



Charter of the Association of Caribbean Electoral Organizations

Adopted the 31st Day of March, 1998

Chapter I

Name and Purposes

Article 1.1 The first General Assembly establishes through this Charter an organization to be known as the Association of Caribbean Electoral Organizations, hereinafter referred to as the Association. The purpose of the Association is to promote cooperation and mutual assistance among electoral organizations in the Caribbean in the pursuit of democracy by processes that ensure free, fair and peaceful elections.

Article 1.2 The Association will seek:

- (a) to strengthen the legal and constitutional basis for independent and impartial electoral organizations and administrators throughout the Caribbean;
- (b) to promote public confidence in the Caribbean through open and transparent electoral procedures;
- (c) to develop civic education programs and systems designed to motivate citizen involvement and electoral participation;
- (d) to develop simple and functional voter registration procedures which will encourage maximum voter participation, and promote the development of accurate and complete voter registries;
- (e) to develop professional election officials with high integrity, a strong sense of public service and a commitment to democracy;
- (f) to develop model training programs and manuals for poll workers, political parties, journalists, and observers;
- (g) to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences, information, technology and literature pertaining to elections among Caribbean election administrators;
- (h) to exchange views on methods of investigation and resolution of complaints and objections to election procedures and results;
- (i) to seek ways to facilitate the production and procurement of electoral equipment and materials;
- (j) to establish a Caribbean resource center for research and information;
- (k) to cooperate in the development of systems for conducting efficient but low-cost elections;
- (l) to promote the welfare of its members in the pursuit of their professional duties; and
- (m) to facilitate an accessible voting environment for all citizens.

Chapter II

Structure of the Association

Article 2.1 The Association shall have the following organs:

- (a) The General Assembly;
- (b) The Executive Board; and
- (c) The Secretariat.

Article 2.2 The General Assembly shall be the supreme organ of the Association and shall be composed of all its members. The Executive Board shall be accountable to the General Assembly. The Secretariat shall be accountable to the Executive Board.

Article 2.3

- (a) The Executive Board shall be composed of five persons elected by the General Assembly, all of whom shall represent full members of the Association. The Board shall choose one of its members as chairperson.
- (b) The Members of the Board shall be elected for three years but no member shall serve for more than two consecutive terms. If a vacancy occurs, the Board shall appoint a person representing a full member of the Association to fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the General Assembly.

Article 2.4 The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the Organization of American States (OAS) shall serve as the interim Co-Secretariat of the Association until otherwise determined by the Executive Board. They shall perform the functions assigned to them in the present Charter and any other duties entrusted to them by the General Assembly or the Executive Board.

Article 2.5 The Executive Secretary shall be a person appointed by the Executive Board and shall serve as the Secretary of the Board, with voice but not vote. During the temporary absence or disability of the Executive Secretary, the Chairperson of the Board may designate another person to perform his/her duties.

Chapter III

Membership

- Article 3.1**
- (a) The members of the Association shall consist of:
 - (i) full members;
 - (ii) associate members; and
 - (iii) honorary members.
 - (b) Full members shall be the electoral organizations of the Caribbean community. For purposes of this Charter, Caribbean Electoral Organizations are defined as the officially established bodies having responsibility for the conduct of elections in any Caribbean island or island group, and in those non-island nations that are members of the CARICOM.
 - (c) Associate membership shall be open to:
 - (i) individuals who are current or former election officers or commissioners of an electoral organization qualified for full membership in the Association;
 - (ii) Caribbean non-governmental and non-partisan organizations that share the objectives of the Association; and
 - (iii) electoral organizations that are not qualified for full membership, but wish to be associated with the work of the Association.
 - (d) Honorary members shall be individuals, from the Caribbean or elsewhere, selected by vote of the full members, who have distinguished themselves by achievements related to the purposes of the Association.
- Article 3.2**
- (a) Any organization or individual seeking membership in the Association shall notify the Secretariat of their willingness to be bound by the Charter. The Secretariat shall circulate the notification to the members of the Executive Board. The Board shall admit the candidate to membership if it determines that the application is consistent with the requirements and purposes of this Charter.
 - (b) The Executive Board may on its own motion recommend to the General Assembly names of persons to be invited to become honorary members of the Association, and the General Assembly may also on its own motion extend such invitations.

Chapter IV

Functions of the Organs of the Association

- Article 4.1** The General Assembly shall meet at least once every three years, shall elect its own chairperson, and shall establish its own rules of procedure. Such meetings shall be at the times set by the Executive Board or whenever a meeting is requested by at least fifty percent of the full members.
- Article 4.2**
- (a) Each full member shall have one vote.
 - (b) Fifty percent plus one of the full members shall constitute a quorum.
 - (c) Except as provided in Chapter VI below, the decisions of the Assembly shall be taken by a simple majority of those present and voting.
- Article 4.3** The General Assembly shall consider issues of common interest and adopt decisions in accordance with the provisions of this Charter and its own rules of procedure. It shall in particular:
- (a) consider proposals or questions of common interest submitted by its members, the Executive Board or the Secretariat;
 - (b) establish the policies and the program of work of the Association; and
 - (c) receive and consider the Executive Secretary's report on the work and the finances of the Association.
- Article 4.4** The Executive Board shall be responsible for:
- (a) acting on any matter referred to it by the General Assembly and for making recommendations to the General Assembly in conformity with the present Charter;
 - (b) preparing and submitting bylaws to the General Assembly for its review and approval;
 - (c) considering proposals from members and the Secretariat regarding the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly;
 - (d) approving a budget for the Association;
 - (e) determining control and reporting mechanisms in respect of the financial activity of the Association;
 - (f) overseeing the work of the Secretariat;
 - (g) acting on matters which need to be addressed between meetings of the General Assembly, and reporting periodically to the members;
 - (h) performing any other functions arising from the present Charter and from the recommendations and decisions of the General Assembly.

Article 4.5 The Executive Board shall meet at least once a year, such meetings to be convened by the Chairperson or by request of any three of its members.

Article 4.6 The Secretariat may accept, on behalf of the Association, any gifts, contributions or bequests to the Association, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.

Article 4.7 The Secretariat shall inter alia:

- (a) submit an annual report on the Association's activity and its financial condition to the Executive Board;
- (b) be responsible for the preparation and arrangements of meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board;
- (c) prepare recommendations concerning the work of the Association for consideration by the appropriate organs of the Association;
- (d) prepare the budget of the Association for submission to the Executive Board;
- (e) serve as the custodian of the Association's documents, including this Charter;
- (f) establish relations of cooperation, in accordance with decisions reached by the General Assembly and the Executive Board, with other regional and international electoral organizations or any other organizations which are concerned with electoral processes;
- (g) notify members of the dates of meetings of the General Assembly;
- (h) prepare minutes of the meetings of the Board;
- (I) prepare a report on each meeting of the General Assembly and submit same to the Members; and
- (j) facilitate and encourage the cooperation of the members of the Association with each other.

Chapter V

Finance

Article 5.1 The budget of the Association shall be financed by:

- (a) membership dues, to be determined by the General Assembly, and
- (b) funds solicited from external sources by the Secretariat, on behalf of and with the approval of the Executive Board.

Article 5.2 Members who have not paid their dues by the date established by the General Assembly shall have the right to representation in the Association but shall not be entitled to vote.

Chapter VI

Miscellaneous Provisions

Article 6.1 This Charter shall come into force immediately upon signature by ten or more full members at the Founding General Assembly.

Article 6.2 (a) The Association may establish and maintain relations with other regional and international electoral organizations. The nature and forms of such relations shall be determined by the Executive Board in agreement with the organizations concerned.

(b) The Executive Board may invite other organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Association as observers.

(c) The Association may, upon invitation, participate in the deliberations of other organizations.

Article 6.3 (a) Any member of the Association may propose an amendment to this Charter and ask the Executive Secretary to circulate it to the members. Proposed amendments must be received by the Executive Secretary at least two months prior to the next meeting of the General Assembly in order to be considered at that meeting.

(b) No amendment to this Charter may enter into force unless and until it has been approved in writing by at least two-thirds of the full members having the right to vote.

Article 6.4 Any dispute regarding the interpretation of the present Charter shall be settled by a two thirds decision of the full members having the right to vote.

Article 6.5 (a) This Association may be dissolved by a resolution of the General Assembly supported by two-thirds of the full members having the right to vote.

(b) Upon such dissolution, the assets of the Association which remain after payment of legal obligation, shall be transferred, by decision of the General Assembly, to organizations of similar interests.