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SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUTION

*As amended and adopted at the 55th
International Committee Meeting in Hohenunkel,
Germany on 25th February 1994*

1. NAME

The name of the organisation is "Service Civil International", hereinafter referred to as "SCI".

2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aims of SCI are to promote peace, international understanding and solidarity, social justice, sustainable development, and respect for the environment.

SCI believes that all people are capable of living together with mutual respect and without recourse to any form of violence to solve conflicts.

In furtherance of these aims, SCI

- a) acts in a non-violent way as a catalyst for change within individuals and society,
- b) supports victims of violence, social, economic and political injustice, and those who suffer from hunger, disease or the destruction of their environment,
- c) takes appropriate non-violent international action in situations of tension, war and injustice,
- d) supports action which promotes international solidarity, justice, mutual understanding, participation in policy-making at all levels, and respect for individuals as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- e) promotes and organises voluntary service activities in co-operation with local communities as well as other local, national and international organisations, as a means of fostering greater confidence between people of different social, cultural, political or religious backgrounds by working, learning and living together,
- f) bases its work on developing people's own initiative to organise themselves to solve their own problems,

- g) does not undertake any work which competes with paid labour or causes strike-breaking,
- h) understands its work as an alternative to military service and contributes to the abolition of military service everywhere by establishing a non-violent international voluntary service.

3. MEMBERSHIP & BRANCH STRUCTURE

3.1 Membership is open to all individuals who share the aims and objectives of the movement, without regard to gender, race, colour, religion, national, social status or political views. To become members of SCI, individuals must register with a branch or recognised group of SCI as defined in articles 3.2 and 3.5. Individual members of SCI may take part in decision-making through the structures of their branch or recognised group.

3.2 Any national or regional (in the sense of relating to a distinct geographic area within a country or a group of countries) voluntary work organisation can become a branch of SCI provided it meets the following requirements:

- a) it has a written constitution which reflects the aims and objectives of the SCI International Constitution;
- b) it has a clearly defined individual and/or local group membership structure, from which the governing body is elected;
- c) there is evidence of sound financial management, including the publication of annual accounts;
- d) it holds general meetings of members at least once every two years for the purposes of electing its governing body, receiving reports and planning activities;
- e) it undertakes to keep the International Committee and appropriate regional committees and offices informed of its activities and plans;
- f) it appoints delegates to represent it within the International Committee and relevant regional committee of SCI;
- g) it undertakes to make an agreed annual contribution to international funds;
- h) its application is supported by all other SCI branches in the same country;
- i) there is evidence of recognition or registration by relevant authorities or bodies.

3.3 Branch status may be granted only by the International Committee; and is only conferred upon organisations which have had recognised group status for at least two years.

3.4 Branches are entitled to:

- a) participate and vote in all SCI International Committee meetings and at meetings of the regional committee to which they belong, and nominate candidates to stand for election to the International Executive Committee and other relevant SCI international or regional structures;
- b) use the name "Service Civil International" or the abbreviation "SCI" on publications, letterheads or official documents, provided that it is always used in conjunction with the branch's national or other geographical identity. (If another name is used, it must state that it is a branch of "Service Civil International".)

3.5 Recognised group status is open to voluntary work organisations which meet some but not all of the requirements for full branch status. These must include those requirements in paragraphs 3.2 (a), (e), (g) & (h) and may only be granted by the relevant Regional Committee. Where there is no Regional Committee, recognised group status may be granted by the International Committee.

3.6.1 Recognised groups are entitled to participate in all SCI International Committee Meetings, and to participate and vote in the relevant regional committee meetings.

3.6.2 Recognised groups may use the name "Service Civil International" or the abbreviation "SCI" in the same way as branches provided that they state clearly on all printed material that they have recognised group status.

3.7 A branch or recognised group may be suspended by the International Executive Committee if there is reason to believe that it is acting outside the spirit of the International Constitution or is likely to bring SCI into disrepute. A suspended branch or recognised group has the right of appeal to the International Committee, which may reverse the decision of the International Executive Committee.

3.8 A branch or recognised group may only be expelled by the International Committee by a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

3.9 Organisations may only be recognised as partners by the International Committee or by the relevant regional committee or commission. Such organisations (which include affiliated members of commissions) may only use the name "Service Civil International" or "SCI" on printed materials if it is clearly stated that they are "partner" organisations or are affiliated to a particular commission.

4. INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURE

4.1 International Committee

4.1.1 The International Committee is the highest and final decision-making body of SCI. It shall be comprised of one delegate from each branch plus the International Executive Committee. Each branch shall have one vote, and the International Executive Committee shall have one collective vote.

4.1.2 The International Committee shall meet every second year for the purposes of determining policy, receiving reports, approving accounts of all international and regional structures, approving the international budget, appointing auditors for the international accounts, admitting branches, expelling branches or recognised groups, recognising or dissolving regional committees or commissions, electing members of the International Executive Committee, or amending the International Constitution.

4.1.3 A quorum at International Committee meetings shall be at least half the total number of branches and at least half of the International Executive Committee members. A meeting shall be quorate only if delegates from all regions are present. In the event that a meeting of the International Committee is inquorate or is likely to be so, the International Executive Committee must reconvene a meeting of the International Committee within one year of the original date set. If a quorum is not achieved at such a

reconvened meeting, the meeting shall proceed as if it were quorate.

4.1.4 A branch which is unable to be present at an International Committee Meeting may appoint a proxy (which must also be a branch) to vote on its behalf. A letter of appointment, authorised by the committee of the branch which cannot attend, must be received by the International President (or, if s/he is not in attendance, any other member of the International Executive Committee who is in attendance) before the start of the International Committee Meeting. A branch may only carry a proxy for one other branch.

4.1.5 Decisions shall be made by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote, including proxies, with the exception of amendments to the International Constitution, the expulsion of a branch, recognised group or a member of the International Executive Committee, or the dissolution of SCI, which shall require a majority of at least two thirds.

4.1.6 The time and place of International Committee Meetings shall be determined by the International Executive Committee, which must give branches a minimum of twenty weeks notice in writing of such meetings.

4.1.7 Alternatively, an International Committee Meeting shall be held at some other time or place if at least one third of the branches express such a wish in writing to the International President.

4.2 International Executive Committee

4.2.1 The International Executive Committee shall be comprised of the International President, five International Vice-Presidents, the International Treasurer and (ex officio) the International Secretary.

4.2.2 The International President, the International Treasurer and the five International Vice-Presidents shall be elected at an International Committee Meeting by the branches present, including those with proxy votes, together with postal votes, but not including members of the International Executive Committee.

4.2.3 The term of office of the members of the International Executive Committee shall be from the end of the International Committee Meeting at which they are elected, until and including the second subsequent International Committee Meeting. However, half of those elected at the first International Committee meeting shall serve only until the next International Committee Meeting. Members of the International Executive Committee may be elected to serve for a second subsequent term which shall be until the next International Committee Meeting.

4.2.4 In the case of vacancies arising, due to the resignation or death of International Executive Committee Members or places remaining unfilled at an International Committee Meeting, the International Executive Committee may co-opt individuals to fill the vacant spaces until the next International Committee Meeting. Such co-opted members shall not have voting rights. In the event of the International President or Treasurer being unable to fulfil their duties, the International Executive Committee may appoint an acting President or Treasurer from amongst their members who may serve until the next International Committee Meeting.

4.2.5 At least twenty weeks before an International Committee Meeting, branches must be invited to nominate candidates to fill vacancies arising on the International Executive Committee. Candidates may be any individual member of SCI who is deemed to have relevant skills or experience. To qualify they must be proposed and seconded by two different branches of SCI or by the International Executive Committee and one branch.

4.2.6 A notice regarding the candidature of individuals for election to the International Executive Committee must be sent to all branches at least eight weeks before the start of the International Committee Meeting.

4.2.7 The International Secretary is appointed by the International Executive Committee and is an ex officio member (without voting rights) of the International Executive Committee, regional committees and commissions.

recognised groups or regional committees. However, such recognition must be ratified by the International Committee at its next meeting, or else the commission will be deemed to be dissolved.

4.4.2 Commissions shall meet at least once per year, and may elect an Executive Committee or other group for the purposes of pursuing policies and other tasks as determined by the relevant commission and supporting and supervising relevant staff.

4.4.3 Rules governing the powers, conduct and organisation (but not including rules of procedure for meetings) of commissions must be approved by the International Executive Committee. Where there is disagreement between the commission concerned and the International Executive Committee, the commission has the right of appeal to the International Committee.

4.5 Working Groups

Ad hoc international working groups may be recognised by regional committees, commissions, the International Executive Committee or the International Committee for specific purposes. Terms of reference concerning membership, tasks, finance and accountability of such working groups must be agreed in advance by the members/structures concerned.

5. FINANCE

5.1 The International Executive Committee shall be responsible for the international finances of SCI and the International Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that proper records are maintained of all transactions within SCI, that annual accounts are produced and that adequate financial control is maintained.

5.2 The International Executive Committee shall be responsible for authorising the opening or closing of such bank accounts as necessary for the efficient conduct of financial transactions. The International Executive Committee shall also determine who shall have authority to sign cheques and conduct business in respect of each bank account.

6. AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUTION

6.1 The International Committee alone has the power to amend the International Constitution.

6.2 Proposals to amend the International Constitution may be made by any two branches or by the International Executive Committee. Such proposals must be made in writing to the International President at least fifteen weeks before the start of the International Committee Meeting.

6.3 A notice regarding proposed amendments to the International Constitution must be sent to all branches at least ten weeks before the start of the International Committee Meeting.

6.4 Decisions regarding proposed amendments to the International Constitution may only be made by a majority of at least two thirds of those present and entitled to vote at an International Committee Meeting.

6.5 Revised amendments may be accepted for consideration at an International Committee meeting provided that a majority of two thirds of those present and entitled to vote agree.

7. DISSOLUTION

7.1 A motion to dissolve SCI may be made by any two branches or the International Executive Committee. Such proposals must be made in writing to the International President.

7.2 The motion will be placed before the ensuing meeting of the International Committee provided that it has been received at least twenty-five weeks before the start of the meeting and that branches have been informed of the motion at least twenty weeks before the start of the meeting. To be carried, a motion must be supported by a majority of two thirds of those present and entitled to vote.

7.3 If an International Committee Meeting at which a motion to dissolve SCI is to be put is inquorate, another International Committee Meeting shall be called for the purpose within a period of twelve months.

7.4 In the event that a second International Committee Meeting being called for the purpose is also inquorate, a decision to dissolve SCI may be taken by a majority of those present and entitled to vote.

7.5 Any remaining assets held by SCI at the time of dissolution may, after the payment of any debts, be distributed to branches, recognised groups and/or partner organisations at the discretion of the International Executive Committee

8. INTERPRETATION

8.1 The terms "Service Civil International" or "SCI" as used in this Constitution are intended to relate to the international movement of SCI and not to any of its constituent parts (regions, branches etc).

8.2 The term "regional", except when otherwise defined, is intended to relate to the groups of branches and recognised groups in the same continental area (such as Asia and Europe).

8.3 The term "international" is intended to relate to groups of branches and recognised groups in more than one region.

8.4 Although this constitution may be translated into other languages, interpretations of the meanings of words, sentences or paragraphs will be based only on the English original.

8.5 In the event of disagreement with the International Executive Committee over the interpretation of any part of the International Constitution, the matter will be referred to the International Committee for a ruling.

GLOSSARY

Ex officio: by virtue of appointed office.

Proxy: somebody who is appointed to vote on behalf of someone else.

Quorum: the minimum number of people necessary for the transaction of business.

Quorate: a meeting with a quorum.

Inquorate: a meeting without a quorum.