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THE CONSTITUTION OF THE

NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN

WITH DISABILITIES

OF UGANDA (NUWODU)

PREAMBLE:

We the women with disabilities in Uganda, driven by the values of unity, transparency, love, sharing, integrity, good time management, peace and harmony, and spirituality; DESIRING to create a common voice for our social, economic, and political emancipation; CONSIDERING that women with disabilities have for long faced double discrimination; REALISING that the literacy rates of the vast majority of our folk are low; TAKING advantage of the conducive political environment prevailing in Uganda. WORKING in close collaboration with the general disability and women's movements; Other NGOs and government. NOTING that a woman's forum was convened in November 1999 to review the status of women with disabilities since 1991, and to, accordingly forge a way forward; and that the forum instituted an interim committee to, inter alia, draft a constitution for the proposed women's umbrella organisation; DO hereby, in and through this General Assembly propose to adopt this Constitution of the National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU) this 16th day of September in the year of our Lord, 2000.

ARTICLE 1

(a) Name

The name of the organisation shall be the National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU).
(Hereinafter referred to as the **Organisation**).

(b) Location

The headquarters of the organisation shall be located in the Republic of Uganda.

ARTICLE 2

(i) Vision

The vision of the organisation is to have a NUWODU consisting of united women with Disabilities enjoying all the benefits of society at all levels, living independently and having self esteem and dignity from among themselves and from society.

(i) Mission

The mission of the organisation is to facilitate unity and advancement of women with disabilities through advocacy, access to resources, education, skill development and functional Adult Literacy.

ARTICLE 3

Objectives

The objectives of the organisation shall be:

1. To strengthen the decentralised groups of women with disabilities in Uganda through capacity building training, education, and provision of assistive devices.
2. To act as a co-ordinating and monitoring body and establish an information centre for women with disabilities in Uganda.
3. to advocate for equal opportunities and rights of women with disabilities regardless of age, nature of disability, tribe and religion.
4. To unite groups of women with disabilities at the grassroots and the existing national organisations of women with disabilities.
5. To mobilize resources for programmes of women with disabilities regardless of age, nature of disability, tribe and religion.

ARTICLE 4

Membership

(a) Membership Categories

(i) Full membership

The membership of the organisation shall be composed of district associations of women with disabilities, existing National Association of women with disabilities who are affiliated to NUWODU, women groups of unidisability and Associations of Parents of children with Learning Difficulties as full members.

(ii) Associate Members

The organisation shall recognise the membership of individuals or organisations who are interested in the affairs of women with disabilities but are not necessarily women upon payment of pre-determined membership fee.

(iii) Honorary Members

The organisation shall recognise the membership of individuals or organisations who are interested in the affairs of women with disabilities but are not necessarily women upon payment of pre-determined membership fee.

(b) Obligations and rights of members

- (i) The members shall be semi-autonomous in running activities within their jurisdiction and within the framework of the National Constitution.
- (ii) All members shall pay membership and annual subscription fees which shall be recommended by the Board of Directors and approved by the General Assembly. A member who fails to pay the membership fee shall not benefit from the organisation's services and shall have no voting rights. The annual fees will be charged in advance of each financial year.
- (iii) The associate members shall benefit from all the organisation's services, have voting rights but shall not be voted to occupy any position on the Board of Directors of the organisation.
- (iv) The honorary members shall benefit from all the organisation's services but have no voting rights and shall not be voted to occupy any position on the Board of Directors of the organisation.
- (v) To be a member of NUWODU, applications for membership shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Board.

(c) Ceasure of Membership

- (i) Withdrawal can be effected by tendering a resignation letter to the board.
- (ii) The board shall have powers to suspend a member upon written evidence that such a member has violated the constitution or acted against the interest of the organisation pending the final decision by the General Assembly against such a member in its ordinary session or special meeting convened for that purpose. The suspended member has a right to appeal to the General Assembly against the decision of the board.

ARTICLE 5

Structure

The structure of the organisation shall consist of:

- (a) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (hereinafter referred to as "The Assembly")
- (b) THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (hereinafter referred to as "The Board")
- (c) The Secretariat (hereinafter referred to as the "The Secretariat")
- (d) The Patron

ARTICLE 6

Functions:

(a) The Assembly

(i) Status and composition

The assembly shall consist of two representative each from all member organisations whenever resources allow. It shall be the supreme policy approving body of the organisation.

At each General Assembly session, the outgoing Board shall constitute part of the delegates to the General Assembly with the right to vote and be voted for.

(ii) Functions of the assembly

Other than conferred on it elsewhere in this constitution, the functions of the assembly shall include the following:

1. To approve the rate of membership and annual subscription fees.
2. To receive, consider and approve reports of the board, the auditing firm and the audited financial statements of the organisation.
3. To amend the constitution and make new provisions.
4. To elect new members of the board.
5. To approve decisions and actions taken by the board
6. To receive reports of the activities of members of the organisation
7. To take other measures necessary or conducive to fulfill the mission of the organisation

(b) The Board

(i) The board shall be the policy making organ of the organisation and shall have powers to conduct its affairs according to the directives of the General Assembly.

(ii) Composition: The board shall consist of 12 members as stated below:

(a) 4 Regional representatives.

(b) The representatives of the different disabilities e.g. (blind, deaf and physically handicapped, Epilepsy and Mental Health).

- (c) 1 Representative of parents of children with learning difficulties.
- (d) 1 Representative of the Youth.
- (e) 1 Representative of the deaf - blind.

The office bearers shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary General and Treasurer. The term of office of the board shall ordinarily be 3 years. Any of the officers shall be eligible for re-election in the same position for only one more full consecutive term.

(iii) Functions

- (a) To examine and approve proposals. The Board shall have powers to appoint sub-committees and task forces from within or without its composition. It shall also have powers to appoint advisers and consultants.
- (b) To supervise activities of the organisation
- (c) The board shall have powers to hire, fire and promote the staff of the organisation.
- (d) To resolve conflicts that may arise amongst the members and within itself.
- (e) Shall have powers to co-opt up to 2 other persons with or without disabilities as need arises.
- (f) To safeguard and protect the organisation's credibility, property and constitution.
- (g) To formulate policies and staff regulations appropriate to the secretariat.
- (h) shall make work plans, budgets and accountability to be approved by the assembly.
- (i) Shall recommend the Auditors for the organisation to the General Assembly.

(c) **Office Bearers**

- (i) The office bearers shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary General and Treasurer

(ii) **Duties of the Chairperson**

The Chairperson shall be the Executive head of the organisation. Her duties shall among others be:

- (a) To preside over all meetings of the board and of the assembly.
- (b) To deliver on appropriate occasions an address on the state of the organisation.
- (c) Shall be the Chairperson of all the board meetings and ex-official member to all committee meetings and attend such committee meetings whenever necessary.
- (d) Shall in the absence of any member of the board of directors wherever necessary, have the power to delegate the duties of the said member to any other member of the board.
- (e) Shall be a co-signatory to all bank accounts.
- (f) To perform any other duties assigned to her by the Assembly

(iii) Duties of the Secretary General

The Secretary General:

- (a) Shall set an agenda, record and keep all minutes of the board meetings.
- (b) Shall in liaison with the secretariat deal with all correspondences of the organisation
- (c) Shall maintain and update the organisation's membership register.
- (d) Shall in consultation with the chairperson call board and general assembly meetings at least 14 days before the day of the meeting.
- (e) Shall perform other duties assigned by the Board of Directors.

(v) Duties of the Treasurer

The treasurer shall be the Chief Finance Officer and the custodian of the property of the organisation, and un-deputised and shall:

- (a) Receive and disburse upon the directives of the board, all monies belonging to the organisation and shall thereafter issue official receipts of all such monies.
- (b) Be responsible to the board and the members shall keep proper books of accounts and other related records of all monies received and paid by the organisation.
- (c) Preside over all finance committee meetings and other related activities.
- (d) Spearhead fundraising drives in liaison with the board and secretariat.
- (e) Prepare budgets and proposals in liaison with the board and secretariat.

(f) Be co-signatory to all the organisation's bank accounts.

(d) Duties of other Board Members

(i) Regional Representatives

Shall identify and mobilise the women with disabilities at the district and regional level and shall arrange and co-ordinate all programmes and activities for the development of all women with disabilities in their areas using avenues and resources within their reach.

(ii) Representatives of specific interest groups shall be responsible to advocate and advance the issues of their groups.

(e) Patron

The organisation shall have a patron who will be recommended by the board and approved by the General Assembly to serve for a period of 5 years.

The duties of the patron shall include:-

(i) To advise the organisation on how best to achieve its mission.

(ii) To arbitrate when conflicts arise within the organisation.

(iii) To take leadership of the organisation in case of resignation or of the deaths of all the board members.

(f) Duties of the Secretariat

(i) The Secretariat shall be the implementing organ of the organisation.

(ii) Shall administer the programmes, projects and head office of the organisation and shall from time to time advise the board on how best to achieve the organisation's mission.

(iii) The board shall appoint an Executive Secretary to head the secretariat who shall be an Ex-official member of the board.

(iv) No member of the secretariat shall hold membership status of the organisation.

ARTICLE 7

(a) Term of office of Board Members

The term of office of the Board shall ordinarily be 3 years. Members of the Board shall be eligible for re-election in the same position for only one consecutive term. After the expiration of such terms, the officer in question may be elected to serve on the board in a different capacity. In case a place on the Board falls vacant the particular group/organisation representative shall elect someone for a replacement. Members of the secretariat of the member organisations are not eligible for election to the board. In case both the Chairperson and the Vice chairperson die or resign, the board shall choose among themselves one member to act as the Chairperson until the General Assembly convenes and new members are elected.

(b) Code of Conduct

The Board of Directors and the members of the organisation shall be governed by the principles of the code of conduct which shall be developed by the board and approved by the General Assembly from time to time.

ARTICLE 8

Meetings:

(a) The Assembly

- (i) The Assembly shall be in ordinary session once every 3 years and election of the Board shall be on its agenda. Members shall be informed of the agenda and the venue at least 3 weeks in advance. They are also expected to contribute towards the cost of the meeting.
- (ii) Special assembly meetings may be convened at any time by the Board or on joint initiative of not less than 1/3 of the fully paid up members, in case of exceptional circumstances. In such cases the members will contribute to the cost of the meeting.

(b) The Board

- (i) The Board shall ordinarily meet four times a year.
- (ii) Special meetings should be convened by the chairperson of the different committees that will be established by the Board of Directors from time to time.

ARTICLE 9

Quorum:

- (i) The Assembly shall have a quorum of at least two thirds of its fully paid up members.

(ii) The board shall have a quorum of two thirds of its members including the chairperson or her vice.

(iii) If a meeting is called twice without raising a quorum, any number of the members meeting shall proceed and their decisions shall be binding on the organisation.

ARTICLE 10

Standing Orders

In pursuance of the provisions of this constitution, the following standing orders shall apply:-

(a) Order of Business

In the absence of the chairperson during any meeting, the Vice chairperson shall chair, if both are absent without any delegation, the meeting shall elect one of the members present to chair.

At the beginning of any meeting, the Secretary General shall read out the agenda in its logical order and all matters thereon shall take precedence over all other business, with a provision for any other business as the last item on the agenda.

The chairperson may, in her discretion, limit the number of persons permitted to speak in favour of, or against any motion.

(b) Elections

(i) All members of the board shall be elected by the assembly.

(ii) After the dissolution of the outgoing board, a neutral presiding officer shall be appointed to conduct the elections.

(iii) At nomination level, a person shall be proposed and seconded.

(iv) At the end of the elections, the newly elected chairperson shall preside over the rest of the assembly session.

(c) Voting

Voting in all meetings of the association shall be by secret ballot. During board meetings, any question proposed for the decision of the Board shall be determined by a majority of votes of members present and voting. At voting, whether in board or assembly sessions, each voter shall be entitled to only one vote. Written proxies shall not be allowed. The chairperson or her vice, or other persons presiding over

a meeting of any nature as the case may be, shall have a casting but not an original vote when on any question before the meeting, the votes are equally divided.

(d) Vote of no confidence

For a motion to be declared a vote of no confidence on the board or single member thereof, it shall be signed by a third of the members and forwarded to the chairperson. The chairperson in liaison with the Board shall then arrange a debate on the motion by the organisation's assembly in its next regular session, or may convene a special session for a purpose among other things.

If the motion is carried by two thirds of the members present, the target of such a motion shall immediately resign.

If the motion is for the entire board, the assembly shall nominate a caretaker leadership, inter alia, to hold office till the next regular session when election of the board shall be on the agenda.

ARTICLE 11

FINANCES

(a) Sources

Sources of the organisation's finances shall include:-

- (i) Contributions from members
- (ii) National and international donors
- (iii) Local fundraising
- (iv) Income generating projects
- (v) Gifts
- (vi) Dividends on shares and interest

(b) Funds

The funds of the association should only be used for the purpose of running the organisation and for the improvement of the welfare of women with disabilities. The organisation's funds shall be received and paid to the treasurer and shall be deposited by her on one of the organisation's bank accounts approved by the board. No payment shall be made out of the bank accounts without the authority of the board. The board shall have power to suspend any officer whom it has reasonable cause to believe is not properly accounting for the funds or property of

the organisation and shall have power to appoint a new person in her place. Such suspension and appointment shall be reported to the assembly in its next regular session or a special session may be convened for that purpose.

(c) Signatories

The organisation's bank accounts shall jointly be operated by:

The Treasurer, Chairperson and the Executive Secretary (Head of Secretariat).

(d) Auditors

The General Assembly shall approve a firm of auditors to examine, audit and make reports on the books and records of accounts of the organisation. The members shall be furnished with a copy of the auditor's report on a yearly basis.

ARTICLE 12

Amendment of the Constitution:

Amendment of this constitution shall be:-

- (a) Approved by at least two thirds majority of the assembly.
- (b) Suggestions for amendment shall be forwarded by the members to the Secretary General in writing at least one month in advance for onward transmission to the assembly for debate.
- (c) The assembly may amend, by way of addition, variation or repeal any provision of this constitution. The board shall act as interpreter of the articles in this constitution as permitted by the assembly.

ARTICLE 13

Dissolution

- (a) This organisation shall not be dissolved except by a special resolution carried by a three quarters majority of the members of the General Assembly.
- (b) Following such resolution no further action shall be taken by the board or any office bearer or member of the organisation's secretariat, in connection with the mission for which the organisation was started, other than handing over the assets of the organisation to an organisation with similar objectives.

ADOPTED: This 16th day of September in the year 2000

Signed: 

Chairperson: Asamo Helen Grace

Secretary General: AKOT WINIFRED HELLEN

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