

**CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH HANSARD EDITORS ASSOCIATION AFRICA REGION (CHEA-AR)**



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## **INTERPRETATION**

**Association:** Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association.

**CHEA International:** Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association comprised of all Commonwealth countries.

**CHEA-AR:** Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association-Africa Region.

**Conference:** Meetings held by all or majority of members of the Association biennially.

**Editors:** Parliamentary Editors, Reporters, Proofreaders, Printers, Audio visual officers and other practitioners.

**Executive Committee:** Governing body of the Association.

**Meeting:** Meetings held by the Executive Committee.

**Member:** A Commonwealth Parliament in the Africa Region which is fully subscribed to CHEA-AR.

**Membership Register:** A register in which all individual members and member Parliaments are recorded.

**Observer:** Any person from a Parliament other than the commonwealth who is not a member of the Association who chooses to participate in the activities of the Association but not eligible to vote.

**Official Reports (Hansard):** Published verbatim reports of parliamentary debates.

**Parliament:** Assemblies and legislative bodies of any Commonwealth country by any name they are called.

**Quorum:** The minimum number of members of the Association who must be present at any Association meeting to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

**Subscription Fee(s):** Fees payable by a member Parliament annually.

## **THE PREAMBLE**

The heads of departments of the Official Reports of national Parliaments/ Assemblies/ Legislatures/ Councils and other Parliamentary bodies declared the formation of an Africa Region branch of the Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association at a meeting in Ulundi, KwaZulu-Natal, on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1999, for-

- The development of professional Hansard staff in member countries;
- Building understanding and unity among countries of the continent;
- Promoting the interest/perspectives of Hansard in Africa;
- Sharing information through enhanced communication; and
- Strengthening and coordinating of Hansard staff in the best interests of the Africa Region.

### **1. NAME**

The name of the Association shall be **COMMONWEALTH HANSARD EDITORS ASSOCIATION-AFRICA REGION (CHEA-AR)**.

### **2. OBJECT**

The object of the Association is to serve the interests of parliamentary democracy by enhancing the quality of parliamentary reporting through the regular exchange of technical information, research and development and personnel among Parliaments.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- (a) Membership of the Association shall be open to State Legislatures and Hansard staff from the Regional Parliaments of Commonwealth in Africa.
- (b) Members of the Association shall be governed by this Constitution and the Code of Conduct of the Association. The Code of Conduct shall conform to the spirit of parliamentary democracy.
- (c) Any Parliament which is not a paid-up member of CHEA-AR for at least two (2) years shall not participate in the activities of the Association, including regional meetings at CHEA International.
- (d) A member of CHEA-AR in arrears of subscription fees for at least three (3) years shall not participate in the activities of CHEA-AR and shall not be elected into any office of the Association.

#### **4. THE ASSOCIATION**

The Association shall be a non-governmental, non-partisan and non-profit organisation that strives to raise the quality of Hansard.

#### **5. LEADERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION**

The leadership of the Association shall comprise the following-

- a. Plenary Biennial Conference
- b. Executive Committee

#### **6. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

There shall be an Executive Committee of CHEA-AR which shall be responsible for the management of the affairs of the Association and ensuring that the decisions of the plenary are implemented. The Executive Committee shall be answerable to the plenary Assembly.

The Executive Committee shall be elected by the Biennial Conference.

(a) The Executive Committee of the Association shall comprise-

- i. The President
- ii. Vice President
- iii. Secretary
- iv. Financial Secretary
- v. Assistant Secretary
- vi. Representatives of the five sub-regions – Central, East, Southern, West Africa and the Islands. Members of the regional blocs are to elect one among them to represent them in the Executive Committee.
- vii. Three (3) ex officio members (appointed by the President).

(b) *“The Hansard Editor for the Parliament hosting the CHEA-AR Conference automatically becomes the President. The Hansard Editor for the Parliament that offers to host the next conference becomes the Vice-President.”*

## **ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **7.1 THE PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENT**

The President shall preside over all meetings of the Association. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall preside over the meetings.

### **7.2 SECRETARY**

- a) The Secretary is the administrator of the Association. He/She keeps records of the Association.
- b) The Secretary shall prepare rules and regulations for adoption.

### **7.3 FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

- a) The financial secretary shall keep proper books and accounts of CHEA-AR.
- b) The financial secretary shall table the annual financial report before the plenary for approval and adoption.

### **7.4 ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

The Assistant Secretary assists the Secretary in the administration of the Association and acts in the absence of the Secretary, but does not undertake any task pertaining to the finances of the Association.

### **7.4 SUB REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES**

Sub-regional representatives are the liaison officers of the five sub regions.

### **7.5 EX OFFICIO MEMBERS**

The three (3) other members are part of the Executive Committee and act as the council of state members.

## **8. FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**8.1** The Executive Committee shall ensure-

- (a) The preparation of an annual budget, which shall be presented to the plenary assembly for approval;

- (b) The preparation of annual reports including meeting reports and other submissions as the plenary Biennial Conference may direct;
- (c) The preparation of the agenda for the plenary Biennial Conference;
- (d) To table the annual financial reports before the plenary Biennial Conference;
- (e) The preparation of rules and regulations for the approval and adoption by plenary Biennial Conference; and,
- (f) That the Financial Secretary shall maintain proper accounts and books of accounts for CHEA-AR and ensure that information and accountable documents are made available to the plenary Biennial Conference.

## **9 TERM OF OFFICE FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The term of office for the Executive Committee shall be two (2) years, unless recommended otherwise by the plenary.

## **10. MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- (a) The Executive Committee shall meet in-person at least once, and at least two (2) virtual meetings annually.
- (b) The quorum at an Executive Committee meeting shall be five (5).
- (c) There shall be a pre-conference planning meeting of the Executive Committee before every Biennial Conference.
- (d) The Biennial Conference shall select the host country, with consideration given to regional balance.

## **11. DECISION MAKING**

- (a) The Biennial Conference shall be the highest decision-making body.
- (b) All decisions of the Association shall be made by vote roll or show of

hands.

- (c) Decisions of the Association shall require a simple majority of members in good standing present, excluding the President.
- (d) Each legislature shall have one vote.
- (e) The President shall have the casting vote.
- (f) Ex-officio Members shall not vote.

## **12 FINANCES**

### **12.1 SOURCES OF FINANCE**

The finances of CHEA-AR shall accrue from the following sources-

- (a) Annual mandatory contributions (subscription fees) from members, which shall be determined by the plenary Biennial Conference on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.
- (b) Grants or donations from governments and other international organisations and charitable institutions, including international parliamentary groupings.
- (c) Various fund-raising activities approved by the plenary Biennial Conference as recommended by the Executive Committee.
- (d) Any other sources approved by the plenary Biennial Conference.

### **12.2 FINANCIAL YEAR FOR THE ASSOCIATION**

The financial year for the Association shall be from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December.

### **12.3 BUDGET**

The Executive Committee shall present a budget for approval by the Biennial Conference.

#### **12.4 BANK ACCOUNT**

- (a) The Bank accounts of the Association shall be maintained at a bank agreed upon by the Executive Committee, and the account shall be in United States Dollars.
- (b) The signatories to the accounts shall be proposed by the Executive Committee for approval by the Biennial Conference.
- (c) The Executive Committee shall develop modalities for accessing funds from the account.

#### **12.5 CONFERENCE FEES**

The host country shall charge conference fees in consultation with the Executive Committee.

### **13. REGISTER OF MEMBERS**

A list of all members with official designations, postal addresses, telephones, fax numbers and e-mail addresses shall be made available to members on a biennial basis.

### **14. HEADQUARTERS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- (a) The headquarters of the Association shall be based at the national Parliament of the Republic of South Africa in Cape Town, and shall serve as the Secretariat.

(b) The Secretariat shall be headed by the head of Hansard based at the Headquarters.

## **15. CONFERENCE**

- (a) The plenary Biennial Conference shall consist of the heads and other editors of member parliaments in commonwealth parliamentary member states.
- (b) The plenary Biennial Conference shall be the main policy-making and deliberative body of the Association.
- (c) The plenary Biennial Conference shall meet for business at biennial intervals.
- (d) The host country shall be responsible for organising the conference.
- (e) Cost of travel and hotel accommodation shall be borne by delegates.
- (f) The Secretariat shall provide financial assistance to the host country as may be determined by the Executive Committee.

## **16. FUNCTIONS OF THE PLENARY BIENNIAL CONFERENCE**

**16.1** Notwithstanding the generality of the above-mentioned section, the functions of the plenary Biennial Conference shall be to-

- (a) Consider and approve the annual budget;
- (b) Consider and approve the financial reports;
- (c) Consider and make decisions on strategies and work programmes of the Association;

- (d) Consider and make approval on the Secretary/Treasurer's financial report;  
and
- (e) Plenary Biennial conference may invite any person or organisation to attend its meetings as observers.

**16.2** Notwithstanding provision 15(c) of this Constitution, the plenary Biennial Conference - on the recommendations of the Executive Committee - may meet at any other time to consider matters of urgent importance.

## **17. OBSERVERS**

- (a) Parliaments other than those in the Commonwealth may send observers to any meeting of the Association on invitation.
- (b) Observers may participate in any activity of the Association, including discussions, but shall not vote or be elected to any office of the Association.
- (c) Observers who accept the invitation to attend the Association's conferences shall pay the prescribed conference fees.

## **18. RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

Meetings of the Association shall be minuted or reported, and copies of the minutes or reports shall be circulated to all members within three (3) months after the meeting.

## **19. OFFENCES AND SANCTIONS**

### **19.1 Absenteeism**

A member who absents himself/herself from attending meetings/sessions during conference without prior approval /permission from the host of the

conference or leader of his/her delegation commits an offence and shall be subjected to a verbal warning in the first instance. A repetition of such an offence for the second time by the member shall attract a written warning. If such an offence occurs a third time, the member shall be suspended from the next conference. This does not prevent the member's Parliament from sending another delegate to attend the next conference.

### **19.2 Misuse/misappropriation of the Association's resources**

A member who misuses or misappropriates the resources of the Association entrusted to his/her care commits an offence and shall be investigated by the Disciplinary Committee of the Association, and if found culpable, shall be reported to the member Parliament and the Police and shall be prosecuted for the offence committed. The Association shall also use all legal means available to retrieve the misappropriated resources.

### **19.3 Failure to keep proper financial records**

A member who is tasked to keep proper financial records of the Association but fails to do so commits an offence and shall be liable to a verbal warning. In the second instance the member shall be surcharged, and a written warning shall be served on the member. If the offence persists, the member shall be expelled from the Association. This depends on a case-by-case basis.

### **19.4 Dereliction of duty**

A member who is tasked to perform a duty/assignment but fails to do so and fails to report back to the Association commits an offence and shall be liable to a verbal warning. The second instance shall attract a written warning.

### **19.5 Misconduct of a member**

A member who misconducts himself/herself during a meeting/session/conference (e.g. drunkenness, rowdiness, disorderly behavior, use of abusive language, assault, etc.) shall be warned. If misconduct persists, a written warning shall be served on the member. If the misconduct does not stop after the written warning, the member shall be suspended from attending the next meeting/session/conference of the Association.

### **19.6 Conflict of interest**

A member who fails to recuse or excuse himself/herself from any delegated duties or decision-making process which may result in personal gain commits an offence and shall be verbally warned in the first instance. The second instance shall attract a written warning. If the offence persists, the member shall be suspended for a period to be determined by the Association.

## **20. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION**

- (a) The Executive Committee (ExCO) or a member of Parliament shall propose amendments to the Constitution which shall be submitted to the Secretary at least 1 month before the Biennial Conference.
- (b) The amendments shall be placed on the agenda for discussion, consideration and adoption by the conference.
- (c) The proposed amendments shall be put to vote and adopted by a simple majority during the conference.

(d) The adopted amendments shall form part of the Constitution. This amendment was adopted by the plenary.

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**EUPHRAAT HOPANE (MS.)**

**CHEA-AR SECRETARY/TREASURER**