



## Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Constitution and By-Laws

As revised and adopted on 5 August 2011  
Revised Draft for adoption in XXXX [August 2018]

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This revision of the WILPF Constitution has been developed by the Standing Constitution Committee from: feedback to the [Discussion Paper on Strengthening the Governance of WILPF](#) (Nov 2017) as discussed at WILPF Webinar on 9 Nov 2017 and IB meetings on 27 November & 11 Dec 2017, and builds on

- the review of the Constitution and By-Laws as presented to the International Congress in April 2015;
- Section, IB member and staff comments submitted May 2014 to February 2015;
- with reference to the Ad Hoc Committee's Report on WILPF's Organisation (September 2013); and
- the Rainbow Report, as prepared for the Baltimore Congress (1998) and the WILPF International website.

***Sections/IB/Members please use this  
DISCUSSION DRAFT (PROPOSED AMENDED VERSION) to provide  
feedback/comments or propose further changes amendments***

*The following guidelines are for information only during drafting phase; they will be deleted before final print.*

**Definition and Purpose:**

a. **The constitution** provides the structure, definition and backbone for an organisation. It should be fundamental, contain comprehensive organisational information and be very straightforward. It should also be relatively difficult to amend.

b. **The By-Laws** are the rules by which WILPF (the organisation) is governed. The by-laws provide more exacting guidelines than a constitution. Governed by the constitution, the by-laws provide specific procedural rules, and should be complete and easy to amend in case additional policies or changes are required.

# CONSTITUTION

## **Preamble**

Founded in The Hague (the Netherlands) in 1915 and granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1948 the members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom are united in our determination, aims and goals, to study, make known the causes of war and to abolish the legitimization of war.

Toward this purpose, we unite our world efforts by working to build the just foundations on which a durable global peace, a just economy and social justice is achieved for all.

## **A. Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, hereinafter referred to as WILPF.

WILPF is a non-profit association governed by the present statutes and, secondly, by Articles 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code. WILPF's headquarter is in the State of Geneva (Switzerland) and it shall be of unlimited duration.

## **B. Aims and Principles**

1. The aims and principles of WILPF are:

(a) To bring together women of different political beliefs and philosophies who are united in their determination to study, make known and help abolish the causes and legitimization of war.

(b) Taking an integrated approach toward world peace we work for:

- i. Total and universal disarmament;
- ii. The abolition of violence and coercion in the settlement of conflict and their substitution in every case of negotiation and conciliation;
- iii. The strengthening of the United Nations system and the General Assembly decision making process in full respect of its Charter;
- iv. The continuous development and implementation of international (human rights) law;
- v. Women's political, social and economic empowerment to achieve gender equality and justice for all;
- vi. Cooperation among all people; and
- vii. Environmentally sustainable societies.

2. Believing that under systems of exploitation including social-economic and cultural exclusion these aims cannot be attained and a real lasting peace and true freedom cannot exist, we make it our duty to further by non-violent means the social transformation that enables the inauguration of systems under which social, cultural and political equality and economic justice for all can be attained, without discrimination on the basis of age, gender, colour, religion, physical and mental disabilities, political opinion or any other grounds.

3. WILPF sees as its ultimate goal the establishment of an international just economic and social order founded on the principles of meeting the needs of all people and not those of profit and privilege for the few.

## C. Membership

1. Individuals who accept this Constitution may become members as set out in the By-Laws.
2. Associate membership is open to national organisations or groups that accept WILPF's aims and principles and agree to comply with the conditions and criteria set out in Section B, paragraph 3, of the By-Laws.

## D. Organisation

The organs of WILPF shall be the International Congress (IC), the International Board (IB), National Sections (NS) and the International Secretariat (IS).

### 1. The International Congress (IC)

- a) The International Congress shall be the highest decision-making body of WILPF and the final authority in all matters concerning the organisation.
- b) The International Congress shall be composed of all members of the International Board and delegates and alternates elected by the National Sections in the following manner:
  - i. a National Section shall be entitled to representation to the International Congress when its dues are paid to the end of the previous calendar year;
  - ii. each National Section with up to 50 members shall be entitled to elect two (2) delegates and two (2) alternates;
  - iii. each National Section with up to 500 members shall be entitled to elect three (3) delegates and three (3) alternates;
  - iv. each National Section with a paid-up membership more than 500 or more shall be entitled to elect four (4) delegates and four (4) alternates; and
  - v. any other paid up member of WILPF may attend and participate in the International Congress but shall be non-voting.

### 2. The International Board (IB)

- a) The International Board is responsible for WILPF achieving its aims and principles. The International Board shall ensure that the decisions adopted by the International Congress to further the aims and principles of WILPF are implemented and that the organisation meets its legal and financial obligations as a constituted body;
- b) The International Board shall be composed of the President, two Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, the Secretary-General, and one Regional Representative and one alternative Regional Representative for each region;
- c) The International Board is responsible for the governance of WILPF in accordance with the By-Laws;

- d) The International Board shall have overall responsibility for establishing and mobilising all Standing Committee(s), Ad Hoc Committee(s) and Thematic Working Group(s), and for determining their mandates, operating modes and dissolution;
- e) Each member of the International Board shall be entitled to one vote; and
- f) An alternate Regional Representative may vote in the place of the Regional Representative for her specific region.

### **3. National Sections**

- a) The work of all National Sections and members is based on the aims and principles of WILPF as established by this Constitution, and on the policies and programmes established in resolutions and decisions adopted by the International Congress and International Board;
- b) A National Section may be established by the International Congress upon the application of at least ten paid up members residing in the country, and on the recommendation by the International Board. National Sections shall adopt this Constitution and By-Laws, complementing as necessary in compliance with the laws of their country and ensuring the democratic functioning of the section;
- c) New National Sections shall be admitted to WILPF with full voting rights upon ratification by a simple majority of the International Congress;
- d) A National Section shall be suspended by the International Board between International Congresses if the National Section has fewer than ten members or has violated this constitution or is in arrears for more than two years or has acted in a manner prejudicial to the realization of the aims and principles of WILPF; and
- e) A National Section may appeal the International Board's action. The final decision is determined by the International Congress if a majority of those attending a duly constituted meeting concludes that the National Section should be dissolved.

### **4. The International Secretariat (IS)**

- a) The International Secretariat is comprised of the Secretary-General, program managers, permanent staff, interns and as required advisors and/or consultants, all of whom operate under the WILPF Constitution and By-Laws; and
- b) Under the direction of the Secretary-General the Secretariat's role includes the implementation and reporting on policies and programmes as adopted by the International Congress; to recommend and develop new initiatives in response to emergency and/or emerging issues of primary concern for WILPF and to provide secretariat and administrative support to the International Congress and the International Board.

### **E. Adoption of this Constitution**

1. This Constitution shall take effect upon approval by a two-thirds majority of the voting participants at an International Congress.
2. The By-Laws shall take effect upon approval by 51% of voting participants at an International

Congress.

**F. Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws**

- a) Amendments to this Constitution and/or its By-Laws may be proposed by a National Section or by the International Board. The International Board may also delegate authority to propose amendments to the Standing Constitution Committee;
- b) The adoption of any proposed amendment to the Constitution shall require a two-thirds majority of the voting participants at the International Congress;
- c) The adoption of any proposed amendment to the By-Laws shall require a 51% majority of the voting participants of the International Congress;
- d) Amendments duly adopted by the International Congress shall take immediate effect unless otherwise decided by International Congress.

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## **BY-LAWS**

### **A. Programmes**

To promote its aims and principles, WILPF shall organise and carry out programmes, projects and campaigns at local, regional, and international levels. As occasion may demand, it shall align its efforts with those of other actors in pursuit of common aims and principles.

### **B. Membership**

1. In countries where a National Section exists, individual membership shall normally be through the National Section by payment of an annual fee set by the National Section;

2. In countries where no National Section exists, individuals may join WILPF by payment of an annual fee as set by the International Board to the International Secretariat. Such international members shall be included in National Groups or where no Section or National Group exists in their country, to the geographical region where they reside. As a paid-up member of WILPF they may attend and participate in the International Congress but shall be non-voting;

3. In countries where no National Section exists, a national organisation or group may apply for associate membership, subject to the following conditions and criteria:

(a) Only one organisation or group per country shall be admitted as an associate member;

(b) The organisation or group shall comply to the aims and principles of WILPF and shall work on at least one of WILPF's internationally adopted programs;

(c) The organisation or group shall not be affiliated with another international organisation, or with a regional organisation that is affiliated with an international organisation;

(d) Associate members shall enjoy the same rights as full members, except the right to vote at the International Congress, to nominate candidates, or to have its members nominated for election to an international office;

(e) The associate member organisations shall not speak or write in the name of WILPF or represent WILPF unless required to do so by the International Board;

(f) Associate members shall be subject to review by the International Board at least every three years;

(g) Associate member organisations shall pay an annual fee to the International Secretariat as set by the International Board.

### **C. Finance**

1. WILPF's sources of revenue include fees from National Sections, international members, groups and associate members as assessed annually by the International Board and from bequests, grants and donations.

2. The fiscal year of WILPF shall commence on the first of January.

## D. International Congress

1. The responsibilities of the International Congress shall include, but not be limited to:

- a) reviewing the activities of the International Board, the International Secretariat and National Sections since the last International Congress, setting the policies and direction of WILPF and adopting the International programme and related budget until the next regular International Congress;
- b) electing the members of the International Board [President, two Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and a Regional Representative (and alternate) from each region] to serve until the next regular International Congress; no individual may be elected to the same International Board position for more than two consecutive terms;
- c) receiving reports from the Secretary-General, the International Treasurer, the International Board, each National Section and Standing Committee(s), Ad Hoc Committee(s), Thematic Working Group(s) and WILPF's Representatives to International bodies [UN & ILO Geneva, UNESCO Paris, FOA Rome];
- d) admitting new National Sections;
- e) deciding on amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws; and
- f) appointing independent auditors.

The decisions of the International Congress are final, and it cannot delegate its powers.

2. Travel

- a) Travel expenses of the delegates and alternates to the International Congress shall be borne where possible, by the National Section they represent. The International Board and the Secretary-General shall have their expenses paid from the international budget to the extent that the funds are available.
- b) WILPF shall maintain a Travel Fund to assist in special circumstances, Section delegates to attend the International Congress. The Fund shall be approved by the Treasurer in accordance with guidelines established by the Standing Finance Committee and administered by the International Secretariat. National Sections receiving such assistance shall repay the amount of money given if their delegates do not come to the International Congress.

3. Meetings

- a) The International Congress shall be convened every three years but no longer than 48 months since the last one. In the case of an 'Extraordinary Session' being convened, the next regularly scheduled International Congress shall be in the third year after the 'Extraordinary Session.' Congress shall meet at a date and place determined by the International Board.
- b) An extraordinary session of the International Congress may be called on request of a National

Section, subject to the agreement of a ~~two-thirds~~ majority of the International Board voting at a duly constituted meeting.

c) A scheduled session of the International Congress may be cancelled or postponed by the International Board subject to the agreement of a 2/3 majority of the International Board

4. Quorum

The Quorum for the International Congress shall consist of 40% of the National Sections being represented and at least four of the elected members of the International Board.

5. Voting rights at the International Congress:

a) each member of the International Board and each delegate elected by a National Section shall be entitled to one vote;

b) an [alternate Regional Representative may vote when the Regional Representative is not present](#);

c) a National Section represented by a single delegate shall have two (2) votes, [if represented by two \(2\) delegates or three \(3\) delegates, the Section will be entitled to four \(4\) votes](#);

d) a National Section alternate may vote in the place of the delegate;

e) any other paid up member of WILPF may attend and participate in the International Congress but shall be non-voting;

f) [a duly accredited National Section delegate or alternate who, for good reason must leave the International Congress early, may vote by proxy by leaving a vote or a potential vote in sealed envelope with the Convenor of the Elections Committee.](#)

**E. International Board**

1. [The International Board is responsible for the overall leadership of WILPF. The International Board is responsible for WILPF achieving its aims and principles, for setting the direction, culture and values; for implementing strategic and tactical objectives of the organisation as-a-whole, for approving the Secretariat's work programme, for safeguarding WILPF's assets and for ensuring WILPF meets its ethical, legal and financial obligations according to the law under which WILPF is incorporated and the governing rules, such as a Constitution and By-Laws.](#)

The International Board is responsible for the governance of WILPF. [It cannot abdicate this responsibility; though it can give mandate to a specific group but under auspices of the International Board.](#) It has the authority to make all necessary decisions between sessions of the International Congress and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the International Board shall:

a) appoint the Secretary-General;

b) appoint the Convenors and [approve members](#) of Standing Committee(s), [Ad Hoc](#) Committee(s) and [Thematic Working Group\(s\)](#);



- c) appoint WILPF's Representatives to International bodies who shall work in cooperation with the International Secretariat;
- d) shall serve as ambassadors to non-members and convey information regarding the initiatives, goals and mission of WILPF;
- e) act on reports received from the Secretary-General, the Treasurer, National Sections, Standing Committee(s), Ad Hoc Committee(s) and Thematic Working Group(s) and the Auditors;
- f) adopt the WILPF programme, workplan and budget;
- g) ensure that funds are available to finance the activities of WILPF, set fees, and arrange for the conduct of an annual audit of WILPF's financial statements. The Financial Statements and other records must be prepared in accordance with the International Accounting Standards (or national equivalent) and audited in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (or national equivalent);
- h) designate the location of the International Secretariat from which the Secretary-General shall operate;
- i) set out additional duties of the Secretary-General;
- j) in the event that the President is unable to act, replace her from among the Vice-Presidents. If any other member of the International Board is unable to act, appoint a replacement for her, or in the case of a Regional Representative the alternate may be appointed. Vacancies among the members of the International Board should be filled within three calendar months of the position becoming vacant; and
- k) set and disseminate the agenda for the International Congress at least two months before the International Congress, in order to give all members sufficient time to study it.

## 2. Responsibilities

A skilled and well-functioning International Board is essential for WILPF's effectiveness. Members must possess the skills and experience for specified board function areas and responsibilities.

### 1. The President provides the political leadership for the organisation, and shall:

- a) with the other International Board members oversee the implementation of policies, programmes and budget passed by the International Congress and monitor the output and outcome of all committees and of the International Secretariat;
- b) encourage a spirit of co-operation and good will within WILPF as a whole;
- c) act as ambassador for WILPF and be its representative on official occasions;
- d) monitor and report on the ethical and fiscal probity of WILPF;
- e) through frequent contact foster a collegiate partnership and at all times work closely with the

Secretary-General to ensure implementation of agreed policies, programs and work plans and to provide the link between the International Board and International Secretariat staff through this relationship;

f) together with the Secretary-General co-ordinate the activities of the International Board, Standing Committee(s), *Ad Hoc* Committee(s) and Thematic Working Group(s), and assist National Sections in their common endeavours and mutual interests;

g) chair, in rotation with the Vice Presidents, the International Congress and meetings of the International Board;

h) with the Treasurer, co-sign or delegate the co-signing of contracts and any other official document on behalf of WILPF;

i) in co-operation with *other International Board members*, evaluate the job performance of the Secretary-General; and

j) delegate responsibility to the Vice-Presidents for any of the above duties and involve them fully in all activities.

## 2. **The Vice-Presidents** shall:

a) support the President in her duties and undertake such duties of the President as she and/or the International Board may delegate;

b) stand in for the President at official functions when required;

c) keep themselves apprised of the activities of the President and be prepared to relieve her of any or all her duties should the need arise;

d) undertake such special projects and assignments as determined by the International Board.

## 3. **The Treasurer** *is responsible for the financial management of WILPF and* shall:

a) ensure WILPF's financial records are kept according to *generally accepted standard* accounting practices, and have them prepared for *annual independent* audit;

b) oversee the preparation of financial statements and report *frequently* to the International Board and to the International Congress;

c) oversee the financial planning and the formulation of financial guidelines for WILPF;

d) generally, provide financial leadership and ensure that WILPF is fiscally responsible *and sustainable*;

e) with the President or another delegated Board member co-sign contracts on behalf of WILPF;

f) with the International Board establish the financial guidelines by which the Secretary-General shall operate: and

g) be a member the Standing Finance Committee.

4. **Regional Representatives** are responsible with the President, Vice Presidents and the Treasurer for the good governance of WILPF and shall:

a) be responsible for providing two-way communication between the National Sections in their designated region and the International Board;

b) feed national and regional experiences and concerns into the International Board and report back the international experience and concerns to the regional membership;

c) keep themselves apprised of all International Board decisions and work-programs and uphold and/or implement the decisions of the meeting;

d) on request by the President/International Board be the local representative to the media when issues of importance arise; and

e) be responsible for providing reports to the International Board on regional activities and their needs.

5. The **Secretary-General** is the daily public spokesperson of WILPF and represents WILPF in its activities. Further she is responsible for the output and outcome of the International Secretariat, in all its offices, and for liaising with National Sections to strengthen their capacity to achieve WILPF's aims and principles in their country. She, together with the President, sets the tone for the leadership of all offices of WILPF.

### 3. **Eligibility**

In addition to a demonstrated commitment to WILPF's mission, principles and values members elected to the International Board shall have been active and paid up members of WILPF with relevant experience at the national or local level for at least three (three) years and have some international experience. Elected officers serve in a voluntary capacity thus must have the ability to commit time and resources as required.

### 4. **Term of Office**

a) The term of office of the International Board shall be from one International Congress till the next regular International Congress;

b) All elected members of the International Board stand down prior to the Election Committee reporting to the International Congress. The term for the newly elected International Board commences with the declaration of voting;

c) No individual may be elected to the same position for more than two consecutive terms;

d) Where a member of the International Board is chosen to fill a casual vacancy (according to E.1.j above), this person will be eligible to be elected for two consecutive further terms if she has been in

her position for less than two years or half the time between elections, whichever is shorter;

e) International Board members must attend more than 50% of meetings in any 12-month period;

f) Where an International Board member fails to attend two (2) consecutive International Board meetings, without valid reason, or when an International Board member otherwise fails to fulfil her duties for three (3) months without valid reason, she shall be suspended from the International Board. If she cannot provide just cause for her absence she will be replaced as in E.1.j above.

## **5. Meetings**

a) The International Board shall meet at least once every two (2) months;

b) Representatives of Standing Committee(s) and Ad Hoc Committee(s) may be invited to participate in International Board meetings in a non-voting capacity; and

c) Meetings and decisions of the International Board using alternate means such as video link, 'Skype' or other new technology can be considered where necessary for budget or other reasons as long as all International Board members have access to the relevant technology.

## **6. Quorum**

Fifty one percent (51%) of the members of the International Board shall constitute a quorum.

## **7. Removal from Position**

a) where a member of the International Board speaks or acts in a proven manner contrary to the aims and principles, Code of Conduct or interests of WILPF and thereby loses the confidence of the membership, this person can lose her position if 51% of the paid-up National Sections move in writing to have her removed;

b) written notice must be forwarded to the member setting out the grounds on which the recall is based; and informing her that she may submit within 28 days written representations relating to this action. The International Board must give due consideration to any representations submitted by the member, and by resolution confirm or revoke the recall action; and

c) where an International Board member is removed from office, she shall be replaced by the transparent process described at E.1.h above. When a Regional Representative is removed, she will be replaced by the alternate and the National Sections in her region will be asked to nominate a replacement alternate.

## **F. National Sections**

1. a) share and adopt the vision of the total organisation and its democratic participatory way of work;

b) carry out the decisions of the International Congress and of the International Board at the national level through programs and grassroots activities that address at least one of WILPF's internationally adopted programs in a way that is appropriate to their national condition;

c) create a space, where National Section members take part in determining the policies and

programs of the international organisation;

d) identify the root causes of conflict in their country/region and propose solutions to the International Board;

e) provide support for the international structure by paying sections fees, sharing information and ideas for action [by promoting the resources e.g. provided by the International Secretariat \(MyWILPF\)](#); and

f) shall appoint a liaison officer to work with and support their Regional Representative.

2. National Sections shall adopt this Constitution and By-Laws, complementing it as necessary in compliance with the laws of their country. They shall [elect a National Board; report annually to the International Board on progress against achieving their work plans and other issues of concern in their Section and ensure the democratic character and functioning of their section.](#)

3. National Sections fund themselves from sources of income appropriate to their membership. They also pay an annual section fee to WILPF based on the formula agreed by the International Board and adopted at the International Congress.

#### 4. **Starting a New Section**

a) Applications for admission to become a new section are considered at each International Congress. The requirements for admission are:

i. a group of at least ten members resident in the country applies to the International Board for approval to operate as a group;

ii. there is only one group representing WILPF in each country;

iii. the group has elected officers who assume specific responsibilities, including a President and Treasurer; and

iv. has a work plan and [a financial plan](#) in place.

b) The group cannot vote at international meetings until it is admitted as a National Section at an International Congress but may receive all mailings sent to sections. After admission, the new section should:

i. adopt this Constitution and By-Laws, complementing it as necessary in compliance with the laws of their country; and

ii. only use WILPF's approved logo on letterheads, in publications, etc. so it is clear to everyone that the section is an official WILPF Section.

#### **G. Regions**

[WILPF Sections are grouped under ~~six~~\(6\) geographical regions: Africa, Asia Pacific, South Asia, Europe, Middle East and North Africa and the Americas.](#)

National Sections in each region are encouraged to support each other; to work together on regional campaigns and address issues they have in common; to hold regular regional meetings and to reach out to WILPF members-at-large in their regions.

## H. Permanent Staff

1. The Secretary-General shall:
  - a) direct and administer the **output and outcome** of the International Secretariat and its staff;
  - b) ensure the practical implementation of the decisions of the International Congress and the International Board and coordinate and administer the policies and programmes of WILPF;
  - c) disseminate information of interest to WILPF to the International Board and the National Sections, and generally act as the main liaison between the International Secretariat, National Sections, **National Groups and international members**;
  - d) **maintain frequent contact with the President** and work in close collaboration with the International Board and undertake such other tasks as it may delegate;
  - f) **foster and** maintain relations with other international bodies **and/or public persons** in the furtherance of WILPF's aims and principles;
  - g) arrange for a minute taker to keep minutes of all the proceedings of the International Congress, the International Board meetings and be the custodian of such minutes and of all other records and accounts of WILPF;
  - h) **ensure information required by the Standing Committee(s), Ad Hoc Committee(s) and Thematic Working Group(s) to carry out their work is provided in a timely manner**; and
  - i) under guidance for the International Board set the agenda, prepared in conformity with these By-Laws, at least two (2) months before the sitting of the International Congress. The agenda and related information is to be circulated to National Sections and members at least one month before the International Congress in order to facilitate enough time to study by all members.
2. All staff of the International Secretariat shall be remunerated in accordance with the terms **and conditions** of their employment agreement. **Such agreements must comply with applicable employment law in the country in which they are employed by WILPF and include whistle-blower protection provisions.**

## I. Young WILPF Network

1. The Young WILPF Network provides a space for members under the age of 35 to network, organize and advance the goals of WILPF.
2. Any paid-up WILPF member, under the age of 35 can join the Young WILPF Network. This is in addition to and does not replace National Section membership.

3. Where two WILPF members, under the age of 35 wish to create a national Young WILPF Network they shall inform the National Section and as WILPF members uphold WILPF's aims and principles.

#### **J. Standing Committee(s)**

1. The International Board has overall responsibility for establishing the necessary Standing Committee (s), Ad Hoc Committee(s) and Thematic Working Group(s) and for determining the rules governing their mandate, work plan, reporting and dissolution. All committees are advisory, with the ultimate responsibility and decision-making mandate remaining with the International Board.
2. The purpose of Standing Committee(s) is to provide guidance; to propose policies in key functional areas and to advise the International Board. Standing Committees include: Standing Constitution Committee; Standing Finance Committee; Standing Personnel Committee; Standing Risk Management Committee; Standing Committee on Organisational Development and Standing Committee on Culture and Diversity.
3. Appointed by the International Board, the Convenor of each Standing Committee shall act as the committee's chair and on invitation may attend International Board meetings in a non-voting capacity.
4. Standing Committee(s) generally consist of up to seven (7) members, one (1) of whom is an International Board member. The Secretary-General or her designee serves in an ex-officio capacity on all committees.

#### **K. Ad Hoc Committee(s)**

1. The International Board can establish Ad Hoc Committee(s) for a specific task or objective and dissolve them after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective.
2. Appointed by the International Board, the Convenor of each Ad Hoc Committee shall act as the committee's chair.

#### **L. Thematic Working Group(s)**

1. The International Board can establish Working Group(s) as required to focus on a particular aspect of the WILPF programme or for a specific action and/or campaign and may be dissolved after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective.
  2. Working Group(s) include: the Environmental Working Group and the Africa Region Working Group.
  3. The Convenor of each Working Group is appointed by the International Board. Membership is open to all paid up members of WILPF, with knowledge of the issues being addressed by the working group and with time to contribute to the agreed work plan.
- M. The International Board may also appoint independent specialists or academic researchers to work with it in an advisory role; the ultimate responsibility and decision-making mandate remaining with the International Board.

#### **N. Nomination Committee**

1. A Nomination Committee shall be established by the International Board at least seven (7) months preceding the International Congress.
2. Reflecting the geographical and other diversities of WILPF, the Nomination Committee shall be composed of seven (7) members, two (2) of whom shall be members of the International Board. The International Board shall name the convenor of the Nomination Committee from among the seven (7) members. The convenor shall act as the committee's chair.
3. The Nomination Committee co-ordinates nominations for all elected International Board positions: President, two (2) Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and one (1) Regional Representative and one (1) alternative Regional Representative for each region.

A skilled and well-functioning International Board is essential for WILPF's effectiveness. The Nomination Committee's role is to assess candidates against the sets of criteria and recommend an election slate. In developing its recommended slate, the Nomination Committee will target to ensure that the proposed International Board has:

- a) an appropriate balance of board and political experiences/and or knowledge at an international level and /or international institutions;
- b) a significant proportion of relatively new members to ensure fresh perspectives; and
- c) sufficient continuity to ensure that the institutional memory of the International Board is retained.

Additionally, where existing International Board members are standing for re-election, the Nomination Committee will take account of their record to date on the International Board – including their attendance record, contributions in meetings, output and outcome of their endeavours and leadership of initiatives.

4. The Nomination Committee shall:
  - a) write to each National Section six (6) months before any sitting of the International Congress seeking nominations for the positions of President, two (2) Vice-Presidents and Treasurer. Such nominations shall be made in writing, supported by the nominee's Section and be received by the Nomination Committee no later than four (4) months before the sitting of the International Congress;
  - b)
    - i. write to each National Section six (6) months before any sitting of the International Congress coordinating the process for the nomination of Regional Representatives and alternate Regional Representatives. National Sections are to meet as a region (either face-to-face or by electronic means) to nominate two representatives - one (1) to serve on the International Board as the Regional Representative and the other (1) as the alternative Regional Representative. The Regional Representative and the alternate Regional Representative nominated are to be from different National Sections;
    - ii. Members accepting their Regional nomination shall then submit a personal nomination letter outlining their suitability to serve on the International Board including their experience and practitioner knowledge of WILPF and other relevant political experience. Nominations are to be forwarded to the Nomination Committee four (4) months before the International Congress;



- c) after receiving nominations obtain from each nominee a written declaration stating her preparedness to stand for the position, **to ascertain her availability and willingness to commit the time and resources required.**
  - d) at least two (2) months before the sitting of the International Congress, the Convenor shall circulate a list of nominations to all National Sections, members of the International Board, and to all the nominees;
  - e) prepare the ballots containing the names of all eligible nominees for elections by the International Congress; and
  - f) report in writing to the International Congress.
4. **Considering the lengthy nomination process (as outlined above) nominations from the floor at the International Congress will not be accepted.**

#### **M. Election Committee**

1. An Election Committee shall be constituted at the beginning of the International Congress to facilitate and oversee the election process.
2. It shall be comprised of up to five (5) members, consisting of members of the Nomination Committee and of members elected by the International Congress. Members nominated for a position on the International Board shall not be eligible to serve on the Election Committee. The members of the duly constituted Election Committee shall designate a Convenor from amongst them.
3. **Once appointed, members of the Election Committee must act in accord with the Code of Conduct and maintain strict neutrality and confidentiality in regard to all candidates and people in attendance at the International Congress. If a committee member breaches this confidentiality she will be removed from the committee with immediate effect.**
4. The Election Committee shall:
  - a) arrange **for time on the International Congress Agenda** in which **all candidates present** introduce themselves to the International Congress participants;
  - b) after private discussion with each candidate recommend a slate from the list of nominees, one for each of the International Board positions; and
  - c) report to the International Congress on its work and on the slate, giving the **arguments** for its recommendations.
6. **Election Procedure**
  - a) upon adoption of the Election Committee's report by the International Congress the candidates recommended for the position shall be considered elected;
  - b) in the case that voting becomes necessary because no slate is recommended, or the report is

not adopted unanimously by the International Congress, an election by secret ballot will be conducted.

c) where voting is required the Election Committee shall ensure proper control of the electoral process by distributing ballots only to the voting members of the International Congress in exchange for their voting cards, and by tallying the votes and reporting the results to the International Congress.

d) if there is only one nominee for President or Treasurer, and the slate is accepted, these candidates will be declared as duly elected. If there are two or more candidates a secret ballot will be conducted and the candidate receiving the majority vote for each position will be declared as duly elected;

e) in the case of Vice-Presidential candidates, if the slate is not accepted or there is no slate, the Vice-Presidents will be elected individually by secret ballot. In the situation where two (2) candidates receive an equal number of votes, a 'run-off' election will be held.

f) where a region nominates more than 2 candidates for the position of Regional Representative or alternate Regional Representative, an election by secret ballot will be conducted, with voting members from that regions only participating. The member receiving the highest number of votes will be declared the Regional Representative, and the member receiving the second highest vote will be declared the alternate Regional Representative. They must be from different Sections.

## **N. Resolutions**

1. A Resolution Committee of 5-7 people shall be established by the International Board at least five (5) months prior to the International Congress.

2. The Resolution Committee is to consider all resolutions, including emergency ones that are received and to decide which are to be submitted for vote at the International Congress. It may redraft resolutions to meet the proper form and to meet clear and good English guidelines.

3. Resolutions:

a) must be in writing and sent to the International Secretariat at least two (2) months before the opening date of the International Congress;

b) comments on proposed resolutions or amendments to proposed amendments to the resolutions must be received within thirty-one (31) days before the opening of Congress;

c) any proposed amendments will be sent to the original proposer and, if accepted by them, incorporated into the resolution and be distributed to National Sections within thirty-one (31) days; and,

d) only emergency resolutions will be accepted at the International Congress. They must be submitted for consideration on the first day of the International Congress. In the rare event of last minute developments, the International Congress may agree to extraordinary measures to allow for the later introduction of an emergency resolution. All others must be submitted in advance as specified.

## **O. Working Languages**

The working language for WILPF shall be English (adopting the United Nations standard of British spelling) with translation and interpretation in as many languages as feasible, including sign languages.

**P. Rules of Procedure**

In the conduct of all meetings of WILPF, every effort shall be made to reach decisions by consensus when to do so is not in conflict with other provisions of this Constitution and its By-Laws.

**Q. Operating Manual**

The International Secretariat shall develop and maintain an operating manual to which the International Board, National Sections, International Secretariat staff and all members shall refer for guidance and clarification on matters arising in WILPF's ongoing functioning and to ensure democratic decision-making procedures are implemented across the entire league.

**R. Amendments to the Constitution and By Laws**

a) Amendments to this Constitution and/or By-Laws may be proposed by a National Section or by the International Board. The International Board may also delegate authority to propose amendments to the Standing Constitution Committee;

b) Proposed amendments must be in writing and sent to the Standing Constitution Committee at least 6 (six) months before the opening date of the International Congress;

c) The Standing Constitution Committee to consider the proposed amendments and where accepted draft a revised Constitution and By Laws for circulation to all National Sections;

d) Comments on proposed amendments or amendments to proposed amendments must be received sixty (60) days before the opening of the International Congress;

e) the amended Constitution and By-Laws proposed for acceptance by the International Congress shall be distributed to the International Board and National Sections thirty-one (31) days before the opening of Congress; and

e) In view of the above process further amendments to the proposed Constitution and/or its By-Laws will not be accepted from the International Congress floor.