by a voting member. The consent of two-thirds of voting members shall be required to authorise a transfer of the headquarters.

ARTICLE 3

LANGUAGE AND SEAL OF THE ASSOCIATION

3.1 The Association's official and working languages shall be Arabic, French, Spanish and English.

- 3.2 The format of the seal, which comprises the name of the association, shall be determined by the governing board.

CHAPTER II

THE ASSOCIATION'S OBJECTIVES

ARTICLE 4

THE ASSOCIATION'S OBJECTIVES

The Association's objectives are to:

- 4.1 Increase citizens' awareness about the role of the institutions of mediators, ombudsmen, Diwan Al Madhalim and People's Defenders (hereinafter referred to as ombudsmen) within the Mediterranean area
- 4.2 Design and implement programmes of information and experience exchanges between its members
- 4.3 Gather, store and circulate information and search results about the institution of ombudsman
- 4.4 Consolidate the action and competences of ombudsmen
- 4.5 Promote the training of the personnel of Association-member ombudsmen
- 4.6 Encourage and support studies and research on the role of ombudsmen
- 4.7 Develop relations with institutions, organisations and individuals or corporate bodies whose objectives are similar to the association's objectives
- 4.8 Implement any project that would be necessary to apply the Statutes and their Preamble.

CHAPTER III

MEANS FOR ACTION, AND RESOURCES

ARTICLE 5

THE ASSOCIATION'S MEANS FOR ACTION

- 5.1 The Association shall organise or support activities such as training workshops, seminars, conferences, meetings, personnel exchanges and funding of research operations mainly dedicated to institutions of Ombudsmen and of Mediators as well as their concerns.
- 5.2 The Association shall offer consultation and information services, as well as publications to its members to enhance the knowledge of the role of Ombudsmen.
- 5.3 The Association shall make joint declarations and recommendations aimed, in particular, at promoting or defending citizens' rights vis-à-vis public administrations.

ARTICLE 6

RESOURCES

To pursue its objectives and finance its operations, the Association may resort to the following resources:

- 6.1 Members' contributions, the amount of which shall be fixed by the general assembly according to membership categories and in compliance with all formalities imposed by their respective legislation.
- 6.2 Grants, donations, loans and various contributions, either in form of cash or property, services, etc.
- 6.3 The property, values and interests acquired in one way or the other by the Association or belonging to it within the limit fixed by law in the country in which it is headquartered.

CHAPTER IV

MEMBERS

ARTICLE 7

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

The Association shall have three membership categories: voting members, associate members and honorary members.

Voting and associate members shall be represented at the Association by their legal representatives.

7.1 Voting members

- 7.1.1 Voting members shall be public institutions whose representative(s) exercise(s) the function of Mediator, Ombudsman, Diwan al-Madhalim, People's Defender, Human Rights Commissioner or any equivalent function, with nation-wide jurisdiction, and whose mission is to correct and prevent injustices caused to citizens by a public administration authority, and which:
- 7.1.1.1 Have been created in accordance with the constitution or law
 - 7.1.1.2 Are authorised to receive complaints, verbally or in writing, from individuals and organisations concerning a decision, recommendation or any other administrative action taken by the representatives of a public administrative authority
 - 7.1.1.3 Do not receive any instructions from any public authority and are independent of the administration under their competence, notwithstanding the naming authority
 - 7.1.1.4 Have exclusive powers over all or part of the public administration
 - 7.1.1.5 Are empowered to investigate complaints sent to them within the framework of their competence
 - 7.1.1.6 Have access to the information required to conduct their enquiries properly
 - 7.1.1.7 Are empowered to make recommendations and propose corrective measures
 - 7.1.1.8 Provide a yearly, public report of their activities

7.1.1. 9 Are headquartered in a country in the Mediterranean area.

7.2 Associate members

Any corporate body pursuing the Association's mission or similar objectives, or whose objectives are compatible with those of the Association but is not a voting member may become an associate member.

7.3 Honorary members

Any person recognised for his or her exceptional contribution to the development of the concept and function of Ombudsmen can become an honorary member.

7.4 Members' rights

7.4.1 Voting members shall have the following rights:

- a) The right to vote at ordinary or extraordinary assemblies of members
- b) The right to participate in the Association's administrative and decision-making bodies.

7.4.2 Associate and honorary members may take part in general assemblies, with speaking and non-voting rights; they shall not be eligible for elected offices.

7.4.3 All members may:

- a) Seek the Association's help in their fields of competence; collaborate to attain the Association's aims and objectives in accordance with the Statutes
- b) Collaborate in pursuit of the Association's mission pursuant to the Statutes and their Preamble
- c) Exercise all rights emanating from the Statutes and their Preamble
- d) Appeal to the Association's authorities if they feel that they have been prejudiced against in the exercise of their rights.

7.5 Members' obligations

Members must respect the Statutes and their Preamble and any rule or administrative practice emanating there from. They must also be ethical by adopting an attitude that is compatible with the Association's mission.

7.6 Applying for membership

7.6.1 To acquire the status of voting member, the applying institution must:

- a) Submit an application to the Association's secretary general
- b) Produce its statutes
- c) Show that the rules governing it are compatible with the Statutes and their Preamble.

7.6.2 To become an associate member, the requestor must:

- a) Submit an application to the Association's secretary general
- b) Show that its interests and activities are consistent with the associate member status and compatible with the Statutes and their Preamble.

7.6.3 Any person applying for honorary membership must:

- a) Submit an application to the Association's secretary general
- b) Prove that he or she meets the criteria for honorary membership; append to the application attestations from two other Association members, including a representative from the candidate's region of origin.

7.7 Admission procedure

7.7.1 The application must be accompanied with the required information and documents.

7.7.2 The Secretary General shall receive the application, check its content and submit it to the Adhesion Committee.

7.7.3 The Governing Board will establish an Adhesion Committee which will be chaired by the First Vice-president and will be made up by two other members of the association: one from the North and one from the South, elected by the General Assembly. The term of this Committee will be three years.

The Adhesion Committee reviews the prospective member application and makes a recommendation, with justification, to the Executive Board. In case of disagreement among the members of this Committee, the latter shall make a recommendation with a majority of its members.

The Adhesion Committee shall make also a recommendation on the suspension or withholding of membership in accordance to the Article 7.8.2 of the Statutes.

7.7.4 The Executive Board shall make a recommendation, with justifications, and return it to the applicant through the Governing Board. The Governing Board shall submit the request, together with its recommendation, to the next general assembly for decision. In case of negative recommendation, the applicant may ask to address the Governing Board to explain his or her means and motivations. If the governing board maintains its negative opinion after listening to the applicant, this latter may exercise his or her rights before the general assembly before a decision is taken on the application.

7.8 Loss or suspension of membership

7.8.1 Any Association member may cancel its membership at any time by notifying the secretary general in writing.

7.8.2 The governing board may suspend any member which fails to comply with the stipulations of the Statutes and their Preamble, or whose attitude is not compatible with the Association's mission or interests, or which fails to meet its financial obligations.

7.8.3 The governing board must state the grounds for any suspension, which must then be sent to the member in question by the secretary general. The governing board may propose a member's expulsion to the general assembly, stating the grounds for such a proposal. This proposal shall be sent to the member in question by the secretary general.

7.8.4 Any suspension must be confirmed by the next general assembly; the member shall be given the opportunity to explain him or herself; otherwise, the suspension shall be deemed null and void, starting from the date of the general assembly.

7.8.5 A member may only be expelled by the general assembly which shall take its decision based on the governing board's report; the secretary shall notify the member in question about the decision which shall be final.

7.8.6 Any representative of an institution or organisation who dies, resigns or is expelled due to behaviours not compatible with the Association's mission or interests shall be replaced in accordance with the provisions of the institution or organisation's statutes; an official notification shall be sent to the general secretary by the institution or organisation.

CHAPTER V

ORGANISATION

ARTICLE 8

ORGANS

The Association's organs and authorities shall be:

- The general assembly
- The governing board
- The governing board's executive committee.

ARTICLE 9

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9.1 Membership of the general assembly

The general assembly shall be the Association's supreme authority. Members of the general assembly shall be the Association's regular members; voting and associate members shall be represented by their legal representatives. In case of force majeure and in accordance with the laws governing their institutions or organisations, the representatives may give another member power of attorney to represent them; only one power of attorney per member shall be allowed.

9.2 Assembly presidency

The Association's president shall automatically preside over the general assembly. In his or her absence, the assembly shall be presided over by the first vice-president, or in the absence of this latter, by the second vice-president. In the absence of the president and the two vice-presidents, the general assembly shall elect its adhoc president among the voting members present.

9.3 Ordinary general assembly

- 9.3.1 An ordinary general assembly shall be held at least every two years. It shall be called by the president on a date and at a venue determined by the governing board. It shall generally take place during the congress of Association members.
- 9.3.2 The general assembly shall be called by sending written invitations to members at least thirty days prior to the meeting, accompanied with the documents required by members to participate adequately.

9.4 Powers of the ordinary general assembly

The ordinary general assembly shall have the power to:

- 9.4.1 Approve the agenda of the meeting and minutes of the previous meeting
- 9.4.2 Elect the president of the Association, the first and second vice-presidents, the secretary general and treasurer for a period of three years. The mandate shall be renewable, and there shall be no limitation as regards the number of mandates.
- 9.4.3 Elect members of the governing board in accordance with Section 10.1.3 of the Statutes
- 9.4.4 Take decisions on the recommendations of the governing board if a board member resigns or is replaced
- 9.4.5 Decide as a last resort on the admission or rejection of an aspiring member; if the governing board rejects an aspiring member's application after listening to the applicant, the general assembly may only take a decision after the aspiring member has explained his or her means and conclusions to it.
- 9.4.6 Decide as a last resort on a temporary decision taken by the governing board to suspend a member; the general assembly may only decide after the member in question has explained his or her position.
- 9.4.7. Decide to expel a member in accordance with Article 7.8.5. of the present Statutes, following a well-grounded report from the governing board, after listening to the member concerned
- 9.4.8 Fix, on the governing board's recommendation, the amount of annual contributions and any other contribution payable by members
- 9.4.9 Approve reports submitted by the president, vice-presidents, secretary general and committees
- 9.4.10 Approve the Association's financial statuses presented by the treasurer

- 9.4.11 Modify, postpone or veto any decision taken by the governing board, except for decisions on commitments made on behalf of the Association pursuant to the law of the country in which the Association is registered
- 9.4.12 Define the Association's orientations
- 9.4.13 Modify the Association's Statutes and their Preamble
- 9.4.14 Decide on the location of the headquarters and secretariat general
- 9.4.15 Create committees according to needs
- 9.4.16 Make appropriate declarations and issue public communiqués to foster the attainment of its objectives
- 9.4.17 Generally, take decisions on any matter not expressly provided for in the Statutes and their Preamble but which are in line with the Association's mission.

9.5 Extraordinary general assembly

- 9.5.1 An extraordinary general assembly may be called to look into a serious or urgent matter, at the request of the governing board or president of the Association, or if required by more than one-third of voting members.
- 9.5.2 The governing board shall decide on the venue and date of extraordinary general assemblies. The secretary general shall invite voting members.

9.6 Powers of the extraordinary general assembly

The extraordinary general assembly may:

- 9.6.1 Examine any serious or urgent matter and take decisions accordingly
- 9.6.2 Fill in until the end of the mandate any position of president and, if necessary, vice-president, which becomes definitely vacant, unless an election has been held by normal or electronic mail as provided for in Article 15 which shall apply
- 9.6.3 Approve the Association's dissolution.

9.7 Quorum for the general assembly

- 9.7.1 Generally, a quorum for the general assembly shall be formed if half of the voting members of the Association is present. In the absence of a quorum, a new invitation to a general assembly, which shall be held within a maximum of three months, must

be sent to members informing them that the general assembly thus called shall be considered as properly constituted regardless of the number of voting members present.

- 9.7.2 General assembly resolutions shall be adopted on the basis of an absolute majority vote of members present.
- 9.7.3 For deliberations concerning a modification of the Statutes and their Preamble or dissolution of the Association, the approval of at least two-thirds of the members present shall be required.
- 9.7.4 Voting members shall have equal voting rights. All members shall have the right to speak.

9.8 Congress of Association members

- 9.8.1 A congress of members of the Association must be held at least every two years, according to the modalities to be fixed and communicated to members by the governing board for each congress at least three months prior to the event.
- 9.8.2 All regular members of the Association shall be invited to the congress. In addition to the persons or organisations on the list of invitees compiled by the committee, representatives of organisations or people who, in both cases, share the Association's goals may also be invited as observers. Any organisation or person who shares the Association's mission may equally ask to be registered by the host of the congress. The host shall submit to the executive committee the list of persons and organisations wishing to be invited and shall make some recommendations if necessary.
- 9.8.3 An offer made by a voting member to organise a congress of the Association in his or her country may only be accepted if backed by the government or parliament of the host country or if the host gives sufficient guarantees that he or her has or will have the right resources to host the congress, that he or her will take appropriate measures in terms of transportation and accommodation, that every participant will be free to enter and move freely on the territory without discrimination, that no political or legal obstacle can compromise the holding of the congress, and that the holding of the congress shall not be used for partisan purposes by his or her institution, government or parliament.

ARTICLE 10

GOVERNING BOARD

10.1 Composition

- 10.1.1 The governing board shall be made up of at least ten members, including:
- 10.1.2 A president, who shall be the president of the general assembly
- 10.1.3 A first vice-president and a second vice-president, a secretary-general, a treasurer; the first vice-president shall automatically become the vice-president of the general assembly. In his or her absence, he or she shall be replaced in accordance with Article 9.2.
- 10.1.4 The voting member of the institution hosting the next congress and members entrusted with specific studies by the general assembly
- 10.1.5 Representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, of the International Organization of the French-speaking world, of the League of Arab States, of the Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe, and of the European Ombudsman. These members attend board meetings and assemblies as permanent observers but do not have any voting rights
- 10.1.6 Representatives of any organisation which may support the Association's mission, invited by the board as observer to attend the meeting or participate in the general assembly. These members are not permanent members and have no voting rights.

10.2 Duration of the mandate

- 10.2.1 The duration of the mandate of members of the governing board shall be three years. The mandate shall be renewable.
- 10.2.2 The mandate of members of the governing board shall be exercised between the holding of ordinary general assembly meetings. It shall end during the ordinary general assembly that follow the general assembly at which they were elected.

If the ordinary general assembly, for reasons pertaining to the organisation of the congress, holds more than three years after a governing board and executive committee election, the mandates of members of these bodies shall be extended until a general assembly is held.

- 10.2.3 The mandate of a member of the governing board shall end if he or she dies, resigns, is no longer an ombudsman, is expelled pursuant to the Statutes and their Preamble, if the institution he or she is running no longer qualifies as a voting member, or if his or her mandate as member of the board is not renewed. However, when the

president or any other member of the committee no longer acts as ombudsman, the board may, considering such special circumstances as the date of the next congress, recommend to the general assembly to extend his or her mandate as member until the next election. The governing board may also ask the outgoing president to work as expert for special projects with the board, one of its committees or members for a period it shall determine according to conditions it shall fix. If the outgoing president is invited to the board to debate on some granted mandates, he or she shall not have any voting rights.

- 10.2.4 The mandate of an ombudsman who had been attending as host of a congress shall end when the host for the next congress is chosen.

10.3 General powers and functions

The governing board shall be in charge of the Association's administrative matters. It shall represent members of the Association and exercise all the powers stipulated in the Association's Statutes, except the powers reserved for the general assembly.

10.4 Responsibilities of the governing board

The governing board shall:

- 10.4.1 Manage the property and affairs of the Association
- 10.4.2 Adopt the annual reports written by the vice-presidents, secretary general and treasurer
- 10.4.3 Decide on a member's temporary suspension and submit a well-grounded opinion to the general assembly concerning a member's expulsion
- 10.4.4 Take necessary measures so the Association's congress can hold every two years and members can meet at this occasion at an ordinary general assembly
- 10.4.5. Choose the voting member that will host the next congress, among the candidates
- 10.4.6 Fix the venue, date and agenda of the general assembly
- 10.4.7 Execute the specific mandate decided upon by the general assembly
- 10.4.8 Create committees to execute specific mandates
- 10.4.9 Choose the staff of the governing board and fix the terms of employment
- 10.4.10 Authorise, through a formal decision, any member of the executive committee or any employee to use the Association's seal and attest to the use of the seal through his or her signature

- 10.4.11 Recommend to the general assembly to approve amendments to the Statutes and their Preamble
- 10.4.12 Take, in all cases not covered by the Statutes and their Preamble, necessary measures to ensure a hitchfree working of the Association, subject to the approval of the general assembly
- 10.4.13 Act as arbitrator in any disagreement between members regarding Association-related matters, subject to the general assembly's approval
- 10.4.14 Approve the executive committee's biennial plan.

10.5 Governing board meetings

10.5.1 Ordinary and extraordinary meetings

The governing board shall hold an ordinary meeting once a year. Extraordinary meetings may be called at the president's discretion or at the request of two-thirds of members of the governing board. The governing board shall keep minutes of its meetings.

10.5.2 Date and venue

The date and venue for the meetings shall be determined by the president after due consultations with the members of the executive committee.

10.5.3 Invitation

An invitation to meetings shall be sent to each member of the governing board by the secretary general at least thirty days in advance, both for ordinary and extraordinary meetings. The invitation to a meeting must include the date, time and venue for the meeting, as well as a draft agenda accompanied by documents that will enable members participate adequately.

10.5.4 Quorum

A quorum shall be formed at the meetings if half of the members of the governing board is present.

10.5.5 Majority required for governing board decisions

Resolutions must be adopted through an absolute majority vote of members present at meetings where a quorum has been formed, unless otherwise stated by the Statutes. The president may authorise voting by electronic mail, fax or ordinary mail.

In these cases, the board must try to reach all the members. Two-thirds of them must have been reached for a majority vote of these two-thirds to be considered sufficient to adopt resolutions submitted to them. Resolutions adopted by electronic mail, fax or ordinary mail must be approved by the governing board at its next meeting.

10.6 Resignation

A member of the governing board may resign any time by sending a resignation letter to the president of the governing board.

10.7 Vacant positions

Positions becoming vacant as a result of the death or resignation of a member of the governing board may be filled in by a substitute member appointed by members of the governing board after a meeting duly called by the secretary general or a vote cast by any appropriate means. The secretary general shall prepare an attestation indicating the result of the vote. The voting procedure implies presenting candidatures and electing one or more candidates to complete the mandate of the governing board member until the next general assembly of members.

10.8 Remuneration and reimbursement

Members of the governing board shall not be remunerated. However, the governing board may authorise the reimbursement by the Association of any reasonable expenses made by members while exercising their mandate on the governing board.

ARTICLE 11

GOVERNING BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

11.1 Composition

The executive members of the governing board shall be the president, first and second vice-presidents, secretary general and treasurer.

Their mandate shall be three years. Said mandate may be renewed without limitation regarding the number of mandates.

11.2 Functions of the president

- 11.2.1 The president shall be the Association's legal representative. He or she shall have full powers to represent the Association.
- 11.2.2 The president shall preside over the governing board and executive committee. In his or her absence, he or she shall be replaced according to the procedure stipulated in Article 9.2, except for the term voting members which has to be replaced with members of the governing board.
- 11.2.3 The president shall preside over the Association's general assemblies, governing board and governing board committee meetings.
- 11.2.4 He or she shall submit, for adoption by the executive committee members, the biennial plan of the Association's activities and objectives which must be approved by the governing board. The president shall also exercise any specific mandate given to him or her by the general assembly or governing board.
- 11.2.5 The president may cast a decisive vote in case of a second vote at the board meeting.
- 11.2.6 The president may act as arbitrator in disagreements between members regarding Association-related matters.
- 11.2.7 The president shall supervise the Association's affairs and activities.
- 11.2.8 The president shall exercise any other function provided for in the Statutes.

11.3 Functions of the vice-presidents

Each vice-president shall exercise the functions assigned to him or her by the president or governing board. The vice-president shall exercise any other function provided for in the Statutes.

11.4 Functions of the secretary general

The secretary general shall:

- 11.4.1 Execute the resolutions, decisions and specific mandates entrusted to him or her by the governing board and president
- 11.4.2 Represent the Association on behalf of the president or one of the vice-presidents, with the same powers and mandates
- 11.4.3 Manage the staff of the secretariat general

- 11.4.4 Pursue the objectives fixed by the general assembly and by the governing board
- 11.4.5 Update the Association's books and archives. Sign and confirm the authenticity of any copy made for legal or other purposes
- 11.4.6 Write the minutes of general-assembly and governing-board meetings.
- 11.4.7 Keep the Association's seal. The secretary or the person working on his or her behalf with the consent of the governing board may use the seal with any document on which it is required. The document shall then be authenticated through his or her signature or that of his or her representative.
- 11.4.8 Develop and maintain relations with any organisation or person pursuing the same objectives as the Association, in line with the orientations fixed by the governing board
- 11.4.9 Arouse interest in different circles for the Association's objectives
- 11.4.10 Submit an annual report on the activities of the secretariat general
- 11.4.11 Prepare and organise meetings of decision-taking bodies and invite all the parties concerned to the meetings
- 11.4.12 Delegate, for specific purposes, some of his or her functions and assignments
- 11.4.13 Coordinate the activities of the governing board and those of the different committees created by the governing board or general assembly
- 11.4.14 Assume any other responsibility at the request of the president and governing board.

11.5 Functions of the treasurer

The treasurer shall:

- 11.5.1 Submit the Association's annual budget to the governing board
- 11.5.2 Keep the Association's account in accordance with the governing board's instructions and existing laws
- 11.5.3 Have the Association's account audited by an external, authorised auditor and submit certified accounts to the general assembly.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 12

FISCAL YEAR

The Association's fiscal year shall start on 1st January and end on 31st December.

ARTICLE 13

PAYMENTS

Cheques, drafts or any other forms of payment shall, subject to the decision of the governing board, be signed by the president or treasurer, or by any executive member empowered by the president to do so.

ARTICLE 14

CONTRIBUTIONS

- 14.1 Members' annual contributions shall be fixed by the general assembly on the governing board's recommendation.
- 14.2 The contributions shall vary according to membership categories. Voting members' contribution shall be more than that of associate and honorary members.
- 14.3 Full or partial exemption from the annual contribution may be authorised by the executive committee if requested by a member. The executive committee may ask the requestor to justify its request with any piece of information deemed pertinent. The granted exemption shall be valid for the current fiscal year.

ARTICLE 15

AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES AND THEIR PREAMBLE

Amendments to the Statutes and their Preamble, decided upon by the general assembly, must be made in accordance with the law of the country in which the Association is headquartered.

ARTICLE 16

INTERPRETATION CLAUSES

16.1 Arbitration

If any provision of the Statutes and their Preamble gives rise to a disagreement between members, said members may send a written request to the president who may take any decision on the matter. If he or she deems it necessary, the president may refer the disagreement to the governing board or general assembly, depending on its seriousness or urgency.

- 16.1.1 At the request of the parties concerned, the president's decision may be reviewed by the governing board and the latter's decision by the general assembly, the highest authority.

Any decision made in accordance with this Article must be written, specifying the grounds.

- 16.1.2 The deadline for reviewing the president's decision or that of the governing board shall be thirty days starting from the date of the decision. The general assembly shall take its decision during its ordinary meeting or, if the matter is serious and urgent, at a duly convened extraordinary meeting.

ARTICLE 17

DISSOLUTION

The general assembly may decide to dissolve the Association, at an extraordinary session. The Association shall then be dissolved in accordance with the law of the country in which it is registered. The administrators shall not have the right to share the Association's property. The property shall be distributed in line with the Statutes and laws applicable at the time of the dissolution. The distribution shall be, as far as possible, proceeded in due proportion of member's past contributions.