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IDWF

CONSTITUTION

INTERNATIONAL DOMESTIC  
WORKERS FEDERATION

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ENGLISH

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# CONSTITUTION OF THE IDWF



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# Definition of Terms

*For the purposes of this constitution*

<b>“affiliate”</b>	means an organization of domestic workers which is officially affiliated to the IDWF
<b>“affiliation fee”</b>	or membership fee, means the fee paid by an affiliate to the IDWF annually
<b>“Constitution”</b>	means the Constitution of the International Domestic Workers Federation
<b>“delegate”</b>	means a person elected or appointed by an affiliate to the IDWF Congress, and have the right of speaking, voting and election
<b>“domestic work”</b>	refers to work done in, for a household or households
<b>“domestic worker”</b>	refers to any person who is employed to perform work for a household or households

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*For the purposes of  
this constitution*

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<b>“domestic workers organization”</b>	means a members-based organization of domestic workers
<b>“household worker”</b>	has the same meaning as domestic worker
<b>“FITD”</b>	is the French acronym of Federation Internationale des Travailleurs Domestiques
<b>“FITH”</b>	is the Spanish acronym of Federacion Internacional de Trabajadores del Hogar
<b>“IDWF”</b>	is the English acronym of International Domestic Workers Federation




# 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 as worker.

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

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- > Domestic work is work. Domestic/household workers must enjoy the same rights and dignity 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 constitute violations to human and trade union rights, and must be prosecuted.
  - > Governments must implement legal protection measures for domestic/household works, equal to the ones implemented for the rest of workers in other activities.
  - > 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 world's 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, safe working condition, security and peace.
  - > Many domestic/household workers are migrants. IDWF promotes the universal/fundamental human and labour rights and the full rights of participation of all migrant domestic/household workers.
  - > Globally, women constitute the majority of people working as domestic workers, therefore organizations of domestic workers will promote the leadership of women within domestic workers' organizations and within the labour movement in general.
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# 1 NAME AND HEADQUARTERS

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- 1.1 The International Domestic/household workers Federation hereinafter IDWF, is an international federation of the organization of local and national domestic/household workers' organizations.
- 1.2 It is a non-profit association governed by the present statutes and, secondly, by Article 60 and seq. of the Swiss Civil Code. It is neutral politically, and non- denominational.

# 2 OBJECTIVES

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*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 and promote the union of domestic/household workers' organizations nationally, regionally and globally, at national, regional and global levels.
- 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.
- 2.8 To unite migrant domestic workers and protect their rights and dignity all over the world.
- 2.9 To eradicate child labour in domestic work and promote safe working condition and ensure childhood for children.



## 3 METHODS/ACTIVITIES

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- 3.1 Organize and/or support campaigns to ratify ILO Convention 189 as well as other ILO Conventions related to domestic workers 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, as well as professionalization 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 and those related to migrant workers, women and informal workers.
- 3.12 Encourage and promote solidarity amongst affiliates and allies, whenever those share the same ideas, principles and purposes.

# 4

## RESOURCES

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### 4.1 The Federation's resources are derived from:

- membership fees;
- donations and legacies;
- sponsorship;
- public subsidies;
- any other resources authorized by the law.

### 4.2 The funds shall be used in accordance with the Federation's objectives.

# 5

## MEMBERSHIP

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5.1 Eligible organizations of domestic/household workers in all countries may affiliate to the IDWF.

5.2 Eligible organizations are:

- a) Local or national democratic, accountable membership-based organizations of domestic/household workers.
- b) National federations of domestic/household workers' organizations.

Multi-sector membership-based organizations with domestic/household workers constituting one of its sectors, will be eligible to affiliate with IDWF solely based on the membership within that particular sector.

- c) Local unions belonging to a national federation of domestic/household workers that is affiliated with IDWF, will not be eligible to seek direct and independent affiliation with IDWF.

5.3 Organizations wishing to affiliate to IDWF should have a minimum of 50 members, a written constitution, based on democratic and legal principles, and regular financial reports, approved by members.

5.4 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.

## 5 MEMBERSHIP (CONT'D)

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- 5.5 A member organization wishing to resign must give one month's notice in writing to the Executive Committee, whereupon its affiliation will terminate.
- 5.6 The Executive Committee shall have the right to suspend, and the Congress the power to 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.

## 6 MEMBERSHIP FEES

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- 6.1 Each affiliate upon joining the IDWF, shall pay an annual membership fee in the first quarter of the corresponding year or by installments in accordance to its agreement with the Executive Committee.
- 6.2 Congress shall determine the amount of the affiliation fee. In special and exceptional circumstances, the Executive Committee can decide on an increase in the amount of the affiliation fee.
- 6.3 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 deemed as having withdrawn its affiliation.

## 7 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURES

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**The IDWF consists of the following structures:**

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



## THE CONGRESS

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- 8.1 The Congress is the highest decision making body of the IDWF and will be conducted at least every five years. Extraordinary Congresses can be convened by decision of the Executive Committee or on petition from a simple majority – more than 50% - of affiliates, taking into consideration the financial implications, can be held in person or virtually according to the prevailing needs of the organization.
- 8.2 The Executive Committee will decide on the date, meeting place, agenda and procedures of the Congress, taking into account recommendations of affiliates, to whom it will notify with at least four months in advance.
- 8.3 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, shall be entitled to one delegate
  - b) Affiliates with 1001-5000 members, shall be entitled to two delegates
  - c) Affiliates with above 5000 members, shall be entitled to three delegates
- 8.4 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.
- 8.5 The General Secretary and staff members may attend Congress as decided upon by the Executive Committee and shall have speaking rights, if invited by the Chair.
- 8.6 The Executive Committee will appoint a Credential Committee, which will approve (or reject) credentials of delegates.
- 8.7 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.



**8.8 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
  - First Vice-President
  - Second 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

8.9 Decisions shall be made by consensus and, in case of not reaching it, by simple majority of votes (50% +1). Amendments to the Constitution shall require 75% of delegates with voting rights for its approval.

8.10 The Election Committee, appointed by the Executive Committee, shall scrutinize the nominations to ensure they are in order.

The President, First Vice President and Second Vice-President shall be elected from three different regions.

The General Secretary will call for nominations for Office Bearers and members of the Executive Committee among affiliates.

The nomination for the General Secretary position will be submitted by affiliates and received by the Election Committee prior to the Congress.

Nominees for the General Secretary can originate from an affiliate or an external source. Each nominee will be required to complete an IDWF form prepared for such purpose or nominated in writing and submit it to the Election Committee prior to the Congress.

# 8

## THE CONGRESS (CONT'D)

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8.11 Elections for Office Bearers, shall be members of the Executive Committee, and decided by secret ballot when there is more than one candidate. Only delegates present in the Congress, as approved by the Credentials Committee, have the right to vote. Organizations that for legitimate reasons are unable to send representatives to Congress will have the right to entrust their votes to other organizations represented in Congress; by submitting the authorization for such representation in writing and in advance, to the Credentials Committee.

# 9

## THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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- 9.1 **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 8.10 and 8.11 above.
- 9.2 The Executive Committee shall be composed of one titular member from each of seven regions: Africa, Asia/Pacific, Latin America, Caribbean, Europe, Middle East and North Africa and North America, including the elected Office Bearers – President and two Vice-Presidents (first Vice-President and second Vice President). Each Region will have the right to elect one alternate member to the Executive Committee.
- 9.3 The alternate members are entitled to attend meetings of the Executive Committee; should a titular member be absent, the alternate member shall exercise the rights to vote on behalf of the regions.
- 9.4 The members of the Executive Committee shall perform their roles and responsibilities on a pro-bono basis, shall not receive any remuneration, with the exception of reimbursement of their effective costs and travel expenses.
- 9.5 The term of office shall be determined by the time between Congresses but should be not more than 5 years. Members of the Executive Committee are elected for one term, which can be renewed only once.



## THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CONT'D)

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- 9.6 Should an Executive Committee member retire for any reason, or become incapacitated, expelled, insolvent, 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.
- 9.7 Meetings of the Executive Committee shall take place at least every three months, either electronically or in person.
- 9.8 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.
- 9.9 The quorum for these meetings will be 50%+1 of the members or their replacing alternates.
- 9.10 **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.
- 9.11 Decisions will be made by consensus or, if there is no consensus, by simple majority of vote (50%+1).

## 10 AUDITORS

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- 10.1 Each year the Congress appoints two auditors, one internal and one external. It may also entrust this task to a fiduciary company.
- 10.2 The auditors shall check the operating and annual accounts prepared by the Executive Committee and present a written and detailed report to the annual ordinary general meeting.

## 11 OFFICE BEARERS

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### 11.1 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 first 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.

### 11.2 The Two Vice-Presidents

Congress shall elect the first Vice-President, and the second 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.

- 11.3 If for any reason or circumstance the First Vice-President becomes vacant, the Executive Committee shall designate the Second Vice-President to succeed the First Vice-President and to elect the Second Vice-President in the Congress immediate following.



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## GENERAL SECRETARY

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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 non-voting member of all IDWF bodies, including the Executive Committee. 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 in meetings, congresses of its affiliates and of other organizations.
- f) An Assistant General Secretary shall be appointed by the Executive Committee as a paid staff.

# 13

## DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF AFFILIATES

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13.1 IDWF has no authority to intervene in the operations/ activities of affiliates. However, its affiliates are obliged to carry out and implement IDWF decisions and policies, which are decided by Congress or by the Executive Committee.

13.2 **An organization affiliated to IDWF must:**

- a) keep the Executive Committee informed, through the General Secretary, of its elections and any changes in its office bearers or in its members, on the first quarter of each year; as well as new contact information that is necessary.

## 13 DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF AFFILIATES (CONT'D)

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- 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 /and links to the General Secretary.
- d) send copies of its annual report to the Secretariat.
- e) regularly pay affiliation fees, in terms of 6.1.
- f) participate in Congresses and other IDWF activities.

## 14 INTERPRETATION OF, AND AMENDMENTS TO, THE CONSTITUTION

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- 14.1 The responsibility for the interpretation of the terms of the Constitution lies with Congress. In between Congresses, the Executive Committee will have the power to establish provisional rules, subject to the final decisions by the Congress.
- 14.2 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.

# 15

## SIGNATURE AND REPRESENTATION

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The Federation is legally bound by at least two of the three individual signature of the President, General Secretary or the Treasurer of the Committee.

# 16

## DISSOLUTION

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- 16.1 Should the Federation be dissolved, the available assets should be transferred to a non-profit organization pursuing public interest goals similar to those of the Federation and likewise benefiting from tax exemption. Under no circumstances should the assets be returned to the founders or members. Nor should they use a part or a total of assets for their own benefit.
- 16.2 Dissolution requires a majority of 75% of voting delegates.



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