

## Servas International Statutes (2012)

SERVAS INTERNATIONAL, a non-profit federation incorporated under Articles 60 to 79 of the Civil Code of Switzerland, and in conformity with Swiss law, with legal seat currently at Zurich, Switzerland, hereby adopts the following statutes, repealing all previously adopted statutes:

### I Definition

Servas International is an international, non-profit, non-governmental federation of national Servas groups, encompassing an international network of hosts and travellers. The purpose of the network is to help build world peace, goodwill and understanding by providing opportunities for personal contacts among people of different cultures, backgrounds and nationalities.

### II Membership

- 1) Any national Servas group containing ten or more personally confirmed hosts (including day-hosts) and three defined contact persons, may become, or be reinstated as, a member group of Servas International by a majority vote of the General Assembly. One host is defined as one household sharing the same home address. A group may be proposed for membership by
  - a) direct application by the group; or
  - b) recommendation from a Servas International Area Coordinator or Committee; or
  - c) invitation from the General Assembly.
- 2) The obligations of a member group to Servas International consist of, and are limited to, paying fees, doing annual host list updates, submitting annual reports, and of following the regulations and procedures as decided by the General Assembly according to Section IV, 3f of the statutes.
- 3) Except under special circumstances, a member group will lose its membership in Servas International by majority vote of the General Assembly if
  - a) it has been without a functioning national secretary for two consecutive years; or
  - b) it has fewer hosts than in subsection 1) above for two consecutive years; or
  - c) it does not fulfil its obligations for two consecutive years.

### III Officers

Servas International Officers are individuals who are elected or appointed as the members of Executive Committee and convenors of committees. Servas International shall have at least 6 and no more than 25 officers. Six of these officers shall be elected by the General Assembly: President, Vice President, General Secretary, Treasurer, Peace Secretary and Host List Coordinator. These officers constitute the **Executive Committee**. The Servas International News Editor, and a Youth Leadership Committee of three to five individuals from at least three different continents shall also be elected by the General Assembly. Each of the remaining officers may be elected or appointed by the General Assembly, or appointed by the Executive Committee, as determined by the General Assembly. The term of office for all officers ends no later than three months after a General Assembly.

#### **IV General Assembly**

- 1) The General Assembly of Servas International shall consist exclusively of one delegate from each member group. These delegates have the right to vote and to speak. The officers of Servas International have speaking rights only. The General Assembly may also grant speaking rights (which may be restricted to specified agenda items) to other individuals.
- 2) The General Assembly shall meet at regular intervals as decided by each General Assembly. In addition to this, the General Assembly may be convened at any time when requested by at least one fifth of member groups. In such an event, at least three months' written notice, including agenda, time and place, must be given to each member group.
- 3) The General Assembly shall:
  - a) review and adopt the minutes of the last General Assembly as published or corrected;
  - b) review and vote on reports of Servas International's office holders;
  - c) review and vote on the audited accounts and the auditor's reports;
  - d) decide upon the programme of activities of Servas International;
  - e) adopt a budget showing projected expenditure up to the next regular General Assembly;
  - f) decide upon fees, regulations and procedures of Servas International;
  - g) elect the Executive Committee;
  - h) elect other Servas International officers, or delegate this responsibility to the Executive Committee;
  - i) elect members of committees or working parties for special tasks deemed necessary by the General Assembly, or delegate this responsibility to the Executive Committee;
  - j) elect an auditor, or empower the Executive Committee to pay for independent professional auditing. The auditor shall verify, annually, the accounts of the Treasurer and shall submit a report to the Executive Committee. These reports shall be submitted for adoption to the next General Assembly;
  - k) determine which members of the Executive Committee shall be empowered to sign on behalf of Servas International. Two signatures shall be required.
- 4) An item may be submitted for inclusion on the agenda only by a national group (represented by its national secretary), or by members of the Executive Committee. All items submitted by member groups must be sent to the President at least six months before the General Assembly to be placed on the agenda of the coming General Assembly. The agenda must be distributed to member groups in writing at least three months before the General Assembly.
- 5) Decisions of the General Assembly, in addition to being recorded in the minutes of the meeting, shall be abstracted from the minutes and a list of such decisions sent to each national Servas group.
- 6) Decisions can be made only on items published in the agenda.
- 7) Decisions made by the General Assembly are binding on the activities and priorities of Servas International.

## **V Executive Committee**

- 1) The Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of Servas International between one General Assembly and the next. Its decisions and actions should be in accordance with decisions made by the General Assembly. Its expenditure is limited to the budget adopted by the General Assembly.
- 2) The Executive Committee shall appoint those Servas officers who have not been elected by the General Assembly.
- 3) If the post of any Servas officer becomes vacant between General Assemblies, the Executive Committee may appoint a replacement. If the vacancy is for a member of the Executive Committee other than President, the remaining members may make the appointment.
- 4) Within financial limits, the Executive Committee shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.
- 5) The Executive Committee is empowered to make decisions either
  - a) by a majority vote at a meeting of the Executive Committee; or
  - b) by a majority vote by correspondence, provided that all members of the Executive Committee are given the opportunity to participate in the decisions.

## **VI Voting at Meetings**

- 1) All decisions of the General Assembly or the Executive Committee (except votes on the dissolution of Servas International, or an amendment to, or replacement of, the Statutes) shall be taken by majority vote of the persons voting. In the event of a tie, the President shall cast the deciding vote.
- 2) Voting procedure shall be made clear to all delegates before voting takes place. The right exists for any delegate to ask for a secret vote on any issue.
- 3) Only delegates from member groups which have met all of their financial obligations to Servas International within six (6) months of the due date are allowed to vote.
- 4) In order to retain its voting rights at the GA, a member country must have published a host list not older than 2 years and must have submitted an annual report for at least one of the two previous years.
- 5) A delegate attending the General Assembly in more than one capacity shall have only one vote, except in the case of proxy voting in elections.
- 6) Only those delegates attending the General Assembly in person shall be permitted to vote.
- 7) The voting process shall include three voting options for each motion, "support/yes", "against/no" and "abstain". "Abstentions" shall not be counted as a vote for or against the motion, except as required in Sections IX Dissolution and X Amendment of Statutes.
- 8) The minutes shall record the number of delegates voting for, voting against, and abstaining.

## **Elections**

- 1) Nominations for election at the GA to be accepted until immediately before the start of the voting.
- 2) Elections for Servas officers shall be by secret vote.
- 3) The GA will allow proxy voting for elections at GAs to enable member countries not present at the GA to participate in the election process.
- 4) If, in the election of officers, there are more than two candidates for any position, and none of these receives more than half of the votes, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall stand in a further election in which all voters vote again.

5) If, in the election of officers, there is only one candidate for any position, the candidate will automatically take office.

## **VII Distant Voting.**

- 1) The member groups of Servas International may make decisions affecting Servas International between meetings of the General Assembly using the following Distant Voting process.
- 2) Each member group of Servas International shall have one vote on each motion to be decided by the Distant Voting process. Votes may be cast by post mail or electronically using a verifiable voting process.
- 3) The Distant Voting process shall not be used to amend the Statutes or to vote on the dissolution of Servas International.
- 4) In each calendar year between each General Assembly at least one Distant Vote shall be held to vote on the annual accounts, auditor's report and any changes to the budget.
- 5) The Distant Voting process may be used to vote on:
  - a) matters to be decided before the next meeting of the General Assembly;
  - b) a motion to suspend or remove from office any officer of Servas International;
  - c) the election of officers to fill Executive Committee or other Servas International vacancies by secret vote;
  - d) motions arising from decisions of the General Assembly.
- 6) No later than two months after a General Assembly the Executive Committee shall publish a schedule of proposed Distant Votes up to the next General Assembly. The closing date for the votes shall be determined as follows:
  - a) the first Distant Vote cannot be earlier than six months after the General Assembly;
  - b) the next Distant Votes shall be at least four and no more than eight months after the preceding Distant Vote;
  - c) the last Distant Vote cannot be later than six months before the next General Assembly.

A scheduled Distant Vote shall be cancelled if no motions have been received.
- 7) A motion for inclusion in the next Distant Vote may be submitted to the President when requested by at least one tenth of the member groups (represented by their National Secretaries), or by any member of the Executive Committee. All motions submitted by member groups must be sent to the President at least four months before the scheduled closing date for the vote to be included in a Distant Vote.
- 8) In addition to Clause 7, the General Assembly may specifically authorise a committee or working group to prepare and submit motions to be voted on by the Distant Voting process.
- 9) The Distant Voting process shall include three voting options for each motion, "support/yes", "against/no" and "abstain", and that abstain votes shall not be counted as a vote for or against the motion.
- 10) Resolutions to be decided by the Distant Voting process as well as the voting procedure to be used must be distributed to member groups in writing at least three months before the closing date for the vote.
- 11) Motions shall be declared adopted as if they have been passed by a meeting of the General Assembly if they get a double majority:

- a) when the majority of the votes cast are "support/yes",
  - b) AND when the "support/yes" vote is at least four tenths of the number of member groups allowed to vote in the Distant Vote.
- 12) The procedures for the conduct of the Distant Voting process shall be governed by the Servas Regulations for Distant Voting. The Servas Regulations for Distant Voting may be amended or replaced by a majority vote of the General Assembly."

### **VIII Duties and Responsibilities of Officers.**

All Servas International Officers must, as a minimum, submit an annual activity and financial report to the President of Servas International or the General Secretary to be forwarded to all National Secretaries.

If any S.I. Officer violates her or his duties or brings Servas International into disrepute as determined by the majority of the member groups, then Executive Committee is authorized to replace or otherwise initiate action against such an officer.

- 1) The President shall:
  - a) oversee the general operation of Servas International;
  - b) preside over all meetings of Servas International or of the Executive Committee, or delegate this function to a suitable chairperson;
  - c) represent Servas on other international bodies or delegate this function to other suitable persons;
  - d) keep broadly informed about the work of Servas officers;
  - e) represent the interests of Servas International News Editor and Servas Archivist in the Executive Committee;
  - f) be responsible for the organisation of the International Conference/General Assembly;
  - g) be responsible for the agenda of the Executive Committee and the agenda of the General Assembly; and
  - h) perform any other functions directed by the General Assembly.
- 2) The Vice-President shall:
  - a) perform the functions of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President;
  - b) be responsible for the development and strengthening of national Servas groups;
  - c) keep broadly informed about the work of the Area Coordinators, and represent their interests in the Executive Committee; and
  - d) perform such other functions as shall be delegated by the President or General Assembly.
- 3) The General Secretary shall:
  - a) handle the correspondence of Servas International;
  - b) collect information from national groups;
  - c) send communications to national groups and maintain their contact information;
  - d) be responsible for the recording of the minutes of meetings and conferences, including the minutes of the General Assembly at the end of the term of office; and
  - e) represent the interests of her/his assistants, National Secretaries and Main Contacts in the Executive Committee.

In the case of an assistant or assistants being elected by the General Assembly or appointed by the Executive Committee, the General Secretary nevertheless carries the final responsibility for the duties of General Secretary.

4) The Treasurer shall:

- a) keep the financial accounts and records of Servas International and arrange for auditing;
- b) send out invoices and collect money owing to Servas International;
- c) submit an annual financial report to the Executive Committee; and
- d) collect financial information from member groups.

In the case of an Assistant Treasurer being elected by the General Assembly or appointed by the Executive Committee, the Treasurer nevertheless carries the final responsibility for the duties of Treasurer.

5) The Peace Secretary shall:

- a) promote the peace aspect of Servas International in national groups and internationally;
- b) coordinate the work of national Peace Secretaries;
- c) represent the interests of the UN delegates and national Peace Secretaries in the Executive Committee; and
- d) encourage liaison with other peace organisations, and arrange representation in such organisations when appropriate.

6) The Host List Coordinator shall

- a) manage the standard presentation of traveller (Letter of Introduction) and host (host listing) information
- b) manage the process of host list exchange, based on each country's rules;
- c) monitor the publication dates of host lists and encourage regular updates;
- d) work with the Vice President and Development Committee to help with the host list issues; and
- e) represent the interests of the national Host List Coordinators in the Executive Committee

7) Convenors Shall

- a) be responsible for the teamwork of their respective committees; and
- b) implement the decisions of the General Assembly relevant to their field of responsibility.

## **IX Dissolution**

1) Dissolution of Servas International shall be effective upon a vote of the General Assembly carried by a two-thirds majority of the eligible voters present.

2) After payment of outstanding debts of Servas International, and within a period determined by the General Assembly, any surplus funds shall be transferred to another non-profit organisation, or organisations, interested in building world peace, as selected by a majority vote at the General Assembly dissolving Servas International. If that General Assembly cannot agree on such a non-profit organisation or organisations, it shall give specific authority to a committee of at least 5 persons to select the non-profit organisation or organisations.

## **X Amendment of Statutes**

The Servas International Statutes may be amended or replaced at a General Assembly by an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the eligible voters present, provided that notice of the

proposed amendment or replacement is given to the delegates at least three months before the General Assembly at which it will be voted on.

As amended at Piaski, Poland August 2012.