



World Blind Union
Union Mondiale Des Aveugles
Unión Mundial de Ciegos

CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD BLIND UNION

Revised Constitution

Of the World Blind Union

Adopted by:

10th General Assembly

Held virtually from Madrid, June 2021

Revised constitution of the World Blind Union

Adopted at the Founding Assembly in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 26 October 1984, and amended at the 3rd General Assembly in Cairo, Egypt, 2-6 November 1992, at The 4th General Assembly in Toronto, Canada, 26-30 August 1996, at the 5th General Assembly in Melbourne, Australia, November 20-24, 2000, at the 6th General Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa, December 6-10 2004, at the 7th General Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, August 18-22, 2008, at the 8th General Assembly in Bangkok Thailand, November 12-16, 2012, at the 9th General Assembly in Orlando, United States of America, August 19-24, 2016, and at the 10th General Assembly held virtually from Madrid, Spain, June 28-30, 2021.

ARTICLE I

Name, Location, Status, Relationships and Definitions

Section 1 - Name

The name of the organisation shall be World Blind Union (Union Mondiale des Aveugles) ("the Union"), representing, and being the only authentic voice of, all people with blindness or partial sight throughout the world.

Section 2 - Location

- a) The headquarters of the organisation shall be located in a place to be determined from time to time by the Executive. Such headquarters will be located in the permanent office of the WBU as determined by the Executive from time to time.
- b) As appropriate, the Executive may establish a corporate entity within the country where the WBU office is located, from time to time. In so doing, in order to ensure the clear linkages between the WBU and any such corporate entity, the Executive will ensure that the elected Officers of the WBU also serve as the Directors and Officers of any such corporation.

Section 3 - Status

The Union is a non-governmental and non-profit making organisation and does not discriminate against any organisation or individual on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or any other ground.

Section 4 - Relationships

The Union shall work towards the establishment and maintenance of official relations with the United Nations and its specialised agencies and organisations and improved co-operation with organisations having shared, common interests with those of the Union.

Section 5 - Definitions

In this constitution

- a) The term 'blindness' includes both blindness and partial sight and "blind" includes persons who are blind or partially sighted. It is understood that the term "partially sighted" also includes those that have low vision. National Members shall be entitled by this Constitution to use their own national definition of blindness.
- b) Organisation of blind people means an organisation representative of blind people in a particular country, having a majority of members consisting of blind persons ordinarily paying a membership fee, and having a governing body with a majority of blind and partially sighted persons, elected by the members at regular intervals. Any other organisation working in the field of blindness but which does not qualify to be an organisation of blind people shall be regarded, for the purpose of this constitution, as an organisation for blind people.
- c) The term "good financial standing" or "financial" means that a member has paid their full annual fees to the WBU.

Section 6 - Construction of the Constitution

The English version of this Constitution shall be the juridical version and it shall be construed according to English law.

ARTICLE II

Objects and Powers

Section 1 - Objects

The objects of the Union are to protect and promote the human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of blind and partially sighted people; to enable blind and partially sighted persons to join together and express their views and aspirations

and, in accordance with democratically adopted decisions, to take collective actions to work towards the advancement and well-being of blind and partially sighted people with the goal of equalisation of opportunities and full participation in society, if necessary by special, legal or administrative measures; to strengthen the self-awareness of blind and partially sighted persons, to develop their personality, self-respect and sense of responsibility, to provide an international forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of blindness, and to work for the prevention of blindness.

Section 2 - Powers

The Powers of the Union shall include the following:

- a) The progressive improvement and modernisation throughout the world of public policies and practices governing the education, health, welfare, social security, rehabilitation, employment, sports and recreation of blind and partially sighted people;
- b) The promotion of the creation and development of national organisations of blind and partially sighted people;
- c) The provision for the encouragement of the exchange of information and experience between all organisations whose activities relate to the objects of the Union;
- d) The dissemination of accurate information and the promotion of enlightened attitudes on the part of the people of the world towards blind and partially sighted people;
- e) The encouragement, co-ordination, and conduct of research and studies in all fields of blindness, including its prevention;
- f) The provision, promotion and co-ordination of technical and material assistance in furtherance of the aims of the Union in areas where such help is required;

- g) To solicit the support of national governments and national and international organisations everywhere to support programmes and policies of the Union and of organisations of and for blind and partially sighted people, and to assist and advise those bodies in their implementation;
- h) To encourage the participation of the parents of blind and partially sighted children (who cannot represent themselves) in all decisions affecting the education, well-being and aspirations of themselves and their children;
- i) To strive for equal representation and participation of gender and age in its activities and, in particular, in the selection by national, grouped and special members of delegations to the Assembly;
- j) To strive for equal representation from developed and developing countries in electing officers and appointing committees, working groups, task forces and similar bodies;
- k) To take any other measures necessary or conducive to the achievement of the objects of the Union.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1 - Classes

Membership of the Union shall be open to all countries of the world, recognised as independent states by the United Nations, and shall comprise the following categories:

- a) National members. - Organisations of blind and partially sighted people, which represent a country which is a member of the WBU, and which are admitted to membership by the executive and pay the membership fee:

Provided that where in any country one or more

organisations of blind and partially sighted people operating at national level join together with or without organisations for blind and partially sighted people to form a consortium which seeks national membership for that country, the executive may admit that consortium as a national member on payment of the membership fee but only if the organisations which form the consortium agree that at least one half of the delegates for the assembly are nominated by organisations of blind and partially sighted people.

- b) Special members. - A special member is an organisation or organisations for blind and partially sighted people representing a country which is a member of the WBU in which there is for the time being no national organisation of blind and partially sighted people in existence, which is admitted by the executive and pays the membership fee. A special member shall be expected actively to promote the establishment of a national organisation of blind and partially sighted people in its country and its membership shall be reviewed by the Executive every four years.
- c) Grouped members. - Where in a region there are countries each with a general population of less than two million people and the representatives of those countries wish to combine their membership of the union, the executive may, upon payment of the membership fee, accord them the status of grouped member with representation by the number of delegates to which the aggregate general population entitles them:

Provided that if at least one half of the organisations in the group would otherwise qualify as national members, the grouped member is a grouped national member and in any other case it is a grouped special member.

- d) International Members. - Those international organisations invited by the Executive to become international members and which pay the membership fee. To qualify for such membership, the organisation shall be one which promotes

and co-ordinates substantial international programmes of activities for the benefit of blind and partially sighted people or for the prevention of blindness.

- e) Associate Members. - Any person, organisation or foundation approved by the national member from the country in which the applicant resides, which has been in existence for at least 1 year prior to the application and paying the membership fee.
- f) Honorary life members. - Those persons deemed to have rendered long and outstanding international service to blind and partially sighted people or in the prevention of blindness may, on the recommendation of the national member from the country where he/she resides and with the approval of the officers, be elected by the Assembly as honorary life members of the Union. WBU Presidents, upon finishing their term as Past President, will be brought forward to the General Assembly for election as Honorary Life Member.

In the case of an honorary life member who dies or who has died, the Secretary-General shall record his/her name and a summary of the citation to the General Assembly in a roll of honour to be maintained by him/her and placed in the World Blind Union archives.

- g) Dependent Territories. -Where an application for membership is received from a dependent territory, which apart from its dependent status is otherwise qualified for membership, the Executive in consultation with the national member concerned may admit that territory to whichever category of membership it considers appropriate upon payment of the prescribed membership fee.

Section 2 - Procedure

Application for membership of the Union shall be made through the appropriate Regional President to the Secretary-General and approved by the Executive.

Applications for national membership in countries where there already is a national member organization must be approved by the current national member who agrees to share the membership and delegates with the new organization. However, if the current member organization is not meeting their financial obligations through the payment of their annual membership fees to the WBU, then such current member forfeits their right to refuse the new applicant and the Regional Union has the right to consider the application and recommend that the membership be shared with the new applicant organization. Furthermore, if membership is shared among more than one organization in a member country and if one or more of the organizations does not pay their share of the membership fees, the other organization(s) may pay fees on behalf of the other organization in order to maintain good financial standing of the member country, and in so doing, is entitled to exercise the delegate votes that would normally be exercised by that non-paying organization.

Application for Associate Membership shall be made through the appropriate Regional President to the Secretary-General and approved by the President with the prior approval of the national member concerned before being submitted to the Executive. A lack of response by the national member to the request within a six-month period will be deemed to be agreement with the received application. National members who are not financial with the WBU forfeit the right to block applications from potential Associate members who wish to join the WBU and who are deemed appropriate by the Regional Union.

Honorary life members shall be elected by the Assembly.

Section 3 - Suspension or expulsion of members

In the event that an organization of or for the blind in a country that is a member of the Union and which forms part or all of the delegation for that country, undertakes unlawful or illegal actions that are likely to threaten or compromise the name, reputation or assets of the Union, the Officers, following consultation with the

appropriate Regional President, may take action to suspend or modify the rights of the organization in question. This might include the right for the organization to represent the country. Such action shall be approved by the Executive. The organization in question as well as any other organization constituting the national member, shall forthwith be advised of the decision on suspension. The organization as well as any other part of the member constituency will be offered a fair opportunity to explain their case, including any specific actions undertaken, to the Officers in writing or, if so deemed desirable, through a personal presentation. The Secretary-General shall undertake all necessary actions to ensure a fair and speedy procedure before a final decision is made.

ARTICLE IV

The Assembly

Section 1 - Composition

The Assembly is the sovereign body of the World Blind Union.

- a) The national, grouped, special, international and honorary life members along with the Table Officers (as defined in Article VI, section 3) shall constitute the Assembly.
- b) The associate members may attend the Assembly in a consultative capacity.
- c) The President of the Union may invite observers to be present at the Assembly after consultation with the national member from the country in which the observer resides.
- d) Delegates to the Assembly shall consist of persons whose names are on the Secretary-General's list of delegates two months prior to the opening of the Assembly, except in cases of illness or emergency or admission of new members to the Union. A delegate unable to attend a meeting of the Assembly may give his/her proxy to another delegate from

the same national, special or grouped member, or in the case of a delegate of an international member, to the delegate of another international member. In the foregoing sentence a meeting of the Assembly means any session or sessions of the Assembly. Written notice of such a proxy must be given to the Secretary-General before the meeting at which it will be exercised. Challenges to the validity of any proxy should be determined by the Assembly after receiving the advice of the Credentials Committee.

Section 2 - Procedure

- a) There may be ordinary or extraordinary meetings of the Assembly. Ordinary meetings shall be held every four years, but extraordinary meetings may be convened at any time by the President in exceptional circumstances.
- b) The President or, in his/her absence, the first or second Vice-President in that order, shall preside at meetings of the Assembly.
- c) Delegates shall be responsible for their own travel and subsistence expenses when attending all Assembly meetings.

Section 3 - Powers

The Assembly shall serve as the legislature and shall adopt policies for the union towards achieving its objects. Its functions shall include the following:

- a) It shall consider and decide upon all recommendations submitted by the Executive.
- b) It shall receive and consider the report of the Executive on the Executive's work and on the work of the committees.
- c) It shall consider the Treasurer's report and determine the budget of the Union for the next four years.

- d) It shall determine the rate of membership fees on the recommendation of the Executive.
- e) It shall elect the President, the First and Second Vice-Presidents, the Secretary-General and the Treasurer of the Union, such elections to be in conformity with the election procedures described below in Section 6 and shall receive the notification of the elections of the other members of the Executive.
- f) It shall consider and decide upon any proposal from members of the Union. To ensure well informed debates and well considered discussions, as much notice as possible regarding issues to be raised and proposals to be made should be given to delegates. Proposals shall be made in time for Braille, large print, audio and electronic formats to be prepared and circulated either prior to or after the opening of the Assembly.
- g) It shall consider and decide upon proposals to amend the Constitution of the Union.
- h) It shall consider and decide on recommendations by the Executive pertaining to membership of the Union of honorary life members.
- i) It shall take any other measures necessary or conducive to achieve the objects of the Union.

Section 4 – Voting

- a) National, grouped, special and international members shall each be entitled to one vote per delegate at the Assembly provided that the member is in good financial standing with the WBU.

Honorary life members shall have the right to speak and are entitled to one vote each when present at Assembly

meetings. Associate members shall have the right to speak, but shall not be entitled to vote.

- b) Each national member shall be entitled to two delegates to the Assembly if its population is below 20 million people, four delegates if its population is between 20 and 40 million people, six delegates if its population is between 40 and 100 million people, eight delegates if its population is between 100 and 250 million people, and ten delegates if its population exceeds 250 million people. A national member with a population of less than 800,000 people, upon request, shall be entitled to reduce its delegation to one delegate. It is recommended that each delegation should consist of an equal number of men and women.
- c) Each special member shall be entitled to one half of the delegates to the Assembly available to a national member with the same population. It is recommended that each delegation should consist of an equal number of men and women.
- d) Each international member shall be entitled to one delegate to the Assembly.
- e) The President, the First and Second Vice-Presidents, the Secretary-General, the Treasurer and the Immediate Past President shall have the status of a delegate in their own right and be entitled to one vote each.
- f) Each associate member shall be entitled to one representative to Assembly meetings.
- g) All questions shall be decided by a simple majority vote except for constitutional amendments and proposals for the dissolution of the Union.
- h) Abstentions shall always be ignored when counting votes.
- i) Voting may be by acclamation (viva voce), by roll call, by

show of hands or, if twenty percent or more of the delegates present so demand, by secret ballot. When using a voice vote, the session Chair must be completely satisfied that there is no ambiguity in the voice vote results. Any ambiguous vote is to be discarded and an alternate voting method employed.

At elections when there is more than one candidate, voting shall always be by secret ballot.

- j) A quorum shall consist of a majority of members with voting rights. In calculating quorum, each Table officer as mentioned in section 4, (e) shall count as a member.

Section 5 - Delegations of National Members

- a) At least one half of the delegates representing a country on the Secretary-General's list of delegates shall represent organisations of the blind and partially sighted.
- b) At least one half of the delegates in each national member's delegation present at the Assembly must be representative of organisations of blind and partially sighted people unless special circumstances satisfactory to the Credentials Committee prevent that from happening.
- c) Where a co-ordinating organisation or mechanism representing national organisations of blind and partially sighted people and agencies providing services to them does not exist in a country, its delegates shall be chosen after consultation between recognised national organisations of blind and partially sighted people and agencies providing services to them.
- d) If a country cannot agree on whether an organisation should be regarded as a recognised national organisation of blind and partially sighted people, or on the composition of its delegation to the Assembly, it should request the assistance of the regional president and/or the Secretary-General of the Union.

- e) A delegate shall be a member of the organisation/s appointing him/her.

Section 6 - Election of Table Officers

- a) To be eligible for nomination for the post of WBU Table Officer, the candidates must be blind or partially sighted as defined in this constitution.
- b) To be valid, a nomination of a candidate must be supported in writing by a majority of the delegation from the country in which the candidate resides, such support being confirmed in writing to the Chair of the Nominations Committee when the nomination is submitted. Only member countries in good financial standing with the WBU are eligible to submit nominations.
- c) All nominations must be sent to the Chair of the Nominations Committee and must reach him/her no later than three months before the beginning of the Assembly if a given nomination is to be circulated to all members in advance. The final deadline for submitting nominations is to be fixed by the Assembly at its first session.
- d) If there are more than two candidates for one office, and in a first or later ballot no candidate obtains an absolute majority of the votes cast, a further ballot shall be held in which the candidates with most votes who together polled fifty percent or more of the votes in the preceding ballot shall participate.

ARTICLE V

The Executive

Section 1 - Composition

- a) The Executive shall be composed of the Officers of the

Union, who, with the exception of the regional presidents, shall be elected by the Assembly, three representatives elected by each region from amongst its national members that are in good financial standing with the WBU, one representative from the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) and one representative from the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), and two additional representatives or their alternates from among the international members chosen by them at the time of the Assembly. All efforts shall be made to ensure that the representatives of the International Members belong to different sectors of activity.

- b) The Table Officers and the representatives of the international members shall serve as members of the Executive for a period of four years, starting at the close of one Assembly and finishing at the close of the next Assembly. Members of the Executive elected by the Regional Unions shall serve as representatives during the period for which they are elected by their respective Unions. The regional presidents shall serve as officers until replaced by their successors.
- c) The President may invite persons with special expertise to be present at Executive meetings from time to time.
- d) If a vacancy occurs among the officers elected by the Assembly, it shall be filled by the Executive, if necessary by postal ballot. If a vacancy occurs on the Executive among the regional representatives, it shall be filled by the appropriate region. If a regional representative ceases to be a member of a national organization, then the Region is to replace that representative with a representative from a national organization.

Section 2 - Powers and Functions

- a) The Executive shall be the principal administrative organ of

the Union.

- b) The Executive shall have power of decision and be directly responsible to the Assembly for interpreting and carrying out in detail the general policies agreed upon by the Assembly and for the administration, management, and control of the affairs and property of the Union. In so doing, it shall have authority to take all necessary action not specifically reserved to the Assembly. This includes the authority, through the Officers, to recruit a CEO and delegate certain responsibilities as deemed necessary and appropriate.
- c) The Executive shall supervise the work of the Officers of the Union and shall have the right at all times to ask for an account of their actions.
- d) In case of the absence or inability to act of any Officer or for any other reason that the Executive may deem sufficient, the Executive may delegate all or any of the powers of any such Officer to any other Officer for the time being.
- e) The Executive may, when considered appropriate, decide to set up a special body under the Union to raise funds to implement its stated objects.
- f) The Executive may from time to time make by-laws for facilitating the carrying into effect of the provisions of this constitution and the policies adopted under it, but in the event of a conflict between the provisions of this constitution and such by-laws, the provisions of this constitution shall prevail.

Section 3 - Voting

- a) Each member of the Executive is entitled to one vote.
A regional member unable to attend a meeting, may, however, give his/her proxy to vote to another member of the Executive from the same region.

- b) In the event of a tied vote, the President may exercise a casting vote.
- c) All decisions of the Executive shall be decided by simple majority of the votes cast.

Section 4 - Meetings

- a) Meetings of the Executive shall be ordinary or extraordinary. Extraordinary meetings may be called at any time by the President or if demanded by a majority of the Executive. Ordinary meetings of the Executive shall be held concurrently with those of the Assembly with further meetings being held at least once every two years.
- b) The travel and subsistence costs of the Executive members and guides of blind members when attending meetings of the Executive may be met in whole or part, subject to funds being available at the time, by the Union for those members who apply; priority to be given to members from developing countries.
- c) A quorum for Executive meetings shall be a majority of the Executive.
- d) The President may conduct a postal ballot via electronic and/or regular post of all the Executive members whenever, in his/her opinion, a solution is needed for an urgent issue, which cannot wait until the next meeting of the Executive.

ARTICLE VI

Officers

Section 1 - Composition

- a) The Officers of the Union shall be the Table Officers and the Regional Presidents.

- b) If a regional president is unable to attend a meeting of the Officers, he/she shall, without delay, notify his/her deputy, ordinarily the Vice-President of the Region, who will take his/her place at that meeting.
- c) The Table Officers shall not hold territorial status during their terms of office but shall be given the status of a Delegate in their own right and, if they were National Delegates to the Assembly which elected them, their seats may be filled in the normal way.
- d) Apart from the President, all Table Officers are eligible for re- election without restrictions.
- e) The President shall hold office for a period of one term and the succeeding president must come from another region.

Section 2 - Powers and functions

- a) The Officers shall meet whenever the President deems necessary or when demanded by a majority of their number. They shall perform those duties which are not the specific responsibility of the Assembly or the Executive, or which are delegated to them by those bodies.
- b) The Officers shall take decisions on matters of internal administration, carry out financial duties in accordance with decisions made by the Assembly or the Executive, appoint ad hoc committees and working groups to implement decisions made by the Assembly and the Executive and take action as may be needed between Executive meetings.
- c) The President shall preside over the meetings of the Executive and the Officers and shall represent the Union.
- d) The Treasurer and the Secretary-General shall, under the direction of the Executive and the President, perform the duties properly pertaining to those offices.

- e) Any payment by one officer to another in respect of the performance of his/her duties as an officer of the union is prohibited.
- f) All Officers shall adhere to the WBU policies in effect from time to time pertaining to ethical conduct and conflict of interest; failure to adhere to the provisions of such policies may result in disciplinary action.

Section 3 – Disciplinary Matters

The resolution of disciplinary matters regarding a Regional President is at the discretion of the Regional Union. Such Regional Union is required to investigate matters of concern brought forward by the WBU Officers or the President.

A Table Officer may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination by a Resolution passed by the Executive upon recommendation by the WBU Officers or the President that the Table Officer has:

- a) breached any of the provisions of the Articles, By-laws, or any written policies of the World Blind Union; or
- b) carried out any conduct which the Officers determine is detrimental to the World Blind Union; or
- c) has significantly neglected the performance of the duties for which the Table Officer was elected or to which the Table Officer was assigned and to which he or she agreed; or
- d) for any other reason that the Officers, in their sole discretion, determine is reasonable having regard to the purposes of the World Blind Union;
- e) provided that the Officer whose membership is subject to such disciplinary action or termination shall be granted the opportunity to be heard at such meeting.

Section 4 - Table Officers

- a) "Table Officers" means the President, the two Vice-presidents, the Secretary-General, the Treasurer and the

Immediate Past President.

- b) The President shall preside at meetings of the Table Officers. A Quorum shall be four of the Table Officers, present in person or connected to a teleconference call.
- c) If the President is of the opinion that it is appropriate and in the interests of the Union that action should be taken before the next meeting of the Officers, the Table Officers may carry out all or any of the functions of the Officers prior to such meeting. Minutes of meetings of the Table Officers shall be circulated to the Officers, and where appropriate, decisions taken by the Table Officers shall be ratified by the next meeting of the Officers.

ARTICLE VII

Regional Unions

- a) The national, grouped and special members of the Union have been and shall continue to be formed into regional unions. Regional Unions serve as bridges between their members and the Union at world level and promote the work of the union at regional level. The number and composition of regional unions shall be kept constantly under review by the Executive.

The Executive may recommend to the Assembly a change in the number or in the geographical boundaries of the regional unions. The Assembly may accept or reject such recommendation by a simple majority vote. If the recommendation is accepted the recommended change shall take effect at the end of the Assembly.

- b) The countries to be included in each regional union shall be determined by the Executive after consultation with the Regional President and (if he or she requests) other representatives of the regional union in question. The name of a regional union shall be set out in its constitution and

may not be changed without its consent. In the event of a recommendation under subsection a) above being made to the Assembly, it shall be accompanied, if appropriate, by a recommendation for a change of name, which recommendation shall be dealt with by the Assembly.

- c) Regional Unions must have constitutions consistent with this constitution and with the policies from time to time adopted under it. They shall have autonomy at regional level and on regional issues.

ARTICLE VIII

Committees

Section 1 - Committees, Working Groups, etc.

- a) The Officers, or if considered appropriate by the President, the Table Officers, shall appoint:
 - 1. A finance committee from among the Officers to support the Treasurer and carry out specific financial duties. The Treasurer shall chair the finance committee.
 - 2. A credentials committee, the duties of which shall include advising the Assembly on the validity of the appointment of delegates, the giving of proxies and other related issues.
 - 3. A World Braille Council with representation from WBU Regions, educators, Braille producers and major language groups, and whose duties shall include promoting and raising awareness about braille and facilitating information exchange and development of braille in all its aspects.
 - 4. The chairs of such other committees, working groups, task forces or similar bodies to carry out such duties as the Officers may delegate to them.

- a) In the case of bodies referred to under a) 4 (17) above, the President and the chair of the body shall within three months after the end of the Assembly appoint other members of the body. Any disagreement between the President and the Chair shall be resolved in favour of the opinion of the President.
- b) Within six months after the end of the Assembly, the Chairs so appointed shall submit a plan of action and budget to the Finance committee. The Finance Committee shall have authority to approve such budget.
- c) A list of committees and other bodies appointed under this Article shall be kept by the Secretary-General and copies made available to members of the Union.
- d) With the approval of the President, a committee or other body may appoint one or more sub-committees or sub-groups to cover specific fields within the broad scope of the body's work.

Section 2 - Reporting

All committees shall maintain regular contact with the Officers and the Secretary-General who will report to the Executive. The Committees must furthermore report regularly to the Assembly and the Executive about their activities. Sub- committees and ad hoc working groups shall report to the committees appointing them. The Executive shall regularly review the structure and functioning of its committees.

Section 3 - Nominations Committee

- a) Within one year after the close of the Assembly, a Nominations Committee shall be appointed.
- b) The Nominations Committee shall consist of a chair appointed by the president, together with one member appointed by the president of each regional union.

c) The powers of the Nominations Committee shall be:

1. To consider nominations for the posts of Table Officers submitted in writing to the Chair of the Nominations Committee prior to the deadline fixed by the General Assembly;
2. To perform a general assessment prior to elections that all candidates have the necessary practical possibility to take on the post to which he/she has been nominated;
3. To ensure that each candidate enjoys the necessary support from the member organisation/s representing the country in which the candidate resides;
4. On the request of the Executive, to be responsible for operating the procedure for filling posts in the event of vacancies occurring between assemblies

d) No member of the Nominations Committee shall be eligible for nomination as a Table Officer, but a member of the Committee who wishes to seek election as a Table Officer may do so if he or she, after having notified the President, resigns from membership of the Committee. In the event of such resignation, the vacancy will be filled by the person who nominated the committee member who resigned.

ARTICLE IX

Finance

Section 1 - Financial Year

The financial year of the Union shall run from the 1st January to the 31st December.

Section 2 - Membership Fees

- a) The amounts of the membership fees shall be determined by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Executive.
- b) The amounts of membership fees shall be different for different categories of membership and may differ within categories. The criteria by which such fees shall be determined shall be laid down by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Executive.
- c) Part of the Union's income shall be set aside for offering financial assistance to delegates of national members, in an effort to ensure that each national member is represented at the Assembly. In countries which are national members the assistance should be offered to delegates coming from organisations of blind people. Any such support is subject to available resources, is restricted to low level and low mid-level national members who are in good financial standing, and its allocation will reflect regional, gender and other WBU diversity priorities.
- d) Membership fees shall be payable within the first half of the year, i.e. by June 30th. A member whose annual fee has not been paid will be deemed to be non-financial and will forfeit the right to vote at General Assemblies or Executive meetings and will be ineligible to receive financial support from the WBU for attendance at such meetings.
- e) In the event that a member whose membership fee has not been paid for 4 consecutive years, the treasurer and the Secretary-General shall undertake a review of the membership within that member country with the aim of preparing a recommendation to the executive on proper action to be taken. Such action could include such measures as encouraging that, if appropriate, membership be shared amongst other eligible organizations within the member country, establishment of a new member organizational structure or, if all other means of mediation fail, suspension of the current membership. In the event that suspension is recommended, the member shall have a right of appeal to the Executive.

Section 3 - Expenses

It shall be the duty of the Executive at all times to keep the expenses of the Union strictly within its income and reserves. Savings made on the annual budget shall constitute a reserve, which shall be banked and/or invested.

Section 4 - Records

- a) The Executive shall ensure that proper financial records are kept and that accepted accounting practices are followed. Account books and all supporting documents shall be held at the office of the World Blind Union and shall be available for inspection by the Officers, by members of the Executive, and by members of the Union.
- b) All financial records must be audited each year by an auditor qualified to audit corporate accounts in the country where he or she practises, following which the audit certificate shall be tabled at the next Officers meeting and then presented to the Executive.
- c) A statement showing the financial position of the Union shall be published each year, and a copy shall be sent to all members within six months of the end of each financial year.

ARTICLE X

Amendment and Dissolution

Section 1 - Amendment

- a) This Constitution may be amended at any assembly, provided always that no less than two-thirds of the votes cast are in favour of the proposed amendment.
- b) Any proposal for an amendment shall be submitted either by

the Executive or by two or more national, grouped or special members having the right to send in total at least seven delegates to the Assembly. Such proposal must be in writing and signed, in the case of submission by the Executive by the Secretary-General, and in any other case by the delegates of the members submitting it.

- c) Any proposal for a constitutional amendment must be in the hands of the Secretary-General four months before the date of the Assembly at which it is to be discussed. The exact text of any such amendment, along with the names of those submitting it, must be circulated to all voting members at least six weeks prior to the meeting at which it shall be discussed. The President may accept minor alterations to the wording of a proposed amendment which do not alter the intention or sense of the amendment.

Section 2 - Dissolution

- a) If at any time dissolution of the Union should prove necessary or desirable, this may be done according to the procedures laid down for amendments to this Constitution except that such proceedings must be initiated by the Executive or by fifteen national members of the Union.
- b) In the event of dissolution, any funds or other assets owned by the Union shall be liquidated in accordance with the relevant law and dealt with in accordance with the wishes expressed by the Assembly.