

STATUTES OF CARITAS AFRICA

(As updated on 15 September 2007)

SECTION I: NAME - MEMBERS - AIMS

Article 1 – Name

In accordance with Article 4 of the Statutes of the Caritas Internationalis Confederation (CI), the Africa Region of Caritas Internationalis is set up under the name "Caritas Africa".

Article 2 – Members

Charitable organisations of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Isles that are members of Caritas Internationalis in accordance with Article 3 of the Statutes of Caritas Internationalis, and do not belong to another Region, are members of Caritas Africa.

Article 3 – Aim

The aim of Caritas Africa is to institutionalise exchange and mutual aid between its members organisations with a view to promoting and harmonising their work and achieving in the region the aims pursued by the Caritas Internationalis Confederation, as an organ of the Church social pastoral in their respective countries.

Article 4 – Objectives

Caritas Africa particular aims at the following objectives:

- a. To encourage and help the member organisations to participate, through active charity and aid, in the human promotion and integral development of the least favoured within the framework of pastoral care as a whole;
- b. To facilitate multilateral collaboration with a view to solving common problems on a regional and global scale;
- c. To organise services liable to foster the integral development of the member organisations of the Region;
- d. To encourage the collaboration of its members with the Regional and Continental Episcopal Associations and the other ecclesiastic Organisations working within the framework of social pastoral work;
- e. To carry out tasks aiming at reinforcing the ties between the Region and the Confederation in accordance with the Statutes and the Internal Regulations of Caritas Internationalis, and further the relations between the Region and the other member organisations;
- f. To integrate the contribution of the Region to the discussions and programmes of Caritas Internationalis and facilitate the carrying out, in the Region, of the initiatives and guidelines established at an international level for cooperation between the member organisations of Caritas Internationalis;
- g. To effectively support the work done by the branches of Caritas Internationalis in relation to other bodies;

- h. To reinforce the ties with the Holy Siege, SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar), other ecclesial bodies, the Caritas of other Regions, Catholic international organizations, NGO's and others.

Article 5 – Registered office

The registered office of Caritas Africa is in Lomé, TOGO, Boulevard des Armées – Tokoin Séminaire, but can be transferred anywhere in the region, upon decision of the Regional Conference, ratified by the SECAM.

SECTION II: STRUCTURES

Article 6

Caritas Africa is endowed with the following organs:

- The Regional Conference (Panafrican)
- The Regional Chair
- The Africa Regional Commission (ARC)
- The Executive Secretariat of Caritas Africa (ESCA)
- The Zonal Coordination

CHAPTER I: The Regional Conference

Article 7: Definition - Composition

- a. The Regional Conference, called the Pan-African Conference of Caritas, is the meeting that gathers the representatives of all the member organisations of Caritas Africa;
- b. Each member organisation may designate up to two representatives to the Regional Conference, but is entitled to only one vote;
- c. At the invitation of the Regional Conference, expert observers or other personalities from the member organisations or elsewhere may participate in the Regional Conference, but without voting rights;
- d. The participation without any voting right is authorised to observers, experts and other personalities invited by the Regional Conference;
- e. The Regional Conference is presided over by the Chairperson, assisted by the Regional Secretary, who acts as the Secretary of the Conference.

Article 8 – Meetings

- a. The ordinary meetings of the Regional Conference are held every four years.
- b. An extraordinary meeting may be held if so decided at an ordinary meeting or at the proposal of the Regional Commission, or at the request of at least one third of the member organisations. In all cases, the Chairperson notifies the participants and establishes the agenda, the place and the dates of the meeting.

Article 9 – Prerogatives

The functions of the Regional Conference are:

- a. To elect the Chairperson of the Region ;
- b. To ratify the 4 members representing the Region on the Executive Committee of Caritas Internationalis ;
- c. To ratify the nomination of the Regional Executive Secretary ;
- d. To approve a Regional Work Plan for a period of four years, as well as the corresponding budget forecasts ;
- e. To establish the contributions of the member organisations for the support of the regional cooperation system ;
- f. To approve the four-yearly reports on activities and the financial report of the previous audited financial year ;
- g. To determine the registered office of the Regional Secretariat and of any regional bodies that are created ;
- h. To foster effective cooperation between the member organisations of Caritas Internationalis in the region ;
- i. To reinforce the relations with the Holy See, SECAM and other ecclesiastic bodies, and with the Caritas organisations of other regions, international Catholic organisations, NGOs and others ;
- j. To evaluate the activities of the cooperation system as a whole.

CHAPTER 2: The Regional Chair

Article 10 – The President

The President of the Region is also one of the Vice-presidents of Caritas Internationalis, in accordance with Article 4 of the Statutes and Article 15 of the Internal Regulations of Caritas Internationalis.

Article 11 – Election and mandate of the Regional Chairperson

- a. The Regional President is elected by the Regional Conference.
- b. The procedure for the candidature is the following:
 - i. Only the member organisations may propose the candidates;
 - ii. The candidature proposals accompanied by the curriculum vitae are submitted to the Candidature Committee appointed by the Regional Commission and composed of one representative of each zone of Caritas Africa;
 - iii. The Candidature Committee contacts the persons proposed to ensure that they agree to stand as candidates to the post;

- iv. The Candidature Committee communicates the names of the candidates to all the member organisations and to the Regional Commission before the holding of the Regional Conference responsible for electing the Chairperson.
- c. The candidates to the post of Regional Chairperson must:
 - i. Be part of a member organisation of Caritas Africa;
 - ii. Be aware of the ecclesiastic and civil evolution in Africa, and maintain good relations with the Episcopal bodies at the national and regional levels;
 - iii. Have the opportunity to make regular visits to the region;
 - iv. Be open and have a team spirit, which are the necessary qualities for effectively carrying out the functions indicated in the above article.
- d. The election procedure is as follows:
 - i. A candidate must receive at least half of the votes plus one of the voting member organisations that are present;
 - ii. If no candidate obtains the required majority in the first round, a second round based on simple majority will be held between the two candidates who have obtained the largest number of votes;
 - iii. The vote will be made by secret ballot. The member organisations that have paid their dues are able to vote by written proxy, which must reach the Candidature Committee 24 hours at the latest before the elections.
- e. The mandate of the Regional Chairperson has duration of four years, i.e. the period between one General Assembly of Caritas Internationalis and the next. The mandate may only be renewed once (i.e. the maximum mandate is eight years).

Article 12 – Functions of the Regional Chairperson

The duties of the Regional Chairperson are:

- a. To summon and preside over the Regional Conference and the Regional Commission;
- b. To officially represent Caritas Africa in relation to Caritas Internationalis and other bodies;
- c. To encourage ecclesiastic solidarity and cooperation between member organisations of Caritas Internationalis in the Region;
- d. To maintain constant relations with SECAM and the other Episcopal bodies in the Region;
- e. If appropriate, to maintain relations of cooperation with regional or sub-regional organisations pursuing similar aims to those of Caritas;
- f. To notify the member organisations of the decisions and the recommendations of organs of Caritas Internationalis;
- g. To draw the attention of the Confederation to the concerns of the Region, through the Executive Committee and the Bureau of CI.

CHAPTER 3: The Regional Commission

Article 13 – Definition - Composition

The Regional Commission, the executive organ of Caritas Africa, is composed of:

- a. The Regional Chairperson who presides over it;
- b. The Regional Vice-Chairperson;
- c. The coordinators of zones representing all the ecclesiastical zones of the Church in Africa and all of whom have voting rights;
- d. The Regional Secretary, who acts as the Secretary of the Commission, with an advisory role;
- e. The person in charge of the Africa Service of Caritas Internationalis, who acts as a consultant, with an advisory role;
- f. The Treasurer appointed by the Regional Commission with advisory role.

Article 14 – Functions

The Functions of the Regional Commission are the following:

- a. To elect the Regional Secretary and submit the result to the Regional Conference for approval;
- b. To dismiss any Regional Secretaries who fail to meet the requirements of their functions and to arrange for their replacement. The replacement of the Regional Secretary remains provisional until the following session of the Regional Conference, which must approve the holder of the post;
- c. To approve the senior executives of the Regional Secretariat;
- d. To ensure that the Regional Secretary and the senior executives of the Regional Secretariat carry out their functions and responsibilities;
- e. To carry out the decisions of the Regional Conference;
- f. To coordinate the global activities of the Regional System;
- g. To establish an annual schedule for the activities of the Region;
- h. To draw up a four-year regional work plan in the spirit of the lines of action established by the Pan-African Conference and by the General Assembly of CI and following the guidelines of SECAM. This plan is submitted to the approval of the Regional Conference;
- i. To establish and approve the annual budget of income and expenditure for financing the Regional System and its activities;
- j. To prepare the meetings of the Regional Conference and the Regional Commission with the aid of the Regional Secretary;
- k. To put into practice in the Africa Region the initiatives established by Caritas Internationalis the representation of the regional system within intergovernmental organisations;

- l. To carry out the organisation in agreement with the Bureau and the General Secretariat of Caritas Internationalis;
- m. To advise the Executive Committee of Caritas Internationalis on specific questions concerning the Africa Region with a view to drawing up the general policy of Caritas Internationalis;
- n. To elect from its members a Vice-Chairperson of Caritas Africa;
- o. Appoint a Treasurer who participates in the Regional Commission meetings with advisory role;
- p. To prepare the Pan-African Conference in collaboration with the host country.

Article 15 – Meetings

The Regional Commission holds an ordinary meeting twice a year. One of the ordinary meetings takes place before or on the occasion of the ordinary meeting of the Executive Committee of CI, in order to allow the representatives of the Region on this body to really act as spokespersons of Caritas Africa.

The Regional Commission may hold an extraordinary meeting at the request of the Regional Chairperson or of one third of its members.

CHAPTER 4: The Regional Secretariat - Definition - Composition

Article 16 – The Regional Secretariat

The Regional Secretariat, the executive organ of the Region, is composed of the Regional Secretary and the staff necessary for carrying out the decisions of the Regional Conference and the Regional Commission.

- a. The Regional Secretary recruits the necessary staff, within the limits imposed by the budget, requesting the approval of the Regional Commission for the appointments to higher posts established by said Commission, and always bearing in mind the need to give the Secretariat a regional character;
- b. The working conditions of the staff of the Regional Secretariat are established by the Staff Regulations approved by the Regional Commission.

Article 17 – Functions

The main function of the Regional Secretariat, under the direction of the Regional Secretary, is to carry out any work that may be entrusted to it by the Regional Conference and the Regional Commission.

As an executive organ, the functions of the Regional Secretariat are:

- a. To stimulate the member organisations and the organs of the Regional cooperation system, in accordance with the universal vision and mission of Caritas and in the direction of its guidelines and priorities, as defined by the General Assembly of CI and the Regional Conference.
- b. To ensure the execution of the work plan of Caritas Africa.

- c. To facilitate the implementation of services that aid the integral development of each member organisation.
- d. To ensure the coordination of the actions of the member organisations related to emergency aid, advocacy action and questions of development, justice and peace in the Africa Region, in accordance with the common criteria that are established.
- e. To organise the documentation and information services.
- f. To hold regular contacts with the member organisations and to inform them of the activities of the Regional System; to visit them periodically in order to gain direct knowledge of their activities, their experiences and their problems, and to encourage them to carry out a coherent regional cooperation.
- g. To organise and maintain the archives of the regional structures.
- h. To provide support staff for the meetings of the Regional Conference and the Regional Commission, and to draw up and circulate the reports of these meetings; to print and publish the documents and decisions arising from these meetings.
- i. To study, analyse and evaluate events and situations in order to present them to the attention of the Regional Conference, the Regional Commission and the member organisations.
- j. To provide services of financial administration and accountancy according to the desires of the Regional Commission.

Article 18 – The Regional Secretary

- a. The Regional Secretary is the director of the Regional Secretariat.
- b. His/her main duties are:
 - 1. To support the work of the Regional Conference and the Regional Commission by:
 - i. helping to prepare and organise the meetings of the Regional Commission and Conference and acting as the secretary for both;
 - ii. carrying out the decisions taken by the Regional Conference and the Regional Commission;
 - iii. assisting the Regional Chairperson, according to his/her needs, with questions concerning the Region or Caritas Internationalis;
 - iv. drawing up the diverse policies and procedures regarding the functioning of the regional structures, all of which must be approved by the Regional Commission and/or the Regional Conference.
 - 2. To implement the regional work plan of Caritas Africa by:
 - i. Drawing up the annual work plans approved by the Regional Commission and aiming at carrying out the regional work plan of Caritas Africa;
 - ii. Managing the budget assigned for carrying out the work plan;
 - iii. Developing and maintaining the necessary communication and administration systems for supporting the regional work plan.

3. To develop the structures and reinforce capacities by:
 - i. Visiting the weak member organisations in order to help them to reinforce their capacities and institutions, and to carry out other requested services;
 - ii. Visiting the member organisations in order to obtain direct knowledge of their activities, their experiences and their problems and to encourage them to carry out a coherent regional cooperation;
 - iii. Organising seminars and training at the regional and sub-regional levels, following the decisions of the Regional Commission.
4. To facilitate cooperation and networking by:
 - i. Facilitating a regular dialogue between the member organisations on questions of common interest;
 - ii. Representing Caritas Africa, when necessary or when the Region requires it, at national, regional or international meetings concerning questions of interest for the region;
 - iii. Maintaining permanent contacts with the General Secretariat of Caritas Internationalis;
 - iv. Collaborating with the episcopal and ecclesiastic structures of the region in order to ensure that their interests are represented and that they are informed of the work done by Caritas Africa;
 - v. Creating and maintaining solid ties with other competent organisations at the national, regional and international levels.

5. The Regional Secretary fulfils his or her functions under the authority of the Chairperson and the Regional Commission.

Article 19 – Conditions of selection

All candidates for the post of Regional Secretary of Caritas Africa must:

- a. Have a suitable Christian training and be strongly engaged in the Social Doctrine of the Church;
- b. Have sound experience of ecclesiastic work in the field of human promotion;
- c. Have sufficient knowledge of the situation and conditions of the different countries of the Region;
- d. Be able to take initiatives and to show adaptability and flexibility;
- e. Have good communication, organisation and leadership skills, and good experience in management;
- f. Be strongly motivated to be at the service of the Church and the values that it fosters;
- g. Have the necessary qualities for teamwork;
- h. Have sufficient knowledge of the working languages of the Region.

Article 20 – Election and mandate

- a. The Regional Secretary is appointed by the Regional Commission and his/her nomination is approved by the Regional Conference.
- b. The procedure for the appointment of the Regional Secretary is the same as that indicated in Article 11 of these Statutes.
- c. The mandate of the Regional Secretary has a duration of four years, i.e. the period between one General Assembly of Caritas Internationalis and the next. This mandate may only be renewed once (i.e. the maximum mandate is eight years).
- d. The Regional Commission will carry out a biennial evaluation (every two years) of the performance of the Regional Secretary.
- e. The Regional Commission can dismiss a Regional Secretary who would not satisfy the demands of his occupation and provide for his substitution, till the following Regional Conference session;
- f. In case of post vacancy, the Regional Commission appoints a Regional Secretary *ad interim*, whose mandate ends at the next Regional Conference;
- g. The post of the Regional Secretary is considered to be vacant in cases of decease or physical incapacity, resignation, abandoning of the post, absence or failure to attend two consecutive meetings of the Regional Commission without a valid reason.

CHAPTER 5: THE ZONAL COORDINATIONS

Article 21 – Zonal Coordination: Definition

- a. In order to achieve a true cooperation between Churches, Caritas Africa is subdivided into zones which correspond to the territories of the Regional Associations of Episcopal Conferences. Thus, Caritas Africa comprises: Caritas ACEAC* Zone, Caritas ACERAC* Zone, Caritas AECAWA* Zone, Caritas AMECEA* Zone, Caritas CERAO* Zone, Caritas CEDOI-M* Zone and Caritas IMBISA* Zone.
- b. The dynamics of the zone are guaranteed by a zone coordinator chosen by the member organisations of the zone.
- c. The zone coordinators work in close collaboration with the Regional Secretariat to carry out the regional work plan and to guarantee the tasks of responding to emergencies, advocacy, organisational reinforcement, communication and exchange.
- d. The zone coordination submits its plan and its annual budget for approval to the Regional Commission.

SECTION III: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 22

The elections, other than those of the President of the Regional Zone, are regulated by the current articles and work regulations of the region.

Article 23

The activities and regional system structures of cooperation are financed by the member organizations of Caritas Africa, in accordance with the support determined by the Regional Conference; and by any other support provided by Caritas Internationalis or any other partner.

Article 24

It is the member organisations' responsibility to accept the charges and responsibilities within the Region and strive to fulfil the obligations deriving from such an implication.

SECTION IV: REVISION

Article 25

The provisions of the present Statutes may be modified by the Regional Conference, at the proposal of the Regional Commission or one third (1/3) of the member organisations. The decision is made by a majority of two thirds (2/3) of the members present or represented.

SECTION V: FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 26

All cases that are not expressly provided for in the present Statutes are determined in the Internal Regulations of the Region.

- * ACEAC = Association des Conférences Episcopales d'Afrique Centrale
- ACERAC = Association des Conférences Episcopales de la Région de l'Afrique Centrale
- AECAWA = Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone Western Africa
- AMECEA = Association of Members of the Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa
- CERAO = Conférence Episcopale de la Région d'Afrique de l'Ouest
- CEDOI-M = Conférences Episcopales Des îles de l'Océan Indien et de Madagascar
- IMBISA = Inter-regional Meeting of Bishops In Southern Africa

15 September 2007