

The OWSD Constitution

Article 1: Establishment

1.1 The Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (hereinafter referred to as OWSD) is an international organization hosted by The World Academy of Sciences in Trieste, Italy.

1.2 This Constitution was revised and approved by the OWSD executive board in February 2017, September 2017, August 2018 and November 2020.

Article 2: Objectives

OWSD shall pursue the following objectives:

- a. Increase the participation of women in developing countries in scientific and technological research, teaching and leadership;
- b. Promote the recognition of the scientific and technological achievements of women scientists and technologists in developing countries;
- c. Promote collaboration and communication among women scientists and technologists in developing countries and with the international scientific community as a whole;
- d. Increase access of women in developing countries to the socio-economic benefits of science and technology;
- e. Promote the participation of women scientists and technologists in the sustainable and economic development of their country; and
- f. Increase understanding of the role of science and technology in supporting women's development activities.

Article 3: Activities

In pursuing its objectives, the Organization may, *inter alia*, undertake the following activities:

- a. Improve access to educational, training and professional development opportunities for women scientists and technologists in developing countries;
- b. Recognize scientific excellence and other achievements of women scientists and technologists in developing countries;

- c. Enhance opportunities and develop strategies for the participation of women in the development and utilization of new technologies;
- d. Develop strategies for the participation and leadership of women in national and international science and innovation systems;
- e. Make science more responsive to the needs of society, especially those of women and of women's development activities;
- f. Promote the involvement of women in harnessing science and technology for sustainable development; and
- g. Undertake such projects and actions as it deems appropriate for achieving its objectives.

Article 4: Members, Friends and Ambassadors

4.1 OWSD membership has two categories:

a. **Full Members:**

- **Women** scientists from [developing countries](#) who have completed a **master's degree or higher** in [scientific subjects](#) and who are committed to the objectives of OWSD.
- This is the only category with voting rights for electing members of the OWSD executive board, and members of national chapter executive committees.

b. **Affiliate Members:**

- **Women** scientists from [developing countries](#) who have completed a **bachelor's degree (or equivalent)** in [scientific subjects](#) and who are committed to the objectives of OWSD.
- Affiliate members can advance to become Full Members upon completion of a master's or doctoral degree (or equivalent) and submission of the relevant certificate to the OWSD Secretariat.

4.2 Individuals who wish to support OWSD, but are not eligible for membership can become **Friends of OWSD:**

- **Women and men** from developed and developing countries with at least an undergraduate degree (or equivalent experience) across all disciplines (including the natural sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities), who are committed to promoting the objectives of OWSD and who are not eligible for the Affiliate or Full membership categories.
- Friends of OWSD are encouraged to engage with OWSD and its members through support activities (mentoring, fundraising,

networking, promoting). They can maintain their online profile on www.owsd.net for visibility and communication purposes.

- Friends of OWSD are not considered OWSD Members and cannot be elected to a National Chapter Executive Committee or OWSD Executive Board. Friends may be invited to participate in selected national chapter events and activities, at the discretion of the national chapter members.

4.3. Individuals who wish to become Members or Friends must apply online through the OWSD website, submitting all required documentation. Applications will be approved online by OWSD Headquarters and national chapters will be able to access new members in their countries directly through the OWSD website. Applications for OWSD membership must always go through the OWSD website to be approved: www.owsd.net.

4.4. OWSD has the right to make specific events for Full/Affiliate members only and/or 'by invitation only'.

4.5 **An OWSD Ambassador** is a woman or man (not necessarily an OWSD Member) who has significant scientific influence and credibility in both the developed and the developing world.

- She or he undertakes to use her or his influence in the scientific circles in which she or he works or in which she or he has influence to further the aims of OWSD listed in Art.2.
- Specific activities OWSD Ambassadors might engage in include:
 1. Inviting OWSD fellows or members to attend conferences or workshops in which the Ambassador is involved;
 2. Nominating OWSD fellows or members for prizes or awards;
 3. Fundraising for OWSD
 4. Increasing the visibility of the Organization at an international level

4.6 **Disciplinary measures:** Upon Registration, each Member commits to the objectives of OWSD. If an OWSD Member believes another OWSD Member(s) is acting against the OWSD constitution and/or Mission, she should write directly to the OWSD President, detailing her complaint. The President may then decide to put the complaint to the OWSD executive board who will carefully consider the evidence and the circumstances. The OWSD EB has the right to withdraw Membership. On the other hand, OWSD will not accept or tolerate any allegations towards its Members that are based on assumptions or word-of-mouth. Any accusations of misconduct should make reference to the point in the OWSD Constitution or National Chapter constitution that has been breached. In such

cases where no evidence is provided, disciplinary measures against the complainant(s) are foreseen and will be discussed and decided by the Executive Board. In such cases, membership withdrawal is an option.

Article 5: National Chapters and Country Networks

5.1 An OWSD **National Chapter** (in the listed Developing Countries) or OWSD **Country Network** (in any other country) is a group of at least twenty OWSD members and friends who fully support the objectives and activities of OWSD, and aim to enhance and promote female participation in: science and technology research and professions; scientific leadership and decision-making processes, at national and regional level. National Chapters are regulated by the National Chapter Guidelines and Executive Committees must adhere to these. Country Networks are regulated by the Country Network Guidelines and Executive Committees must adhere to these.

National Chapter or Country Network membership shall consist of all registered OWSD members and friends who are **Resident and/or Nationals** of that country.

Article 6: General Assembly

6.1 The General Assembly is a meeting of OWSD members convened by the Executive Board.

6.2 All Members shall be invited to attend the General Assembly and have the right to participate.

6.3 At the General Assembly the Executive Board and OWSD Headquarters shall inform members of activities undertaken since the previous General Assembly and present a strategic plan for the next four years. Members will have an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback to the Executive Board. If Members do not agree with the decisions taken they should contact their regional Vice-President or Regional Member, who can raise Members' concerns with the Executive Board.

6.4 The General Assembly shall meet at regular intervals to be determined by the Executive Board (usually 4 years). All Members shall be notified at least six months in advance of a planned meeting of the General Assembly and shall receive a draft programme at least four weeks before the meeting.

5.5 A website page with all evolving information relevant to the General Assembly and conference will be available at least 3 months before the General Assembly.

Article 7: The Officers of the Organization

7.1 Elections to the OWSD Executive Board are regulated by the relevant Rules of Procedures.

7.2 At least six months in advance of the General Assembly, any Full Member can submit her name to the Nominating Committee (appointed by the Executive Board) for election to the Board. All applications must be endorsed by at least two Full Members.

7.3 At least three months before the General Assembly, all Full Members will be invited to vote for the eligible members selected by the Nominations Committee, from which a shortlist will be published on the OWSD website

7.4 Full Members shall elect from the shortlist all members of the Executive Board:

- President (from any region)
- 4 Vice-Presidents (from each of the 4 OWSD regions)
- 4 Regional Members (from each of the 4 OWSD regions)

7.5 The term of office of the President, the Vice-Presidents and the Regional Members of the Executive Board shall begin the year in which they are elected and shall end in the year of the next Board elections. They may be re-elected onto the Board in any capacity only once (whether consecutively or not).

7.6 The President shall preside over the meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board. If the President is unable to attend a meeting, she shall designate a Vice-President to take her place.

7.7 If the President or a Vice-President resigns before the end of her term or is otherwise unable to continue, the Executive Board shall elect a Member of the Board as acting President or Vice-President for the remainder of the term of the original President or Vice-President.

7.8 If a Regional Member of the Executive Board resigns before the end of her term or is otherwise unable to continue as Regional Member, the Executive

Board shall meet to discuss procedures for the election of a replacement Regional Member.

7.9 *Ex officio* members do not have the right to vote for decisions which are discussed by the Executive Board. The immediate past President shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board for one term only. The Coordinator of OWSD Headquarters shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board.

7.10. The President shall liaise with OWSD Headquarters in handling all official correspondence. If she is unable to do this she will delegate this responsibility to one of the Vice-Presidents.

7.11 The OWSD Executive Board shall meet at least once per year (online or in person). An additional online meeting (e.g. six months from the formal EB meeting) may be held online to discuss matters arising and to ensure agreed decisions and timelines are being implemented.

7.12 The Executive Board shall be responsible for:

- a. Setting the time and venue for the meetings of the General Assembly;
- b. Discussing and approving the General Assembly programme drawn up by OWSD Headquarters in consultation with the OWSD President;
- c. Discussing and approving the strategic plan drawn up by the Secretariat and President in consultation with a specially formed Executive Board sub-committee (4 persons)
- d. Approving programmes and activities, as well as their budgets.

7.13 The Executive Board may only take formal decisions if at least six members are present (including online) at a meeting. The Executive Board shall decide by a majority vote. In case of a tie, the vote of the President shall decide. At any point during the Board meeting, members have the right to request a secret ballot for decisions they deem sensitive.

7.14 In the interval between meetings a formal decision may be taken by email, with instructions sent from the President and provided that at least six members approve by the stated deadline. If a vote by email relates to a specific person or persons, the individual votes of members shall be kept confidential.

Article 8: OWSD Headquarters

8.1 The staff of OWSD Headquarters shall be appointed through UNESCO procedures and with the approval of the TWAS executive director.

Article 9: Finances

9.1 The funds of OWSD shall be derived from Membership fees, grants, subsidies, bequests, prizes, revenue from investments and from such other sources as are approved by the Executive Board.

9.2 The Executive Board shall each year set or confirm the voluntary contribution suggested to be paid by Full Members.

9.3 OWSD Headquarters shall prepare each year an audited account of all incomes and expenditures of OWSD to be presented at the EB meeting.

Article 10: Amendments

10.1 The Executive Board can make amendments to the Constitution and these must be published on the OWSD website and the Membership informed thereof (with a period of at least two weeks to raise any objections). Any amendments to the Constitution since the last Assembly will be presented to the next General Assembly.

10.2 The Executive Board may amend the Rules of Procedures of the Organization and these must be presented to the General Assembly.

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