

# WILPF Constitution and By-Laws



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WILPF Constitution and By-Laws

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# Constitution

## Preamble

Founded in The Hague (the Netherlands) in 1915 and granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) in 1948 the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and its members are united in our determination, aims and goals to study, and make known the root causes of and prevent violent conflicts, armed conflicts, and war, and to abolish their legitimation and practices. Toward this purpose, we unite our world efforts by working to build the just foundations on which a durable global peace, a just economy and social justice are achieved for all.

## A. Name

The name of this organisation shall be the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, hereinafter referred to as WILPF.

WILPF is a non-profit association independent of all political parties, and of unlimited duration. With headquarters in the Canton of Geneva (Switzerland), WILPF is governed by the constitution (the “Constitution”) and, secondly, by Article 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code.

## B. Aims and Principles

1. a. WILPF brings together women of different cultures, backgrounds, political beliefs, and philosophies who are united in their determination to study and make known the root causes of violent conflicts, armed conflicts, and war, to prevent and help abolish their legitimation and practices.
- b. We take an integrated approach toward world peace; towards this goal we work:
  - i. to achieve total and universal disarmament;
  - ii. to prevent and abolish violence and coercion in the settlement of conflict and their substitution in every case of negotiation and conciliation;
  - iii. to reform the United Nations decision-making process and to strengthen the spirit of its Charter;
  - iv. to continually develop and implement international law;
  - v. to achieve women’s human rights;
  - vi. to achieve gender equality and justice for all through political, social and economic empowerment;

- vii. to support solidarity and cooperation among people to achieve peace;
  - viii. to identify and address the intersectional nature of women’s struggle; and
  - ix. to identify, encourage, develop, and support environmentally sustainable societies.
2. We believe these aims can be attained, and a real lasting peace and true freedom can exist only under just systems of social-economic and cultural inclusion. Accordingly, we make it our duty to further by non-violent means the social transformation that enables the inauguration of systems under which social, cultural and political equality and economic justice for all can be attained, without discrimination based on age, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, physical and mental disabilities, political opinion or on any other grounds recognised under International Human Rights Law.
  3. WILPF sees as its ultimate goal the establishment of an international just economic and social order founded on the principles of meeting the rights and needs of all people and not profit and privilege for the few.

## C. Membership

1. Individuals who share and accept the vision and values held in this Constitution may become members as set out in the By-Laws.
2. Associate membership is open to affiliated organisations or groups that accept WILPF’s aims and principles and agree to comply with the conditions and criteria set out in Section B, paragraph 3, of the By-Laws.

## D. Organisation

The organs of WILPF shall be the International Congress (IC), the International Board (IB), National Sections (NS) and the International Secretariat (IS).

1. The International Congress (IC)
  - a. The International Congress shall be the highest decision-making body of WILPF and the final authority in all matters concerning the organisation.
  - b. The International Congress shall be composed of all members of the International Board and delegates and alternates elected by the National Sections in the following manner:
    - i. a National Section shall be entitled to representation to the International Congress when its dues are paid to the end of the previous calendar year;
    - ii. each National Section with up to 50 members shall be entitled to elect two delegates and two alternates;
    - iii. each National Section with up to 500 members shall be entitled to elect three delegates and three alternates;

- iv. each National Section with up to 1500 members shall be entitled to elect four delegates and four alternates;
- v. each National Section with a financial membership of more than 1500 shall be entitled to elect five delegates and five alternates; and
- vi. any other financial member of WILPF may attend and participate in the International Congress but shall be non-voting.

## 2. The International Board (IB)

- a. The International Board represents the leadership of WILPF, acts on behalf of the members and is responsible to the membership for WILPF achieving its aims and principles. It shall ensure that the decisions adopted by the International Congress to further the aims and principles of WILPF are implemented and that the organisation meets its legal and financial obligations as a constituted body;
- b. The International Board shall be composed of the President, two Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and one Regional Representative or one alternate Regional Representative for each region together with the Secretary-General in a non-voting advisory role;
- c. The International Board is responsible for the governance of WILPF in accordance with the By-Laws;
- d. The International Board shall have overall responsibility for establishing and mobilising all Standing and Ad Hoc Committees and for determining their mandates, operating modes and dissolution;
- e. Each elected member of the International Board and appointed Regional Representatives shall be entitled to one vote;
- f. An alternate Regional Representative may vote in the absence of the Regional Representative for her specific region; and
- g. In the event that consensus cannot be achieved the President may exercise a casting vote.

## 3. National Sections (NS)

- a. The work of all National Sections and members is based on the aims and principles of WILPF as established by this Constitution, and on the policies and programmes established in resolutions and decisions adopted by the International Congress and the International Board;
- b. In order to become a National Section, a National Group must first be established. Following this, a National Section may be established at the next International Congress upon the application of at least ten financial members residing in the country, and on the recommendation of the International Board. National Sections shall adopt this Constitution and By-Laws, complementing as necessary in compliance with the laws of their country and to ensure the democratic functioning of the Section;
- c. New National Sections shall be admitted to WILPF with full voting rights upon ratification by a simple majority of the International Congress;

- d. A National Section shall be suspended by a two-thirds majority of the International Board between International Congresses if the National Section has fewer than ten members or has violated the Constitution or is in arrears for more than two years or has acted in a manner prejudicial to the realisation of the aims and principles of WILPF; and
  - e. A National Section may appeal the International Board's action. The final decision is determined by the International Congress if a simple majority of those attending a duly constituted meeting concludes that the National Section should be dissolved.
4. The International Secretariat (IS)
    - a. The International Secretariat comprises the Secretary-General, programme managers, staff, interns and as required advisors and/or consultants, all of whom operate under the WILPF Constitution and By-Laws; and
    - b. Under the direction of the Secretary-General the Secretariat's role includes the implementation and reporting on policies, resolutions and programmes as adopted by the International Congress; managing financial operations; recommending and developing new initiatives in response to emergency and/or emerging issues of primary concern for WILPF and the provision of administrative support to the International Congress and the International Board.

## **E. Adoption of this Constitution**

1. This Constitution shall take effect upon approval by a two-thirds majority of the voting participants at an International Congress.
2. The By-Laws shall take effect upon approval by a two-thirds majority of voting participants at an International Congress.

## **F. Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws**

1. Amendments to this Constitution and/or its By-Laws may be proposed by a National Section or by the International Board. At a duly constituted meeting, the International Board may also delegate authority to propose amendments to the Standing Constitution Committee.
2. The adoption of any proposed amendment to the Constitution shall require a two-thirds majority of the voting participants of the International Congress.
3. The adoption of any proposed amendment to the By-Laws shall require a two-thirds majority of the voting participants of the International Congress.
4. Amendments duly adopted by the International Congress shall take immediate effect unless the Congress itself resolves otherwise.

# By-Laws

## A. International Programme (IP)

1. To further its aims and principles, WILPF shall bring together people who are united in their determination to study and make known the root causes of violent conflicts, armed conflicts and war, to prevent and help abolish their causes and legitimation and to take an integrated approach toward world peace. WILPF's methods of work include advocacy, research, analysis, campaigns, projects, dialogues, direct actions and WILPF's participation in partnerships, alliances and coalitions.
2. The International Congress adopts the International Programme which is implemented by the International Board (IB), National Sections (NS) and the International Secretariat (IS).

## B. Membership

1. In countries where a National Section or National Group exists, individual membership shall normally be through the National Section or National Group by payment of an annual membership fee set by the National Section or National Group.
2. In countries where no National Section or National Group exists, individuals may join WILPF by payment of an annual fee as set by the International Board to the International Secretariat. Such international members shall be included in the geographical region where they reside. As a financial member of WILPF, they may attend and participate in the International Congress but shall be non-voting.
3. An affiliated organisation or group may apply for associate membership, subject to the following conditions and criteria:
  - a. Interested affiliated organisations or groups in any country may be admitted as associate members; and
  - b. Each affiliated organisation or group shall comply with the aims and principles of WILPF.
  - c. Associate members shall enjoy the same rights as full members, except the following:
    - i. the right to vote at the International Congress;
    - ii. the right to nominate candidates; and
    - iii. the right to have its member nominated for election to an international office;



- d. Associate member organisations shall not speak or write in the name of WILPF or represent WILPF unless required to do so by the International Board;
- e. Associate members shall be subject to review by the International Board at least every three years; and
- f. Associate member organisations shall pay an annual fee as set by the International Board to the International Secretariat.

## C. Finance

- 1. WILPF's sources of revenue include fees from National Sections, international members, groups and associate members as assessed annually by the International Board; from bequests, grants, investments, donations and sales of merchandise.
- 2. The fiscal year of WILPF is according to the Gregorian calendar, from the 1st of January to the 31st of December.

## D. International Congress

- 1. The responsibilities of the International Congress shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Reviewing the activities of the International Board, the International Secretariat and National Sections since the last International Congress, setting the policies and direction of WILPF, setting National Section fees, reviewing and approving the audited Financial Statements since the last Congress, and adopting the International Programme and related three-year budget until the next regular Congress;
  - b. Electing the President, two Vice-Presidents and Treasurer to serve on the International Board until the next session of the International Congress;
  - c. Appointing the Regional Representative (and alternate) as nominated by each respective region to serve on the International Board until the next session of the International Congress;
  - d. Establishing an Advisory Board for the period until the next session of the International Congress;
  - e. Appointing Convenors of Standing Committees;
  - f. Receiving reports from the International Board, the Secretary-General, the International Treasurer, National Sections, Convenors of Committees and WILPF's Representatives to International bodies (e.g. UN, ILO, UNESCO and FAO);
  - g. Admitting new National Sections;
  - h. Deciding on amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws; and
  - i. Appointing independent auditors.

The decisions of the International Congress are final, and it cannot delegate its powers.

## 2. Travel

- a. Travel expenses of Section delegates and alternate Section delegates to the International Congress shall be borne where possible, by the National Section they represent. The International Board and Secretary-General shall have their expenses paid from the international budget to the extent that the funds are available; and
- b. WILPF shall maintain an Assistance Fund to assist Section delegates in special circumstances, to attend the International Congress. The Assistance Fund shall be approved by the Treasurer and the International Board in accordance with guidelines established by the International Board and administered by the International Secretariat. Sections receiving such assistance shall repay the assistance provided if their delegates do not attend the International Congress.

## 3. Meetings

- a. The International Congress shall be convened every three years but no longer than 48 months since the last one.
- b. The International Congress shall meet at a date and place determined by the International Board and may be conducted by virtual means.
- c. A scheduled session of the International Congress may be postponed by the International Board for no more than half a year subject to the agreement of a two-thirds majority of the International Board.
- d. Extraordinary Session of the International Congress (ESIC)
  - i. in the event that a situation occurs where a decision normally taken by the International Congress needs to be decided upon more rapidly than at the next regular International Congress (for example to fill a vacancy on the International Board), an 'Extraordinary Session' may be called by request of a simple majority of the International Board at a duly constituted International Board meeting, or on request of a National Section, subject to agreement from two-thirds of financial National Sections.
  - ii. an 'Extraordinary Session' can only make decisions on the points specified in the call for the session, it cannot amend the Constitution or By-Laws.
  - iii. National Sections and members must be given a minimum of two months' notice of a proposed 'Extraordinary Session';
  - iv. an 'Extraordinary Session' may be convened via visual communications, or other technologies if this allows all National Sections wishing to participate to do so; and
  - v. in all other regards the 'Extraordinary Session' is subject to the same rules as the International Congress.

#### 4. Quorum

The quorum for the International Congress shall consist of at least 60 per cent (60%) of the National Sections represented.

#### 5. Voting rights at the International Congress

- a. Each member of the International Board and each delegate elected by a National Section shall be entitled to one vote;
- b. An alternate Regional Representative may vote when the Regional Representative is not present;
- c. A National Section represented by a single delegate shall have two votes regardless of their membership;
- d. An alternate National Section delegate may vote in the place of the National Section delegate;
- e. Any other financial member of WILPF may attend and participate in the International Congress but shall be non-voting; and
- f. A duly accredited National Section delegate or alternate who, for good reason must leave the International Congress early, may vote by proxy by leaving a vote or a potential vote with the Convenor of the Nomination and Election Committee.

## E. International Board

1. The International Board is responsible for the overall leadership of WILPF; for WILPF pursuing its aims and principles, for setting the direction, culture and values; for setting strategic and tactical objectives of the organisation as-a-whole, for approving the International Secretariat's work programme, safeguarding WILPF's assets and for ensuring WILPF meets its ethical, legal and financial obligations according to the law under which WILPF is incorporated and the governing rules, such as the Constitution and By-Laws.

The International Board is responsible for the governance of WILPF. It cannot abdicate this responsibility; though it can give mandate to a specific group within WILPF but under its auspices. It has the authority to make all necessary decisions between sessions of the International Congress and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the International Board shall:

- a. Appoint the Secretary-General;
- b. Approve members of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees and Working Groups;
- c. Appoint WILPF's Representatives to the international bodies who shall work in cooperation with the International Secretariat;
- d. Shall serve as ambassadors to non-members and convey information regarding the initiatives, goals and mission of WILPF;

- e. Act on reports received from the Secretary-General, the International Treasurer, National Sections, Convenors of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, the Secretariat and Auditors and approve the yearly WILPF's programme and budget within the framework established by the International Congress;
- f. Is collectively responsible for the financial management of WILPF. To meet this responsibility the IB, on the advice of the Treasurer and the Secretary-General, will:
  - i. ensure that WILPF is financially responsible and sustainable;
  - ii. ensure that funds are available to finance the activities of WILPF;
  - iii. consider, review and approve updates to the budget approved by Congress;
  - iv. act on reports from an Audit Committee of the Board, appointed from amongst its members with advisors as needed;
  - v. approve the Charter of the Audit Committee;
  - vi. approve the Financial Manuals of both the Geneva and New York offices, as presented by the Secretary-General and as advised by the Treasurer;
  - vii. receive and review the audited Financial Statements and updated Budget, signed off by the Secretary-General and the Treasurer; and
  - viii. in doing so, ensure the financial statements and other records are prepared in accordance with the International Accounting Standards (or national equivalent) and audited in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (or national equivalent);
- g. Designate the location of the International Secretariat, which currently is in the Canton of Geneva (Switzerland), with an office in New York City (United States of America);
- h. Approve the location and mandate for other WILPF offices that may be set up, and ensure that they operate under WILPF's overall governance structure;
- i. Set out additional duties of the Secretary-General;
- j. In the event that the President is unable to act, replace her from among the Vice-Presidents. If any other member of the International Board is unable to act, call an "Extraordinary Session of the International Congress" to elect a replacement for her. Vacancies among the members of the International Board should be filled within three calendar months of the position becoming vacant;
- k. In the case of a Regional Representative vacancy, her alternate may be appointed. For an alternate Regional Representative vacancy (subsequent or new) the National Sections in her region are to meet and nominate a new alternate Regional Representative for endorsement at an "Extraordinary Session of the International Congress"; and
- l. Set the agenda for the International Congress at least three months before the International Congress.

## 2. Responsibilities

A skilled and well-functioning International Board is essential for WILPF's effectiveness and efficiency. Members must possess the skills and experience for specified board functions, responsibilities and expectations.

- a. The President provides the political leadership for the organisation, and shall:
  - i. with the other International Board members oversee the implementation of policies, programmes and budget passed by the International Congress and monitor the work of all Committees and of the International Secretariat;
  - ii. encourage a spirit of co-operation and good will within WILPF as a whole;
  - iii. act as ambassador for WILPF and be its representative on official occasions;
  - iv. monitor and report on the ethical and fiscal probity of WILPF;
  - v. foster a collegiate partnership and work closely with the Secretary-General to ensure implementation of agreed policies, programmes/budgets and work plans, and provide the link between the International Board and the International Secretariat staff through this relationship;
  - vi. with the Secretary-General co-ordinate the activities of the International Board, Standing and Ad Hoc Committees and where established Special Purpose Working Groups, and assist National Sections in their common endeavours and mutual interests;
  - vii. chair, in rotation with the Vice-Presidents, meetings of the International Board;
  - viii. with the International Treasurer, co-sign or delegate the co-signing of contracts and any other official document on behalf of WILPF;
  - ix. in co-operation with other International Board members, evaluate the job performance of the Secretary-General; and
  - x. delegate responsibility to the Vice-Presidents for any of the above duties and involve them fully in all activities.
- b. The Vice-Presidents shall:
  - i. support the President in her duties and undertake such duties of the President as she and/or the International Board may delegate;
  - ii. stand in for the President at official functions when required;
  - iii. keep themselves apprised of the activities of the President and be prepared to relieve her of any or all her duties should the need arise; and
  - iv. undertake such special projects and assignments as determined by the International Board.

- c. The Treasurer is responsible for coordinating the financial work of the International Board and shall:
  - i. through receipt of financial statements and statements of performance, advise the International Board on financial strategy;
  - ii. convene the Audit Committee of the Board responsible for financial oversight in accordance with its Charter;
  - iii. with the President or another delegated International Board member co-sign contracts on behalf of WILPF in accordance with the By-Laws; and
  - iv. report to the International Congress on the financial situation of WILPF.
  
- d. The Regional Representatives together with the President, Vice-Presidents and the Treasurer are responsible for the good governance of WILPF and shall:
  - i. provide two-way communication across their region and between the National Sections in their designated region and the International Board;
  - ii. feed national and regional experiences and concerns into the International Board and report back the international experiences and concerns to the regional membership;
  - iii. keep themselves apprised of all International Board decisions and programmes, uphold and implement the decisions of the meeting;
  - iv. when issues of importance arise, contact the media upon consultation with the respective National Section, the President and/or the International Board;
  - v. be responsible for providing reports to the International Board on regional activities and their needs;
  - vi. encourage cooperation between regions; and
  - vii. promote and support the creation of new National Sections and Groups, with the support of the International Secretariat.
  
- e. The Secretary-General is the daily public spokesperson of WILPF and represents WILPF in its activities. She, together with the President, sets the tone for the leadership of all offices of WILPF. Further she is responsible for:
  - i. the management of the International Secretariat, in all its offices;
  - ii. liaising with the National Sections to strengthen their capacity to achieve WILPF's aims and principles in their country; and
  - iii. financial management of the International Secretariat, including the day-to-day management of WILPF's investments in accordance with the International Secretariat's Financial Manuals and as such is required to:

- a) ensure appropriate financial policies, systems and controls are in place and fully documented in the Financial Manuals by which the International Secretariat shall operate and that its financial records are kept according to generally accepted accounting practices and in compliance with relevant legislation, and are prepared for audit;
- b) provide to the International Board all information required to establish how she has exercised her responsibility; and
- c) report to the International Board on the financial performance of the International Secretariat.

### 3. Eligibility

- a. In addition to a demonstrated commitment to WILPF's aims and principles, members elected to the International Board shall have been active and financial members of WILPF with relevant experience at the national or local level for at least three years and have some international experience. Members of the International Board serve in a voluntary capacity thus must be able to commit both the time and resources as required; and
- b. To avoid any conflict of interest, all members of the IB (except for the Secretary-General) receiving any form of remuneration, (including salary, consultant's fee or grant payment) from the International Secretariat or via an international WILPF project, must:
  - i. declare this income source to the International Board;
  - ii. sign a conflict-of-interest undertaking;
  - iii. not use privileged information for personal advantage; and
  - iv. recuse themselves from voting on related issues.

### 4. Term of Office

- a. The term of office of the International Board shall be from one International Congress till the next regular International Congress;
- b. All elected members of the International Board stand down prior to the Nomination and Election Committee reporting to the International Congress. The term for the newly elected International Board commences with the declaration of voting;
- c. No individual may be elected to the same position for more than two consecutive terms and no member may serve more than three terms on the International Board;
- d. Where a member of the International Board is chosen to fill a casual vacancy (according to E.1.j/k above), this person will be eligible to be elected for two consecutive further terms if she has been in her position for less than two years or half the time between elections, whichever is shorter;
- e. The International Board members must attend more than 60 per cent (60%) of meetings in any 12 month period; and

- f. Where an International Board member fails to attend two consecutive International Board meetings, without valid reason, or when an International Board member otherwise fails to fulfil her duties for three months without valid reason, she shall be suspended from the International Board. If she cannot provide reasonable cause for her absence she will be replaced (as in E.1.j/k above).

## 5. Meetings

- a. The International Board shall meet at least once every two months;
- b. The Convenors of Committees may be invited to participate in the International Board meetings in a non-voting capacity; and
- c. Meetings of the International Board may be held using visual communications, or other technologies for budget or other reasons providing all International Board members have access to the relevant tools. Decisions made at such International Board meetings are valid.

## 6. Quorum

A simple majority of the members of the International Board shall constitute a quorum.

## 7. Removal from Position

- a. Where a member of the International Board speaks or acts in a proven manner contrary to the aims and principles, Code of Conduct or interests of WILPF, this person can lose her position if a simple majority of the financial National Sections move in writing to have her removed;
- b. Written notice must be forwarded to the International Board member setting out the grounds on which the recall is based, and informing her that she may submit within 28 days written representations relating to this action. The International Board must give due consideration to any representations submitted by the International Board member, and by resolution confirm or revoke the recall action; and
- c. Where an International Board member is removed from office, she shall be replaced by the transparent process (described at E.1.j above). When a Regional Representative is removed, she will be replaced by the alternate and the National Sections in her region will be asked to nominate a replacement alternate Regional Representative (as described in E.1.k. above).

# F. National Sections

## 1. National Sections

- a. Share and adopt the vision of the organisation and its democratic participatory way of work;
- b. Carry out the decisions of the International Congress and the International Board and implement other initiatives at the national level through programmes and grassroots activities that are consistent with WILPF's aims and principles and address at least one of WILPF's internationally adopted programmes in a way that is appropriate to their national condition;



- c. Create a space, where National Section members take part in determining the policies and programmes of the international organisation of WILPF;
  - d. Identify the root causes of armed and violent conflicts and war in their country and/or region, promote prevention of conflict, and propose solutions to the International Board;
  - e. Provide support for the international structure by paying Sections fees and sharing information and ideas for action with the International Secretariat and other National Sections;
  - f. Shall appoint a member as Regional Liaison to work with and support their Regional Representative and alternate Regional Representative; and
  - g. Shall comply with WILPF's visual identity, including the use of specific WILPF Section logo in its letterhead, publications and social media profiles, to facilitate the Section's identification as part of WILPF.
2. National Sections shall adopt this Constitution and By-Laws, complementing it as necessary in compliance with the laws of their country. They shall elect a National Board, report annually to the International Board on progress in achieving their work plans and other issues of concern in their Section, and ensure the democratic character and functioning of their Section.
3. National Sections fund themselves from sources of income appropriate to their membership. They also pay an annual Section fee to WILPF based on the formula agreed by the International Board and adopted at the International Congress.
4. Starting a New National Section
- a. Applications for admission to become a new National Section are considered at each International Congress. The requirements for admission are:
    - i. a group of at least ten members resident in the country has been approved by the International Board to operate as a National Group;
    - ii. there is only one group representing WILPF in each country;
    - iii. the group has elected board members who assume specific responsibilities, including a President, Secretary and Treasurer; and
    - iv. the group has a work plan and a financial plan in place.
  - b. The group cannot vote at any international meetings until it is admitted as a National Section at an International Congress but may receive all information sent to the National Sections. After admission, the new National Section should:
    - i. adopt this Constitution and By-Laws, complementing it as necessary in compliance with the laws of their country; and
    - ii. only use WILPF's approved logos in publications and social media to comply with WILPF's visual identity.

## G. Regions

WILPF National Sections are grouped under geographical regions: currently Africa, Asia Pacific, South Asia, Europe, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the Americas. National Sections in each region are encouraged to support each other; to work together on regional campaigns and address issues they have in common; to hold regular regional meetings and to reach out to international members in their regions and connecting with other regions and the International Board and the International Secretariat for achieving its aims and principles as WILPF.

## H. Staff

1. The Secretary-General shall:
  - a. Direct and administer the work of the International Secretariat and its staff;
  - b. Ensure the practical implementation of the decisions of the International Congress and the International Board and coordinate and administer the policies and programmes of WILPF;
  - c. Disseminate information of interest to WILPF to the International Board and National Sections, and generally act as the main liaison between the International Secretariat, National Sections, National Groups, international members and affiliated organisations/ groups;
  - d. Maintain frequent contact with the President and work in close collaboration with the International Board and undertake such other tasks as it may delegate;
  - e. Foster and maintain relations with other international bodies and/or public persons in the furtherance of WILPF's aims and principles;
  - f. Arrange for a minute taker to keep records of all the proceedings of the International Congress, International Board meetings and be the custodian of such minutes and of all other relevant records and accounts of WILPF;
  - g. Ensure information required by the Standing and Ad Hoc Committees and Special Purpose Working Groups to carry out their work is provided in a timely manner; and
  - h. At least three months before the sitting of the International Congress under guidance of the International Board and in conformity with these By-Laws prepare and circulate the agenda and related information to National Sections and members.
2. All staff of the International Secretariat shall be remunerated in accordance with the terms and conditions of their employment agreement. Such agreements must comply with applicable employment law in the country in which they are employed by WILPF and with the WILPF Personnel Policy.

## I. Advisory Board

1. The Advisory Board
  - a. Shall provide considered advice and recommendations to the International Board concerning:
    - i. implementation of the International Programme;
    - ii. fostering political discussion; and
    - iii. strengthening and promoting contact and exchange of information between the International Board and National Sections and Groups.
  - b. Is a non-decision-making body concerning the governance of WILPF.
  - c. Membership
    - i. consists of one representative with an alternate from each National Section and Group, as selected by the Section or Group; and
    - ii. the Secretary-General or her designee serves the Advisory Board in an ex-officio capacity.
  - d. Meetings
    - i. the first meeting of the Advisory Board shall be held no later than three months after the International Congress. Convened by the International Secretariat, the meeting is to elect a Convenor and two Deputy Convenors to serve for the period until the next International Congress;
    - ii. members of the International Board are required to attend Advisory Board meetings, in a non-voting capacity;
    - iii. meetings are to be held online and are also open to Convenors and representatives from the Standing Committees and Working Groups; and
    - iv. the Advisory Board shall normally meet twice a year, but a meeting shall be called whenever one-third of members so request.

## J. Standing Committees

1. The International Board has overall responsibility for establishing the necessary Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, and where necessary Special Purpose Working Groups, and for determining the rules governing their mandate, work plan, reporting and dissolution.
2. The purpose of a Standing Committee is to provide guidance, to propose policies in key functional areas and to advise the International Board.
3. Appointed by the International Congress, the Convenor of each Standing Committee shall act as the Committee's chair and on invitation may attend International Board meetings in a non-voting capacity.

4. Standing Committees generally consist of up to seven members approved by the International Board, one of whom is an International Board member. Where possible they should have regional representation. The Secretary-General or her designee serves in an ex-officio capacity on all Committees.
5. As Standing Committees have an advisory function, members are required to have relevant experience at national or international level on the subject matter of the Committee they serve on.

## **K. Ad Hoc Committees**

1. The International Board may establish Ad Hoc Committees for a specific task or objective and dissolve them after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective.
2. Appointed by the International Board, the Convenor of each Ad Hoc Committee shall act as the committee's chair.

## **L. Special Purpose Working Groups**

1. The International Board may establish Working Groups as required to focus on a particular aspect of the International Programme or for a specific action or campaign and may be dissolved after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective.
2. The Convenor of each Working Group is appointed by the International Board. Membership is open to all financial members of WILPF, with knowledge of the issues to be addressed by the Working Group and with time to contribute to the work plan as agreed by the International Board.

## **M. Advisors**

The International Board may appoint independent specialists or academic researchers to work with it in an advisory role; the ultimate responsibility and decision-making mandate remaining with the International Board. Preference should be given to members of National Sections/Groups that have proven experience and competences.

## **N. Nomination and Election Committee**

1. A Nomination and Election Committee shall be established by the International Board.
2. At least seven months preceding the International Congress, the International Board shall write to the National Sections seeking nominations of members to serve on this Nomination and Election Committee.

3. Members intending to stand for a position on the International Board shall not be eligible to serve on the Nomination and Election Committee. Further, members of the Nomination and Election Committee must act in accord with the Code of Conduct and maintain strict neutrality and confidentiality regarding all candidates. If a committee member breaches confidentiality and neutrality she will be removed from the committee with immediate effect.
4. Reflecting the geographical and other diversities of WILPF, the Nomination and Election Committee shall be composed of seven members. The Convenor of the Nomination and Election Committee shall be nominated by the International Board from among the seven members.
5. The Nomination and Election Committee:
  - a. Coordinates nominations for all elected International Board positions: President, two Vice-Presidents, and Treasurer; and for one Regional Representative and one alternative Regional Representative for each region;
  - b. Assesses candidates for President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer against the sets of criteria outlined below and prepares a report for the International Congress, in addition to circulating a list of nominations to National Sections, as detailed at 7.d;
  - c. Coordinates nominations and prepares a report of nominees for Regional Representatives and alternate Regional Representatives for endorsement by the International Congress; and
  - d. Facilitates and oversees the whole election process.

#### 6. Criteria

A skilled and well-functioning International Board is essential for WILPF's effectiveness and efficiency. The Nomination and Election Committee's role is to assess candidates for President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer against the sets of criteria and to prepare a report for the International Congress, in addition to circulating a list of nominations to National Sections, as detailed at 7.d. Further, a report of nominees for Regional Representatives and alternate Regional Representatives shall be prepared for endorsement by the International Congress.

After receiving nominations from National Sections, the Nomination and Election Committee may solicit additional names from Sections as appropriate to ensure that the proposed International Board has:

- a. A suitable balance of board governance and political experiences or knowledge at an international level;
- b. A significant proportion of relatively new members to ensure fresh perspectives;
- c. Sufficient continuity to ensure that the institutional memory of the International Board is retained.

Additionally, where existing International Board members are standing for re-election, the Nomination and Election Committee will take account of their record to date on the International Board – including their attendance record, contributions and conduct in meetings and other WILPF forums, output and outcome of their endeavours and leadership of initiatives.

## 7. Nomination Process

The Nomination and Election Committee shall for:

a. Elected Positions (President, two Vice-Presidents and Treasurer)

Write to each National Section six months before any sitting of the International Congress inviting them to consider making nominations for President, two Vice-Presidents and Treasurer. Nominations shall be supported by Sections, made in writing, and outline the candidate's suitability to serve on the International Board including their experience, knowledge of WILPF and other relevant political experience. Nominations and candidate qualification information shall be received by the Nomination and Election Committee no later than four months before the sitting of the International Congress.

b. Regional Representative and alternate Regional Representative

Write to each National Section six months before any sitting of the International Congress coordinating the process for the nomination of Regional Representatives and alternate Regional Representatives. National Sections are to meet as a region (either face-to-face or by other tools) to agree to nominate one person as Regional Representative and another as alternate Regional Representative. The Regional Representative and the alternate Regional Representative are to be from different National Sections, and where applicable from different sub-regions within the region. In forwarding their Regional Representative nominations to the Nomination and Election Committee, regions are to advise the date of the regional meeting at which the nominations were agreed.

Nominations are to be forwarded to the Nomination and Election Committee no later than four months before the International Congress and must outline the candidate's suitability to serve on the International Board including their experience, knowledge of WILPF and other relevant political experience.

c. After receiving nominations, to contact each nominee to ensure that they comprehend the role and responsibilities of the position and to ascertain the nominees' availability and willingness to commit the time and resources required.

d. At least two months before the commencement of the International Congress, the Convenor of the Nomination and Election Committee shall circulate a list of nominees together with a copy of the written nomination and a short presentation (written or visual) from the nominees to all National Sections, members of the International Board, and to all nominees.

e. Prepare the ballots containing the names of all eligible nominees for elections by the International Congress.

f. Report in writing to the International Congress.

g. Considering the lengthy and weighed nomination process (as in N.5 above) further nominations at the International Congress will not be accepted.

## 8. Election Process

The Nomination and Election Committee shall:

- a. Facilitate time on the International Congress agenda for all candidates to introduce themselves to Congress participants;
- b. Report to the International Congress on its work and list the nominees for each of the elected International Board positions: namely the President, Vice-Presidents, and the Treasurer; and
- c. Present for endorsement by the International Congress, a report advising nominees for Regional Representatives and alternate Regional Representatives.

## 9. Election Procedure

- a. If there is only one nominee for President or Treasurer, the respective candidate will be declared as duly elected. If there are two or more candidates a secret ballot will be conducted and the candidate receiving the majority vote for each position will be declared as duly elected;
- b. In the case of Vice-Presidential candidates, if there are three or more candidates a secret ballot will be conducted. Where two candidates receive an equal number of votes a 'run-off' election will be held;
- c. Where voting is required the Nomination and Election Committee shall ensure proper control of the electoral process by distributing ballots to the voting members of the International Congress and by tallying the votes and reporting the results to the International Congress; and
- d. Where a region nominates more than two candidates for the position of Regional Representative or alternate Regional Representative, and this cannot be resolved prior to the International Congress, an election by secret ballot will be conducted, with National Section delegates from that region(s) only participating in the vote. The member receiving the highest number of votes will be declared the Regional Representative, and the member receiving the second highest vote will be declared the alternate Regional Representative. They must be from different National Sections.

## O. Working Languages

The working language for WILPF shall be English (adopting the United Nations standard of British spelling) with translation and interpretation in as many languages as feasible, including sign languages.

## **P. Rules for Decision Making**

In the conduct of all meetings of WILPF, every effort shall be made to reach decisions by consensus when to do so is not in conflict with other provisions of this Constitution and its By-Laws.

## **Q. Operating Guidelines**

The International Secretariat shall develop and maintain a range of guidelines, as approved by the International Board, that support WILPF's ongoing functioning and to which the International Board, National Sections and the International Secretariat staff shall refer to for guidance and clarification on operational matters and to ensure democratic decision-making procedures are implemented across the entire league of WILPF.

## **R. Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws**

1. Amendments to this Constitution and By-Laws may be proposed by a National Section or by the International Board. The International Board may also delegate authority to propose amendments to the Standing Constitution Committee;
2. Proposed amendments must be in writing and sent to the Standing Constitution Committee at least six months before the opening date of the International Congress;
3. The Standing Constitution Committee is to consider the proposed amendments and where accepted, draft a revised Constitution and By-Laws for circulation to all National Sections;
4. Comments on proposed amendments or amendments to proposed amendments must be received 60 days before the opening of the International Congress;
5. The amended Constitution and By-Laws proposed for acceptance by the International Congress shall be distributed to the International Board and National Sections 31 days before the opening of the International Congress;
6. In view of the above process further amendments to the proposed Constitution and its By-Laws will not be accepted from the International Congress floor; and
7. Amendments duly adopted by the International Congress shall take immediate effect unless the International Congress itself resolves otherwise.



The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is a worldwide non-governmental organisation with National Sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and an office in New York.

Since our establishment, we have brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace. Our approach is always nonviolent, and we use existing international legal and political frameworks to achieve fundamental change in the way states conceptualise and address issues of gender, militarism, peace and security.

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