



# CONSTITUTION

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*International Domestic Workers Federation*

*(IDWF)*

2014

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## **PREAMBLE**

We the members of the **International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)** commit ourselves to unite into a powerful force to overcome the exploitation and abuse experienced by domestic/household workers across the World. By domestic/household worker we mean any person engaged in domestic/household work within an employment relationship.

*In doing so we are guided by the following principles:*

- Domestic work is work. Domestic/household workers must enjoy the same rights as other workers.
- Domestic/household workers are entitled to decent working and living conditions as contained in ILO Convention C189, and which must be enshrined in national law.
- Abuses against domestic/household workers are violations of trade union and other human rights and must be prosecuted.
- Governments must implement equal legal protection for domestic/household workers.
- The existing economic and social relations reflect the power of minority interests who have organized social life for their own benefit and to the detriment of the vast majority of the worlds' population.
- Domestic/household workers' organizations are part of the global labour movement and will join forces with all other workers in the struggle to change power relationships and to determine our own economic and social destinies, and secure freedom, justice, well being, security and peace.

- Many domestic/household workers are migrants. IDWF promotes the full rights and participation of all migrant domestic/household workers (LA).

## **1. NAME**

The International Domestic/household workers Federation (IDWF), is an international federation of local and national domestic/household workers' organizations.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

*The objectives of the IDWF shall be:*

- 2.1 To help build strong, democratic and accountable domestic/household workers' organization which protect domestic/household workers' rights everywhere.
- 2.2 To unite domestic/household workers' organizations nationally, regionally and globally.
- 2.3 To promote the leadership of women within domestic/household workers organizations and domestic/household workers within the labour movement in general.
- 2.4 To support affiliates to develop effective collective bargaining mechanisms and improve the working conditions of domestic/household workers.
- 2.5 To promote gender equality, human and trade union rights in every country, making governments accountable to their people.
- 2.6 To build solidarity with the labour movement and collaborate with trade unions and allies across sectors,

especially with other informal and precarious worker organizations at all levels.

- 2.7 To challenge economic and social policies and current power relations that create wealth inequalities, erode worker and other human rights and create forced migration.

### **3. *METHODS/ACTIVITIES***

- 3.1 Organize and/or support campaigns to ratify ILO Convention 189 and to implement its provisions.
- 3.2 Represent domestic/household workers at regional and international forums.
- 3.3 Engage in and promote research regarding domestic work.
- 3.4 Provide education and training activities and opportunities for affiliates.
- 3.5 Share experiences of organizing and collective bargaining and use them to become stronger.
- 3.6 Document and disseminate advances in domestic/household workers' organizing, campaign victories, bargaining models, legal and social protections and other activities of domestic/household workers' organizations that contribute to improving the working and living conditions of domestic/household workers.
- 3.7 Support the strengthening of IDWF affiliates and their struggles and campaigns to improve trade union and other human rights.

- 3.8 Assist in organizing domestic/household workers, in particular where domestic/household workers are not organized.
- 3.9 Regularly communicate with affiliates to facilitate their active participation in the life of the IDWF.
- 3.10 Engage in strategic campaigns and activities that highlight the need for societies to provide for the care needs of children, people with illness and disabilities and the elderly, and to value and respect the caregivers, many of whom are domestic/household workers.
- 3.11 Build alliances with trade unions and organizations in other sectors, in particular with those of migrant workers, women and informal workers.
- 3.12 Encourage and promote solidarity amongst affiliates and allies.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 Eligible organizations of domestic/household workers in all countries may affiliate to the IDWF.
- 4.2 Eligible organizations are:
  - a) Local and national democratic, accountable membership-based organizations of domestic/household workers
  - b) National federations of domestic/household workers' organizations
  - c) Multi-sector membership-based organizations where domestic/household workers form one sector,

provided that membership of IDWF is based only on the number of domestic/household workers in the organization and representation in IDWF is from the domestic worker section.

- 4.3 Where a national federation of domestic/household workers' organizations is an affiliate of IDWF, individual members of such national federation will not be eligible for separate membership of IDWF.
- 4.4 Organizations wishing to affiliate to IDWF should have a minimum of 50 members, a written constitution, based on democratic principles, and regular financial reports approved by members.
- 4.5 Organizations wishing to affiliate to the IDWF should complete the Application Form, attaching the required documents and submit to the Executive Committee, which shall have the power to approve (or reject) an application, after consulting the existing affiliates in the country where the new applicants come from.
- 4.6 A member organization wishing to resign must give one month's notice in writing to the Executive Committee, whereupon its affiliation will terminate.
- 4.7 The Executive Committee shall have the right to suspend, and the Congress expel, an affiliated organization, for acting against the Constitution and/or interests of the IDWF. Prior to any decision a hearing shall be held. The Executive Committee shall determine the procedure for such hearing.

## **5. AFFILIATION FEES**

- 5.1 Affiliates shall pay a fee on joining the IDWF and an annual membership fee thereafter in the first quarter of the year in

which it becomes due, or by installments as agreed by the Executive Committee.

- 5.2 Congress shall determine the affiliation fee. In special circumstances the Executive Committee can decide on a raise in affiliation fees.
- 5.3 If an organization is more than one year in arrears with payment of its fees without the permission of the Executive Committee it shall lose its rights and privileges in the IDWF. Should an organization be more than two years in arrears it shall be considered to have withdrawn its affiliation.

## **6. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURES**

*The IDWF consists of the following structures:*

- a) The Congress
- b) The Executive Committee
- c) The Secretariat (General Secretary)

## **7. THE CONGRESS**

- 7.1 The Congress is the highest decision making body of the IDWF and will be held at least every five years. Extraordinary Congresses can be convened by decision of the Executive Committee or on petition from a majority of affiliates, taking into consideration the financial implications.
- 7.2 The Executive Committee will decide on the date, meeting place, agenda and procedures of the Congress, taking into account recommendations of affiliates, and will notify affiliates in writing of the convening of the Congress at least four months in advance.



- 7.3 Congress shall be composed of the Executive Committee and delegates from affiliates, based on size of membership. Delegates shall be entitled to speak and vote.
- a) Affiliates with 51-1000 members, entitled to one delegate
  - b) Affiliates with 1001-5000 members, entitled to two delegates
  - c) Affiliates with above 5000 members, entitled to three delegates
- 7.4 Only affiliates who are up to date with their affiliation fees will be entitled to full representational rights at Congress, and delegation size will be based on the number of members for whom affiliation fees have been paid in the previous year.
- 7.5 The General Secretary, Coordinators and Staff members may attend Congress as decided upon by the Executive Committee and shall have speaking rights only.
- 7.6 The Executive Committee will appoint a Credential Committee, which will approve (or reject) credentials of delegates.
- 7.7 The quorum for the Congress shall be 50% +1 of the total delegates who have completed all requirements for representation. If within twenty-four (24) hours of the time fixed for the Congress, a quorum is not present, the Congress shall stand adjourned to such a place and time as the Executive Committee shall decide.
- 7.8 The Congress agenda shall include:

- a) Consideration and approval of reports from the Secretariat and President
- b) Consideration and approval of Financial Reports
- c) Approval of Congress committees, including an Election Committee
- d) Election of Executive Committee and Office Bearers:
  - President
  - Vice-President
  - General Secretary
- e) Amendments to the Constitution
- f) Decisions on policies and resolutions submitted by affiliates or the Executive Committee
- g) Approval of action plans

7.9 Decisions shall be taken by consensus or, if no consensus, by majority vote (50%+1), apart from constitutional amendments that require the approval of 75% of voting delegates

7.10 The General Secretary will call for nominations from within affiliates (with the exception of nominations for the General Secretary as she can be from outside of an affiliate) prior to Congress, which should be submitted in writing on the prescribed form together with personal descriptions. The Election Committee, appointed by the Executive Committee, shall scrutinize the nominations to ensure they are in order.

- 7.11 Elections for Office Bearers and Executive Committee members shall be by secret ballot where there is more than one candidate. Delegates present in the Congress, as approved by the Credentials Committee, are entitled to vote. Organizations which for important reasons are unable to send representatives to Congress shall have the right to entrust their votes to other organizations represented at the Congress by submitting the authorization for such representation in writing to the Credentials Committee.

## **8. *THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE***

- 8.1 Governance of the IDWF shall be vested in the Executive Committee in between Congresses. Congress shall elect the Executive Committee in terms of the procedures set out in 7.10 and 7.11 above.
- 8.2 The Executive Committee shall be composed of one representative from each of six regions: Africa, Asia/Pacific, Latin America, Caribbean, Europe, North America, including the elected Office Bearers - President, Vice-President and General Secretary. Each Region will also be entitled to elect an alternate Executive Committee member who will perform the duties of the member in her/his absence.
- 8.3 The term of office shall be determined by the period between Congresses but should be not more than 5 years. Executive Committee members are elected for one term of office that can be renewed only once by election.
- 8.4 Should an Executive Committee member retire for any reason, the Executive Committee shall designate the alternate member to replace her/him. Should there be no alternate member from the region a replacement will be appointed by the Executive Committee, from amongst

members of affiliates in the same region as the former member, and taking into account the views of the affiliates.

- 8.5 Meetings of the Executive Committee shall take place at least every three months, either electronically or in person.
- 8.6 The General Secretary will notify members of the Executive Committee in writing of the meeting at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.
- 8.7 The quorum for meetings will be 50%+1 of the members or their alternates.
- 8.8 The Executive Committee shall have the following duties and powers:
  - a) Promote the activities of the IDWF and uphold the Constitution
  - b) Monitor and facilitate the implementation of resolutions, action plans and policies adopted by Congress
  - c) Ensure the proper functioning of the staff and Secretariat
  - d) Approve financial reports and budgets
  - e) Consider proposals submitted by affiliates, and decide on urgent problems and issues that concern the IDWF
  - f) Organize Congresses
  - g) Delegate tasks to the staff members and sub-committees

- h) Agree on affiliations and suspension of affiliates, subject to ratification or decision by Congress
- i) In case of emergency and by decision of 75% of committee members the Executive Committee may provisionally implement an amendment to the Constitution, with the final decision to be made by the next Congress.

8.9 Decisions will be taken by consensus or, if no consensus, by majority vote (50%+1).

## **9. OFFICE BEARERS**

### **9.1 The President**

Congress shall elect the President for one term of office that can be renewed only once by election. Should s/he retire from the IDWF presidency for any reason, the Executive Committee shall designate the Vice President to succeed the President. The President shall:

- a) Chair the Congress and meetings of the Executive Committee.
- b) Represent the IDWF at meetings, congresses of affiliates and organizations outside of the IDWF
- c) Carry out duties mandated by the Congress and Executive Committee

### **9.2 The Vice-President**

Congress shall elect the Vice-President for one term of office that can be renewed only once by election. In the

absence of the President, or as delegated by her/him, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President.

### 9.3 The General Secretary

Congress shall elect the General Secretary for one term of office that can be renewed only once by election. S/he is a full-time, paid member of staff and an ex-officio member of all IDWF bodies. The General Secretary is accountable to the Executive Committee, and works closely with the Office Bearers to implement decisions and plans of Congress. S/he is responsible for:

- a) The management of the Secretariat and for the prompt completion of its work in accordance with the resolutions and directives of the Executive Committee
- b) The recording and circulating of minutes of Congresses, Executive Committee meetings and ensuring effective communication with affiliates
- c) The maintenance of a competent office staff of Regional Coordinators and such other assistance as may be required, subject to the availability of finance
- d) The financial management of IDWF, including presenting an annual financial report and a proposed budget to the Executive Committee; and maintenance of books and records for audit purpose
- e) The General Secretary may serve as representative of IDWF at meetings and congresses of its affiliates and of other organizations.

## **10. DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF AFFILIATES**

- 10.1 The IDWF has no authority to interfere in the operations/activities of its affiliates. However affiliates are obliged to carry out and implement decisions and policies of the IDWF as agreed by the Congress or Executive Committee.
- 10.2 An organization affiliated to IDWF shall:
- a) keep the Secretariat informed of its elections and any changes to its office bearers and membership as per December 31 each year, as well as new contact details
  - b) provide information required to the best of its ability
  - c) publish in its newsletter, web site and other media information about the activities of the IDWF and send copies or links to the Secretariat
  - d) send copies of its annual report to the Secretariat
  - e) pay affiliation fees regularly in terms of 5.1. above
  - f) participate in Congresses and other IDWF activities

## **11. INTERPRETATION OF, AND AMENDMENTS TO, THE CONSTITUTION**

- 11.1 The responsibility for the interpretation of the terms of this Constitution shall be vested in the Congress. In between Congresses the Executive Committee shall be empowered to make an interim ruling subject to a final decision by the Congress.

- 11.2 The Congress may repeal, amend or add to the provisions of this Constitution by a two-thirds (2/3) majority provided that at least sixty (60) days' notice of any proposed alteration shall have first been given to affiliate organizations.

## **12. DISSOLUTION**

- 12.1 In the event of the dissolution of the IDWF being decided by a Congress, any financial obligations must be fulfilled. The Congress shall decide on the manner of disposal of funds and assets of IDWF.
- 12.2 Dissolution requires a majority of 75% of voting delegates.



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