



HIC - Constitution of Habitat International Coalition

Constitution of Habitat International Coalition

HIC General Assembly

As amended by the 2013 HIC General Assembly

Name and Seat

Article 1

The name of the Association is Habitat International Coalition (HIC). The Association is registered in The Hague, The Netherlands.

Objectives

Article 2

1. HIC is dedicated to action for the recognition, defence and full implementation of the right of everyone to a secure place in which to live in peace and dignity, in all countries.
2. HIC defines "habitat" as the set of environmental and material conditions that permit the satisfaction of vital needs and the survival of all species. "Human habitat" is additionally determined by the economic, social, cultural and political factors that facilitate or limit the access of all people to the goods and services that society produces. For the purpose of this Constitution, "habitat" also means a place for everyone to live in peace and with dignity.
3. Specifically, HIC acts as an international collective of civil society organizations, social movements and individuals that mobilizes and advocates in defence, promotion and enforceability of the human rights of homeless, evicted, displaced, landless and inadequately housed people and communities, including those under occupation, in urban and rural areas. HIC seeks to empower people and communities to improve their conditions based on the principles, norms and standards of human rights, diversity, gender equality, social production and environmental sustainability. HIC promotes public awareness about habitat issues and serves as a platform for the formulation of programs, policies and strategies for constituent social movements and civil society organizations working to promote the human rights to housing, land, and the city, and acts as their representative to public, national, regional and international bodies and forums.
4. The Association aims to attain these objectives by means of:
 - (a) Mobilizing and advocating, independently or in co-operation, with other civil society entities, grassroots and popular organizations, social movements, independent institutions, academic networks, and activist platforms;
 - (b) Organizing forums, seminars and conferences, lectures, public hearings, and exchange visits;
 - (c) Publishing statements, reports, newsletters, and other studies and informative materials;
 - (d) Conducting research and fact-finding missions to document violations and positive experiences;
 - (e) Supporting and strengthening networks and promoting information exchanges among its Members and other civil society entities;
 - (f) Conducting training, human rights education and other activities to build capabilities of constituent Members and affiliates; and
 - (g) Any other activities compatible with these objectives.
5. HIC is based on the principle of decentralization of its activities to the different regions and countries of the world.
6. The Association is a non-profit-making organization.

Duration

Article 3

The Association has been established for an indefinite period.



Membership

Article 4

1. HIC Members can be any civil society organization [social movement, community-based, professional body, voluntary agency, and research, scientific and educational institution] that shares HIC objectives, and whose activities are concerned with one or more aspects of habitat.
2. Members are those entities referred to under paragraph 1 of this Article that subscribe to and act in accordance with the objectives of HIC as set out in Article 2 and have been accepted as such by the Board.
3. Members are those organizations/entities of local, national, regional or international character that collaborate with activities developed by HIC, and that make a contribution as determined by the Board. Member organizations have the right to vote and to propose their Members and collaborators for elected positions.

Article 5

Membership ends:

- (a) When the Member ceases to exist;
- (b) On termination by the Member, this consists of notifying the Board in writing, by letter, email or other forms of electronic communication, and giving four weeks' notice;
- (c) On termination or dismissal by HIC. This can only occur when the Member acts in defiance of the Coalition's Constitution, objectives, by-laws or decisions. The Board decides the termination or dismissal and informs the Member concerned in writing as soon as possible with reasons given. The Member concerned may appeal to the General Assembly within two months after receipt of the notification. The General Assembly may reject the Board's decision and reinstate the Member by a two-thirds majority vote of the Members present in person or online at a duly called General Assembly meeting with a quorum.

Friends of Habitat International Coalition

Article 6

HIC Friends are individuals who make a contribution to the Coalition. They can attend meetings of the General Assembly but have no voting rights.

Finances

Article 7

HIC finances consist of contributions made by Members and Friends, legacies, donations, financial resources administered by the General Secretariat, Reference Centres and Working Groups, and other contributions.

The Board

Article 8

The Board is composed with a gender balance and regional and generational diversity of the following:

1. The currently elected HIC President.
2. One elected Member from each approved and active region of the Association, or additional Members should the Board adopt policies establishing more Board positions for regions with a specified large number of Member organizations in HIC.
3. One invited Member from social movements, in addition to any other Board Member who may represent a social movement.
4. One invited Member from women's and/or feminist movements, in addition to any other Board Member who may represent a women's and/or feminist movement.
5. One associated Member to be named by the Board, representing discriminated groups and minorities.

Article 9

All Board Members are elected or appointed for a four-year term. Board Members shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. Members of the Board are elected as follows:

1. The President is elected by the General Assembly from among the Members of the Association.
2. Regional Members are elected through a democratic process established in each region by the HIC Members



located within the region. All Members located within the region must be invited to participate in the election process. Regional Members are persons active in HIC activities. Each approved region elects one Member to the Board and one alternate of a different gender.

3. Members from social and women's and/or feminist movements are designated by the Board from among a list of candidates proposed by HIC Members in consultation with allied social and women's and/or feminist movements. Social and women's and/or feminist movements invited to the Board include primarily international or regional networks or alliances of community-based / social organizations working for common objectives. Board Members of social and women's and/or feminist movements are from different regions

4. An associated Member may be named by the Board to complement expertise, knowledge and areas of interest within the Board. This Member may or may not be a HIC Member, but in any case acts within the Board in accordance with HIC objectives. The selection of the associated Member must consider the gender balance of the whole Board.

5. Board Members are elected as representatives of their organizations, but act within their own individual capacities to advance HIC objectives.

6. Regions must formulate their respective procedures for the democratic election of their Board Members and must present these procedures to the Board for its consideration and approval. Board Members must also report on their actions/activities to those who elected or designated them.

7. The Board appoints a Vice-President from among its Members, who is of the opposite gender of the President and who is from a different region.

8. The Board appoints a Treasurer from among its Members.

Article 10

1. The Board manages HIC affairs.

2. A quorum for the transaction of business is constituted by a simple majority of Board Members then in office, not counting vacancies.

3. The Board meets at least once a year in person and more often if it deems it necessary, which can be done either in person or through electronic means (on-line).

4. The Board may decide to give a mandate to one or more of its Members to represent HIC within the limits of that mandate.

5. The Board may appoint one or more Working Group(s) to deal with a specific subject within the objectives of the Association as stated in Article 2.

6. Board Members may act as proxy for all matters placed before the Board, subject to any restrictions placed in the letter appointing the proxy.

7. A Board Member may act as proxy for no more than one other Member. A written authorization must be presented to the President or General Secretary prior to the time of voting.

The General Assembly

Article 11

1. The General Assembly is a composite body of all HIC Members and holds the highest authority in HIC. A General Assembly meeting is convened at least once a year in person and more often if required, either in person or through electronic means (on-line). A quorum for a General Assembly meeting consists of a minimum of 20% of the then current Members, providing that at least 10% of the Member organizations from a majority of the then current regions approved by the Board are present in person or online. The Board submits to this meeting its annual report and the annual financial statements for approval, and provides an account of its management during the previous year.

2. Every year the Board Treasurer presents the audited financial statements referred to in the previous paragraph to the Board and the General Assembly for their review.

Article 12

1. The Board shall convene the annual General Assembly meeting. The Board may convene General Assembly meetings in person or on line whenever it deems desirable, or when subject to Article 12.2 below.

2. At the written request of at least one-fifth of the Membership, the Board is obliged to convene a meeting of the General Assembly with notice of no less than four and no more than six weeks. If this request is not complied with within the following two weeks, the petitioners may themselves convene the meeting.

3. HIC Members are convened in writing to the General Assembly at least four weeks prior to the date and eight



weeks if the agenda contains a proposal to change the Constitution or to dissolve the Association. The communication contains the agenda of the meeting.

Article 13

1. Every Member is entitled to one vote in the General Assembly. In the case of absence from a General Assembly meeting, any Member may appoint any other Member with a written proxy to vote on her/his behalf.
2. All decisions, for which this Constitution prescribes no larger majority, are taken by a simple majority of the votes cast. In the event of a tie when a vote is taken on business, the proposal is rejected. In the event of a tie when a vote is taken on persons, a decision is taken by drawing lots. If in an election between two or more persons, no one obtains an absolute majority, a second ballot is taken between the two persons having obtained the most votes.

Article 14

1. General Assembly and Board meetings are chaired by the President. In his or her absence or if he or she considers it convenient, the meetings are chaired by the Vice-President or by a person nominated by the Board Members in attendance. The Board and General Assembly may nominate a facilitator for their meetings.
2. The resolutions of General Assembly and Board meetings are recorded in minutes kept by the General Secretary or a person designated by him or her. The minutes are approved in the same meeting, or the next meeting of the body concerned.

General Secretary

Article 15

1. The General Secretary is in charge of the day-to-day HIC business. He/she is accountable for his/her activities to the Board.
2. He/she represents HIC in legal and other matters.
3. He/she can originate from anywhere as long as he/she "lives and works" in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, or the Middle East and North Africa regions. The HIC General Secretariat is located in one of these regions.
4. The Board is responsible for the appointment and dismissal of the General Secretary.
5. The General Secretary, who is a HIC employee, is designated for a period of three years. This period may be extended at the discretion of the Board. The General Secretary cannot be appointed for more than three terms.
6. The Board is annually responsible for evaluating and deciding to maintain or remove the General Secretary.

Reference Centres

Article 16

1. The Board may designate one or more Reference Centres to assist the General Secretary in promoting, managing, facilitating and coordinating HIC activities, including the activities of one or more Working Group(s), with dedicated staff or based on voluntary collaboration. Reference Centres may have regional and/or thematic functions.
2. Reference Centres coordinate among themselves, and operate in accordance with mechanisms that the Membership establishes in consultation with the Board, Working Groups, and the General Secretary, as reviewed and approved by the Board.

National Coalitions

Article 17

1. The Association encourages the formation of national coalitions that link their community, local, and national activities to the international HIC activities. National coalitions may include HIC Members and others, and adopt the organizational structure which they determine most appropriate.
2. National coalitions do not constitute chapters of the Association, nor do they use the name of Habitat International Coalition (HIC) within their title, nor do they form part of the formal structure of the Association.



WorkingGroups

Article18

1. Working Groups are made up of those HIC Members interested in participating in programmes of strategic action focused on specific themes.
2. The Board may establish and approve a Working Group within an area of HIC strategic importance, with a plan of action approved by the Board.
3. Each Working Group is coordinated by a person designated by its Members.

Revision of the Constitution

Article19

1. A revision of the Constitution can take place only by a decision of the General Assembly. When a revision of the Constitution is proposed, it must be stated in the call to convene the General Assembly.
2. When a revision of the Constitution is proposed, the notice to convene the General Assembly must include a verbatim copy of the proposed changes to the Constitution. In addition, the HIC General Secretary must ensure that the proposal be open to public inspection through electronic means (on-line).
3. A revision of the Constitution can only be approved by the General Assembly by a two-thirds majority of HIC Members present in person or online and voting at a duly constituted General Assembly meeting with a quorum.

Dissolution and Liquidation

Article20

1. The procedure referred to in Article 19 also applies to a decision of the General Assembly to dissolve the Association.
2. Following any decision under the preceding paragraph, the General Assembly decides on the disposal of the balance of funds and assets in conformity with the HIC objectives.
3. Unless the General Assembly decides otherwise, the Board shall carry out the liquidation.

By-laws

Article21

1. The General Assembly may decide upon one or more by-laws on matters that missing or are not exhaustively provided for in this Constitution.
2. A by-law may not contain Articles incompatible with the laws of the country where the seat of the Association is located or with this Constitution.
3. A revision of the by-laws can only be approved by the General Assembly by a simple majority of HIC Members present in person or online and voting at a duly constituted General Assembly meeting with a quorum.

End