



CONSTITUTION

OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

Published by
the World Federation of Trade Unions
Athens, April 2011

ENGLISH

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Adopted by the First World Trade Union Congress, in October 1945, in Paris, France and amended by:

- the 2nd World Trade Union Congress, in 1949, in Milan, Italy.**
- the 4th World Trade Union Congress, in 1957, in Leipzig, German Democratic Republic.**
- the 16th session of the WFTU General Council, mandated by the 6th World Trade Union Congress, in 1965, in Warsaw, Poland.**
- the 7th World Trade Union Congress, in 1969, in Budapest, Hungary.**
- the 25th Session of the WFTU General Council, mandated by the 8th World Trade Union Congress, in 1973, in Varna, Bulgaria.**
- the 31st Session of the WFTU General Council, mandated by the 9th World Trade Union Congress, in 1978, in Prague, Czech.**
- the 12th World Trade Union Congress, in 1990, in Moscow, Russia.**
- the 13th World Trade Union Congress, in 1994, in Damascus, Syria.**
- the 16th World Trade Union Congress, in 2011, in Athens, Greece.**

PREAMBLE

I. DEFINITION

As set forth in the declaration adopted by the London World Trade Union Conference in February 1945 and the resolutions and principles adopted by the First World Trade Union Congress in Paris in October 1945, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) is a democratic, class-based international trade union organisation of struggle of all wage-earners, which supports and encourages action of trade unions in every country to obtain the rights and demands of the workers, and to defend their interests, to combat all forms of subservience, exploitation and oppression, and to bring about socioeconomic development, and which develops and coordinates cooperation and solidarity amongst all workers.

The WFTU makes constant use of efforts/endeavors aimed at unity and cooperation with all national, branch and inter-branch organisations, in members and non members, in the struggle for common objectives and in a spirit of internationalist solidarity amongst workers. The WFTU unites all workers with its final aim being the suppression of exploitation of man by man.

The WFTU functions democratically, openly, and collectively. Respects the opinions, and the proposals of its affiliates and friends. The WFTU develops positively both criticism and the self-criticism.

The observance of full respect for democratic principles in relations with trade union organisations, based on the recognition of the right of member organisations to draft their policies, programmes and actions independently and in accordance with the interests of the workers of their countries and the specific conditions in which they are working, as well as with specific national circumstances.

Relations between the WFTU and its member organisations, and between member organisations within the WFTU or at bilateral level, are based on mutual respect, complete equivalence of rights, reciprocal independence and non-interference in internal affairs.

Concerning relations between the WFTU and its member organisations:

a) An organisation's membership of the WFTU does not, in any case, entail the renunciation or reduction of its independence and national autonomy.

b) Member organisations shall carry out the decisions of the WFTU statutory bodies taking into account the situation in their respective countries, thus recognising the right of each organisation to take into consideration the specific conditions in which they work.

Trade union organisations from all countries in the world that wish to unite on the basis of the principle of independence in order to achieve common aims join the WFTU on a voluntary basis, irrespective of differences in their political, philosophical or religious beliefs, in the race, age, or gender of their members, or in their social regimes. As an international organisation, and notwithstanding the relations established at national level by member organisations, the WFTU maintains its independence from governments, political parties and employers.

It is for this reason that the WFTU intends to modernize itself into a flexible and operational general structure capable of adapting to the needs of member organisations, a structure which in effect aims to see itself being placed within the modern developments of each period.

For WFTU, the continuous effort for renewal and modernisation is a constant process. The promotion of young men and women workers to its guiding bodies is part of this process. Part of this process is the restriction of terms in one for the President and in three terms for the General Secretary, simultaneous alternation to the country of their origin. The attitude against careerism, against bureaucracy, and against elitism is part of this process also.

II. OBJECTIVES

The WFTU, as a class-oriented international trade union organisation, has as its prime objective the emancipation of the working people

by means of struggle.

- against all forms of exploitation of people and to obtain and guarantee living and working conditions for all workers which would allow them the widest possible benefits from the fruits of their labour, in order to obtain for them and their families the time and the means to live in conditions appropriate to our epoch, which is one marked by the headlong progress of science and technology;
- against colonialism, imperialism, domination, subservience, and expansionism in the economic, social, political and cultural spheres for the right of all peoples to self-determination; for freedom, sovereignty and security of nations, non-interference in their internal affairs, respect of their political, economic and social independence, and for the establishment of a new and just international social order;
- for the elimination of racism, sexism and any other forms of discrimination
- for the right to full employment and the guarantee of this right;
- for the abolition of forced bonded and child labour;
- for full and public organised social security coverage and any other assistance needed, adequately responsive to the needs of workers and their families in the event of unemployment, sickness and old age;
- for free and public organised vocational training and education for all workers, throughout their working lives;
- for the providence of means securing access to cultural and recreational activities to all workers and their families;
- for the protection of working environment, and for effective measures to maintain and promote ecological standards and sustainable development;
- for the promotion of health and safety at work and free and public organised health care for all workers;
- for the achievement of social, economic and political democracy, the defence and further development of workers' and trade unions' rights and freedoms, respect for human rights, and the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Trade Union Rights;
- for the prevention of a nuclear war and the dissolution of all military alliances; against militarism, aggression and war and for

the promotion of international detente; for an end to the arms race, especially in nuclear arms, and the total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons; for arms reduction leading to general and complete disarmament;

• for the promotion of internationalist solidarity, just and lasting peace, peaceful coexistence and mutually advantageous cooperation amongst all peoples and states.

III. MEANS

In order to encourage and promote these objectives, the WFTU takes initiatives to contribute to the mobilisation of all the forces of the international trade union movement.

To this end, the WFTU, its affiliates, the TUI's, the Regional Offices and all its structures:

a) use every available means to publicise and explain these objectives to the workers of all countries, together with the programmes and decisions adopted by its leading bodies, and the actions for unity which it adopts;

b) utilize the rich militant experience of struggles of the working class;

organize international action days, demonstrations, mobilizations, marches, strikes and any other form of action

c) make every effort to organise, inspire and coordinate internationalist solidarity;

d) promote and encourage all democratic debates and exchanges of opinion and experience on problems of common interest to all workers and trade unions of the world;

e) work with and within international institutions;

f) work for action organised and carried out at regional level to stimulate and develop consultation, cooperation and solidarity, so as to respond best to their specific concerns and interests, and at industrial level and at regional level also

g) WFTU establishes relations with non-member organisations based on fraternal and voluntary cooperation in the constant search for common objectives and the planning of joint activities. In

this spirit, the WFTU shall seek contact and establish cooperation with other international trade union organisations, as well as with regional or continental trade union organisations.

h) advocate and act in favour of the achievement of unity amongst workers

i) cooperate with trade union organisations and the institutions concerned with workers' trade union training.

j) develop, study and circulate the history of trade-union movement in all levels

k) respect the culture, the civilization and the fighting traditions of each people.

ARTICLE 1

Composition

I.

The WFTU is open to all trade union organisations which represent and struggle for the workers' interests and accept the present Constitution. They can be either affiliated or associate members.

The WFTU recognises the right of its full or associate members to be affiliated to, or have associate status with other regional organisations.

II.

Trade union organisations may submit their requests for affiliation to the WFTU through a national centre, Regional Offices, a TUI, or directly to the General Council or the World Trade Union Congress. The approval or refusal of applications for membership is decided by the Presidential Council or by the General Council. The decision takes immediate effect. The reasons for any refusal of an application for membership are in every case explained to those concerned

III.

Trade union organisations which are not WFTU members may be associated with its activities and take part in the discussion of all problems and the adoption of resolutions on the activities with which

they have bilateral agreements of cooperation established between such organisations and the WFTU.

Should they agree at any time to contribute to the financing of a specific initiative of interest to them, this by no means signifies their becoming members of the WFTU.

ARTICLE 2

Structure

A) The WFTU organises itself on the basis of:

- the affiliated National Centres which make up the Regional Offices in each region or continent;
- the industrial branch organisations which constitute the International (TUIs-UIS).

These are the two essential support bases which make up its structure.

B) The structure of the World Federation of Trade Unions comprises:

- the World Trade Union Congress;
- the General Council;
- the Presidential Council;
- the Secretariat.

ARTICLE 3

World Trade Union Congress

I.

The World Trade Union Congress (WTUC) is the supreme body of the WFTU. It meets regularly every five years, convened by the General Council or by the Presidential Council or at the request of the majority of member organisations which must be at least one-third of the member organizations.

The functions and powers of the World Trade Union Congress are as follows:

- a) To take sovereign decisions on all matters concerning the WFTU;

- b) To be informed of and to discuss the most important matters affecting the workers of the world, the various regions, countries and sectors, to state its opinion on such matters, and to adopt decisions with regard to solidarity, the mobilisation of public opinion and the struggle to defend the workers' interests;
- c) To examine and discuss the reports presented by the General Council, the Auditing Commission and the Solidarity and Adjustment Fund, as well as supplementary reports presented to the Congress on questions on the agenda, and to take decisions on matters relating to the programme and general policy;
- d) To modify or amend the present Constitution. These decisions must be taken by a majority of two-thirds of those voting;
- e) To examine any question concerning the admission of any union organisation;
- f) To ratify proposals by member organisations concerning the composition of the General Council;
- g) To elect a Presidium for its sessions;
- h) To adopt the agenda and standing orders of the sessions;
- i) To ratify the composition of the Auditing Commission .

II.

The World Trade Union Congress is open to all trade union organisations, and their participation does not imply their membership of the WFTU.

The Congress has a quorum if the delegates represent at least two-thirds of the total number of affiliated organisations.

III.

The World Trade Union Congress comprises:

- a) the number of delegates representing affiliated and associated organisations, which is decided from the General Council or the Presidential Council
- b) observer delegates representing non-member guest organisations in a number established by the General Council or the Presidential Council
- c) delegates from the TUIs, with 1 delegate
- d) representatives from other international or regional trade union

organisations.

In countries where the trade federations affiliated to the TUIs are not members of any National Trade Union centre affiliated to or associated with the WFTU, these organisations may be represented by a delegation jointly chosen by them, with the same rights as member organisations. The scale of representation in such cases is calculated according to the total membership of such organisations in the country concerned.

The outgoing members - both full and deputy - of the General Council, Presidential Council, Secretariat and Auditing Commission, and the chairpersons of the Working Commissions, if they are not representatives, they can participate in the debates with consultative status.

All Congress participants, together with special guests, representative of non-trade union organisations with which the WFTU cooperates and various important people specially invited by the General Council, may take the floor under the same conditions as laid down by the standing orders of the Congress.

Observer delegates and representatives of international and regional trade union organisations may, if they agree, be elected to the Congress Presidium and take part in the different commissions with the same rights as member delegates, with the exception of the following commissions:

- Credentials Commission;
- Nomination Commission;
- Constitution Commission

Observer delegates may, if they wish, vote on all the Congress documents, except in the following cases:

- adoption of the standing orders and agenda;
- approval of, or amendments to the WFTU Constitution;
- approval or ratification of new members;
- approval of the report by the Auditing Commission and the Solidarity and Adjustment Fund Commission;
- ratification of the proposals by member organisations concerning the composition of the General Council, the Presidential Council and the Auditing Commission.

IV.

Votes at the Congress are taken first of all by a show of hands, under the principles set forth in the Preamble of the Constitution.

The voting procedure shall be as follows:

- 1) prior consultations with the aim of achieving unanimity;
- 2) if unanimity cannot be obtained, voting shall take place;
- 3) when voting takes place, each WFTU affiliate as a whole casts only one vote, irrespective of the number of its members

ARTICLE 4 General Council

I.

The General Council is the leading statutory body of the WFTU between two Congresses. It meets once between two Congresses; otherwise, an extraordinary session may be convened at the request of one-third of its members.

The functions of the General Council are:

- a) to examine reports presented by the Presidential Council on its activities and to take any action arising from the reports;
- b) to adopt necessary measures in order to deal with issues raised by affiliated and associated organisations and others and to reach agreements and promote solidarity actions in defence of workers' interests;
- c) to establish plans of work for the WFTU and adopt appropriate measures for carrying out Congress decisions;
- d) to receive reports given by the Auditing Commission, examine financial matters and approve the budget;
- e) to elect, through direct and secret ballot, the President, General Secretary, Vice-presidents and Secretaries, one of whom will be the Secretary for Finance;
- f) to elect the Auditing Commission.

II.

It consists of one representative for each national trade union centre and each TUI, as well as one representative with consultative status for each associate organization.

The trade federations affiliated with the TUIs which are not members of any national trade union centre affiliated to or associated with the WFTU may be represented, if they so wish, by one full member and one deputy member, nominated jointly by these organisations from the county concerned.

General Council members - full members and deputy members - are proposed by their respective organisations and ratified by the World Trade Union Congress . If there should be any changes in the composition of the General Council between two Congresses on the decision of the respective organisation or owing to new members joining, the new members are ratified by the General Council itself. If the Presidential Council so decides, representatives of other trade union organisations, not members of the WFTU, may be invited to the General Council sessions as observers without the right to vote

Members of the Secretariat, the Regional Offices and the Auditing Commission, and WFTU representatives at international institutions, take part in the discussions.

Full and deputy members of the General Council may represent the WFTU and speak on its behalf when they agree it with and are mandated to do so by the General Secretary or through a Secretariat decision

The General Council may terminate the term of any elected official if it considers that such a measure can contribute to the better functioning of the organisation.

ARTICLE 5

Presidential Council

I.

The Presidential Council is the collective governing body of the Federation between the sessions of the General Council. It is elected by the Congress or the General Council.

It is composed of the President, General Secretary, Vice-presidents and other members, taking into consideration representation for all regions, representatives of the TUIs, and the President of the Solidarity and Adjustment Fund Commission. Members of the

Secretariat and the President of the Auditing Commission may take part in the discussions of the Presidential Council. The number of members of the Presidential Council is decided by the General Council or the Congress.

II.

The Presidential Council ensures the coordination of the Regional Offices of the WFTU and the TUIs

III.

The Presidential Council directs the activities of the Secretariat in implementing the decisions, resolutions and orientation of the Congress and the General Council.

It regularly examines reports on the state of the use of WFTU funds, and the activity of the Solidarity and Adjustment Fund.

If necessary, the Presidential Council takes any urgent action concerning all questions affecting the interests of the trade union movement. It must submit reports on such action for ratification by the General Council or the Congress.

The Presidential Council shall constitute a Solidarity and Adjustment Fund Commission to promote international solidarity activities and assist the regions and TUIs.

IV.

The Presidential Council meets regularly, convened by the Secretariat in agreement with the President or at the request of one- third of the Presidential Council members.

ARTICLE 6 **Secretariat**

The Secretariat is composed of the General Secretary and Secretaries elected by the General Council or the Presidential Council, one of whom will be in charge of finance. The Secretariat is the permanent executive body of the WFTU. Its principal tasks are the execution and implementation of the decisions adopted by the Congress, the General Council and the Presidential Council.

It is collectively responsible to the statutory bodies of the WFTU for its daily activities, the functioning of its central and regional apparatus, its financial activity and the organisation of the various departments and representations.

The international nature of the tenure of all members of the Secretariat frees them, within the Secretariat, from their particular national obligations.

II.

In particular, the functions of the Secretariat are:

- a) to examine all urgent questions which arise between meetings of the Presidential Council and to submit the measures taken on these urgent questions to the Presidential Council for ratification;
- b) to call meetings of the Presidential Council, in consultation with the President, and prepare documents for these meetings, as well as for those of the General Council and Congress;
- c) to maintain permanent contact with member organisations, the TUIs, the Regional Offices, and WFTU representatives at various international bodies;
- d) to guide all the representatives of WFTU in the International organizations and assume the responsibility for the promotion of the positions of the Organization.
- e) to take all necessary measures to collect documentary material on social legislation and various matters of interest to the world trade union movement, and to send syntheses and analyses of this information to union organisations;
- f) to edit WFTU publications;
- g) to direct the activity of the WFTU technical apparatus.

III.

The work of the Secretariat is directed by the General Secretary. The General Secretary, or in his/her absence, one of the members of the Secretariat, assumes his responsibilities and represents the WFTU in relations with other organisations and institutions. The General Secretary represents the WFTU in all authorities, all the International Organizations and all the financial and judicial authorities.

ARTICLE 7

Limit of terms

Strengthening the spirit of the internal democracy and renewal of leading bodies, persons and countries, the WFTU defines the maximum election limit as below:

- For the General Secretary a maximum of three consecutive terms and alternation to country of their origin.
- For the President a maximum of five years. The Continent must be changed per term.
- For the members of the Secretariat, three consecutive terms.

ARTICLE 8

Auditing Commission

I.

The Auditing Commission is made up of a chairperson and four other members, all elected by the General Council or by the World Trade Union Congress, from among members of affiliated organisations which are up to date in the payment of their dues, and from among persons who are not members of the General Council or the Presidential Council. It participates in the General Council with consultative status.

II.

The task of the Auditing Commission is to inspect the accounts of the Federation and to ensure that the finances are managed in accordance with the work plans and other decisions of the statutory bodies.

ARTICLE 9

Budgets and Funds

I.

The funds of the World Federation of Trade Unions are provided mainly by means of affiliation dues, the amount of which shall be

established by the Presidential Council and ratified by the General Council or by the World Trade Union Congress.

II.

Taking into consideration the views of the Regional Headquarters or TUI concerned, the Presidential Council has the authority, subject to ratification by the General Council, to permit affiliated trade union organisations to pay a lower quota than that stated.

III.

The collection of affiliation fees is centralised. The Trade Unions Internationals will collect their dues according to the provisions stipulated in their constitutions.

IV.

The General Council can allocate a portion of dues to the Solidarity and Adjustment Fund. This Fund to be administered by the Solidarity and Adjustment Fund Commission shall serve, on the one hand, to ensure WFTU international solidarity, and on the other, to sustain an adjustment fund to assist the regions, TUIs or WFTU representations which so require.

The Commission is defined by the Presidential Council, comprises representatives from the regions and the TUIs.

It collaborates closely with the WFTU Secretariat and is chaired by a member of the Presidential Council.

The Presidential Council and the General Council are informed regularly of the work of the Commission. The Presidential Council is responsible to take decisions in case of disputes.

V.

The Presidential Council submits to the General Council regular financial reports about income, contributions and other matters. The accounts of the Fund shall be audited by the Auditing Commission.

ARTICLE 10

Working Commissions

I.

The General Council, Presidential Council or Secretariat may decide to set up permanent or temporary Working Commissions to study certain specific subjects of importance or to carry out certain activities, like as Women's Committee, Youth Committee and others that will be decided by the Presidential Council or the World Trade Union Congress.

II.

The Working Commissions may also include representatives of non-member organisations. They are of a consultative nature and their conclusions and recommendations are submitted to the body which created them for the adoption of decisions.

ARTICLE 11

Information and Publications

To maintain regular contact with its member organisations and make its policies, opinions, programmes and initiatives known everywhere, the WFTU employs publications and modern communication media as decided by the Presidential Council.

ARTICLE 12

Head Office

The location of the Head Office of the WFTU, the country, the town, may be changed by the leading bodies of the WFTU on the basis of a proposal by the Secretariat.

ARTICLE 13

Trade Union Internationals (TUIs)

The Trade Unions Internationals (TUIs) form part of the WFTU structure. The TUIs have their own constitutions: these should,

however, be in harmony with that of the WFTU. The policies of the TUIs shall also be in keeping with those of the WFTU.

The constitutions of the TUIs determine the norms of their sovereignty in all spheres of their activities, their policies, their composition, their leadership and their internal administration. They establish freely, with their member organisations, the rate of dues needed for them to function autonomously. These dues should in no case be lower than the compulsory portion paid to the WFTU on behalf of affiliated organisations.

The WFTU cooperates with the Trade Unions Internationals (TUIs) and their industrial branches, which group together, on a voluntary basis, the organisations of workers from their respective industries, professions and jobs. They are centres for the planning, coordination and stimulation of international trade union activity at industrial level, for greater unity and solidarity in the interest of the workers of their respective branches.

The participation of the TUIs within the WFTU leading bodies is set forth in articles 2, 3 (III.b), 4 (e), 5, 7, 8 and 9.

The TUIs are organisations which benefit from extensive autonomy and from independence in their activity. This requires genuine cooperation between the initiatives of the TUIs and those of the WFTU.

This cooperation is carried out:

- through the participation of the TUIs in the General Council of the WFTU;
- through the representation for TUIs on the Presidential Council of the WFTU;
- through meetings with the WFTU Secretariat;
- through their possible participation in ad hoc or permanent working groups set up by the WFTU;
- through the participation of their members in the work of the Regional Offices on the basis of and with the working methods determined by the latter.

The TUIs cooperate with the WFTU to implement the guidelines of the World Trade Union Congresses in which they have taken part. Cooperation between the WFTU and the TUIs takes the form of conferences of the Secretariats of the WFTU and the TUIs, aimed

at exchanging experience and information on shared problems, as well as, when necessary, coordinating initiatives and actions as far as possible.

ARTICLE 14

Regional Trade Union Activities

In each region a Regional Office of the WFTU is established, formed at the outset by the national centres which are members of the WFTU in that region.

The regional conference, open to broad participation, will select the Regional Offices and approve the programme of struggle and plan of action designed to meet the needs of workers and peoples and encourage the growth and strengthening of the WFTU

The assembly of the Regional Offices will adopt its internal regulations governing administrative, operational and financial matters and elect, by secret and direct ballot, the leading bodies. All the above will be in keeping with regional needs and possibilities and with WFTU policy.

The representation of the regions within the WFTU leading bodies is set forth in articles 2, 3 (III.a), 4 (e), 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

They have the following principal tasks:

- to organise and stimulate consultations and exchanges of experience amongst the member trade union organisations of the continent;
- to take any initiatives for solidarity action and for the realisation of the demands of the workers of the continent;
- to work towards rapprochement, cooperation and united action with the different national, regional or branch trade union organisations of the continent;
- to promote trade union training

They cooperate with the TUIs to promote sectorial activities on the continent.

ARTICLE 15

Associate Members

I.

Organisations with the status of associate members of the WFTU participate in the World Trade Union Congresses.

II.

Associate organisations are members of the General Council with consultative status.

III.

Members of organisations with associate status cannot be elected to the office of President, Vice-president, General Secretary, Secretary, or President of the Auditing Commission of the WFTU.

IV.

Organisations with associate member status contribute to the solidarity funds of the WFTU, if they so desire, and to the financing of initiatives in which they wish to take part.

They cover their own costs for participation in WFTU leading bodies at the rate established by the General Council.

ARTICLE 16

The present Constitution which is composed of the Preamble and the 16 Articles, is the current constitution of the World Federation of Trade Unions as exactly voted by the representatives of the 16th World Trade Union Congress, held on 6-10 April 2011 in Athens, Greece.

General Secretary
George Mavrikos

President
Mohammed Shabban Azzouz

THE SECRETARIAT

Elsadig Ali

H. Mahadevan

Osiris Oviedo de la Torre

Swadesh Dev Roye

Valentin Pacho Quispe

Artur Sequeira (Obs)



**WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS
FEDERATION SYNDICALE MONDIALE
FEDERACION SINDICAL MUNDIAL
FEDERAÇÃO SINDICAL MUNDIAL
ΠΑΓΚΟΣΜΙΑ ΣΥΝΔΙΚΑΛΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΟΜΟΣΠΟΝΔΙΑ**

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