

THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE
ORGANISATION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA



**The Organisation for Social Science Research in
Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)**

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OSSREA's Mission

To enrich an African research tradition that responds to national and regional challenges and opportunities through building the capacity of and opportunity for social science scholars in Eastern and Southern Africa.

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OF THE
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IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Declaration

After consulting the OSSREA Liaison Officers at the biannual meeting held in Lilongwe, Malawi in August 2012, OSSREA staff and various stakeholders, this constitution was passed by the 11th Congress of on the 11thDecember 2014.

Professor Habtamu Wondimu Hibiso,

President

THE CONSTITUTION

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ORGANISATION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Preamble

We, *Social Science Researchers from Eastern and Southern Africa*, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this eleventh day of December 2013;

Convinced of the need to strengthen our Organisation, which we established of our free will in April 1980;

Cognisant of our professional, social and moral responsibilities to contribute towards the causes of unity, justice, social progress and economic development for our peoples;

Understanding the need to revise our Constitution in order to make it more compatible with the changing needs of our region and the level of development which our Organisation has currently attained;

Do hereby agree on this *revised Constitution of the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa* (OSSREA) which shall repeal the provisions of the April 1980 Constitution as amended in June 1983, in May 1990, August 1993, December 2002, and March 2008.

Article I

Nomenclature

The name of the Organisation shall be the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), hereinafter referred to as the Organisation.

Article II

Language

The official language of the Organisation shall be English. HOWEVER the Congress (hereinafter provided for) may approve the use of any other additional official languages as and when the need arises.

Article III

Headquarters and Branches

The Headquarters of the Organisation shall be at Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. However, the Congress may, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and for justifiable reasons, decide to transfer the Headquarters to any other city in Eastern and Southern Africa. Upon the recommendations of the Executive Committee the Congress may establish branches or hubs of the organization in any country within or outside the region.

Article IV

Objectives

The Organisation shall have the following objectives:

1. To encourage and promote interest in the study of and research in the social sciences in Eastern and Southern Africa;
2. To promote collaborative research and facilitate the exchange of ideas between individuals as well as institutions engaged in the study of and research in the social sciences; and the dissemination of research results through scholarly publications and other scientific means;
3. To promote interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary collaborative research involving social scientists and professionals from other sciences;
4. To promote the research and training capacity of African scholars and policy actors in the social sciences and to encourage the establishment of programmes, projects and activities dedicated to this goal;
5. To work in close co-operation with other individuals and institutions in Africa and elsewhere that are engaged in the study of, research in and capacity building for the social sciences in the region;
6. To mobilize resources necessary for the running of the activities of the Organisation and for the attainment of its objectives in such a manner and upon such conditions as the Executive Committee may from time to time determine;
7. To establish a Special Fund ('the Fund') to be utilised for purposes of providing research grants and training fellowships that are consistent with the objectives of the Organisation set forth in this Article;
8. To promote dialogue and interaction between social science researchers and policy makers in Eastern and Southern Africa with a view to enhancing the impact of social science research on policy-making and development planning;
9. To promote relations and co-operation between social science researchers in Eastern and Southern Africa and African development institutions;
10. To facilitate the incorporation of the findings of social science research into the policy-making processes in Eastern and Southern African countries;

11. To establish links and enter into memoranda of understanding with regional and national bodies, universities, think tanks and other institutions of higher education and research within the region to conduct collaborative research, provide training courses and support staff exchange between and among them for the purpose of experience and resources sharing, leveraging and maximizing on economies of size and scale;
12. To establish databases on and establish links with African professionals in the Diaspora for research and training activities that promote knowledge transfer;
13. To work towards widening the organization's financial base through the provision of fund administration services; technical advisory services and training services that are consistent within the mandate of the organization; and
14. To streamline its areas of research focus to ensure they are reflective of the policies of countries within the region.

Article V

Membership

1. Membership of the Organisation shall be of four categories:

- a) **Full Membership**

Full membership of the Organisation shall be open to any scholar or institution, with or without affiliation to a University or any other higher learning establishment in Eastern and Southern Africa, engaged in the study of or research in the social sciences and related fields upon payment of membership fees and yearly subscription charges.

- b) **Associate Membership**

Associate membership of the Organisation shall be open to any other person or institution engaged or interested in the study of the social sciences and related subjects anywhere in Africa or elsewhere upon payment of membership fees and yearly subscription charges.

- c) **Honorary Membership**

Honorary membership may be conferred upon any person who, in the opinion of the Congress, has made outstanding contributions towards the realisation of the objectives of the Organisation. An honorary member may not be required to pay membership fees.

- d) **Institutional Membership**

Universities or regional organizations in the region that have vested interest in the research and capacity building activities of OSSREA shall be given institutional membership and together all the institutional members belonging to this category of universities or regional organizations with vested interest in OSSREA activities shall be independent constituencies of OSSREA at the same level with Chapters and each of them will be entitled to elect one member of the Executive Committee provided the number of members of each constituencies is not less than five institutions. Each of the institutions will be entitled to be represented at the OSSREA Congress and its organs. Each constituency shall have only one vote at the Business Meeting of OSSREA.

2. A full member shall have all the rights and privileges inherent in the Organisation including, but not limited to, the right to vote in the meetings of the Congress as provided for in election byelaws and procedures and the right to offer himself or herself for election to any of the organs of the Organisation. Institutional members admitted to full membership shall exercise voting rights only through their constituencies and each constituency shall have only one vote and shall only nominate candidates for elections through their constituencies. An associate or an honorary member may attend and participate in any meeting of the Congress but shall not have the right to vote or the right to offer himself or herself for election to any of the organs of the Organisation nor shall his or her presence be taken into account in determining a quorum.
3. A member, whether full, associate or honorary, shall be bound by the provisions of this Constitution and by the resolutions of the Congress, the Executive Committee and/or such other Committees and Commissions as the Congress may from time to time establish.
4. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, membership fees and annual subscription charges, as well as variations and reviews thereof, shall be determined by the Business Meeting of the Congress.
5. Individual membership shall be granted by OSSREA National Chapters and the said chapters shall keep registers of members and send copies of the same to the OSSREA Headquarters every year. The registers of members shall be reviewed by the Chapters in cooperation with the OSSREA Head Quarters annually. Membership fees for individual membership shall be paid to OSSREA National Chapters and each Chapter shall send reports of the amounts collected and how they have been expended to the OSSREA headquarters on annual basis.
6. Associate, honorary and institutional membership shall be granted by OSSREA Headquarters which shall keep a register of members in each those three categories and present the register to the Executive Committee once every year together with the membership fees paid each year. The register of members in these categories shall be regularly updated.

Article VI

Organisational Structure

The Organisation shall have the following organs:

- a) A Congress;
- b) An Executive Committee;
- c) A Secretariat
- d) Such other Committees and/or Commissions as the Congress may establish from time to time upon such terms and on such conditions as it may deem appropriate; and
- e) Chapters in states of Eastern and Southern Africa.

Article VII

The Congress

1. The Congress shall be the highest decision making organ in all matters pertaining to the Organisation.
2. The Congress shall meet every three years or at such other shorter or longer intervals as the Executive Committee may determine or as justifiably requested by at least two-thirds of national committees in the Organization's Chapters. In all cases however, consideration shall be given to funding situation of the organization while planning for congress meetings.
3. The Congress shall perform its functions through the conduct of two separate proceedings, namely, the Conference and the Business Meeting.
4. The Conference shall be a forum for the exchange of ideas on a theme determined by the Executive Committee.
5. All policy decisions of the Organisation shall be made at the Business Meetings of the Congress.
6. The Business Meeting may be attended or observed by members who have received notice of the meeting, staff of OSSREA and other guests invited by the Executive Committee. Such participants or observers shall not have voting rights.
7. The record-keeping activity of the Congress shall be the responsibility of the Organisation's Executive Director.
8. Each Chapter shall be represented in the Business Meeting by maximum of three (3) members consisting of the Liaison Officer plus two other members elected for the purpose by the general meeting of the National Chapter and representatives of institutional members elected for the purpose by their general meeting. The representatives of the Chapters and institutional members shall be the delegates of the

Congress. Each Chapter shall have only one vote and the representative of institutional members shall also have only one vote. Associate members will attend by invitation in their individual capacity but shall not be treated as delegates and shall have no voting rights.

9. The quorum of such a Business Meeting shall be two-thirds of the registered delegates of the Congress. In case the organization is experiencing budget constraints a mini-congress shall be recommended by the Executive Committee at which each chapter shall be represented by only one person.
10. Each Chapter shall have one (1) vote irrespective of the number of the participants representing each Chapter in the Business Meeting of the Congress.
11. If a Liaison Officer is unable to attend the Congress he/she shall be represented by another national executive committee member. Information about representation shall be communicated to the Secretariat at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting of the Congress.
12. All decisions of the Business Meeting shall be passed by a simple majority vote.

Article VIII

The Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the implementation of policies and resolutions adopted by the Congress as well as for overseeing general affairs of the Organisation.
2. The Executive Committee shall be constituted of:
 - a) The President;
 - b) Three Vice-Presidents, one of whom shall be a citizen or permanent resident of the country in which the Organisation has its Headquarters (hereinafter referred to as 'the Resident Vice-President'). At least one of the Vice- Presidents shall be a woman or a man in case the other two are women;
 - c) Three Members at least one of whom shall be a woman or a man in case the majority are women;
 - d) In case the President is elected from the hosting country, there shall not be a Resident Vice-President and
 - e) The Executive Director as non-voting member and Secretary of the Executive Committee.
3. With the exception of the Executive Director, members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the Business Meeting of the Congress for a period of three years and may stand for re-election for one more term only.
4. It shall be a condition for election to serve and continuing to serve in the Executive Committee that a person be a citizen of a country in Eastern or Southern African as defined in Article XVIII (2).

5. There shall be four constituencies of OSSREA for purposes of elections. They shall include a) East Africa comprised of the National Chapters from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda; b) The Horn of Africa comprising of National Chapters from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan; c) Central Africa comprising of National Chapters from Angola, Comoros, Malawi, Mozambique, Seychelles, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and d) Southern Africa comprising of National Chapters from Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.
6. There shall be extra constituencies one of which will be comprised of universities with vested interest in the research and capacity development activities of OSSREA provided their number is not less than five and another comprising of regional organizations with vested interest in the research and capacity building activities of OSSREA provided their number is not less than five. The Executive Committee of OSSREA may from time create extra constituencies provided they are comprised of institutional members, their members are involved in similar activities and they are not less than five in number.
7. OSSREA will support the participation of National Chapters in the activities of the Congress but institutional members will cover all their costs. Each constituency shall elect by secret ballot two persons: one female and one male to be presented to the Business Meeting for election to the Executive Committee. Names of those elected by the constituencies shall be presented to the Business Meeting. Each of them shall be given time to address the Business Meeting and spell out his/ her views on what she/he will contribute to OSSREA if elected to be on the Executive Committee. After these presentations, those eligible to vote will cast one vote each for one of the candidates. The candidate who gets the highest votes will be the President and the three candidates with the next highest votes will be the Vice Presidents. In case the first three candidates with the highest votes apart from the President belong to the same gender, a person with a lower number of votes than the three belonging to a different gender from that of the three will be offered the post of Vice President. The number of Vice Presidents shall be three. The maximum number of elected Executive Committee members shall be seven. The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Committee.
8. The Executive Committee shall meet once every year to:
 - a) give effective direction to the Organisation;
 - b) consider and approve OSSREA's budget and action plan for the following year;
 - c) review past performance of the organization from the previous Executive Committee meeting to the present meeting;
 - d) review and approve progress reports and financial statements;
 - e) consider long term plans of action;
 - f) deliberate upon issues that require the attention of the Congress; and
 - g) perform such other functions as the Congress may from time to time confer upon it or which the Executive Committee may deem necessary and expedient to carry out for the proper and effective functioning of the Organisation.

9. Decisions of the Executive Committee shall be passed by consensus. If consensus is not attained, simple majority vote shall be sufficient in a two-thirds quorum. Once attained at the commencement of the Executive Committee meeting, the quorum shall be deemed to be continuous.
10. The Executive Committee may, for the necessary and proper functioning of the Organisation, give such general or specific directives to the Executive Director, Liaison Officers, National Chapters and such other organs as may from time to time be established in accordance with this Constitution.
11. Each Executive Committee member shall be assigned by the Committee a number of chapters to support on regular basis and a specific portfolio for interaction with the secretariat and shall report on the same during the annual review meetings. The main portfolios shall be: research and capacity building; human resources; finance and administration; publications and dissemination; resource mobilization and international relations. The Executive Committee may establish more or merge portfolios as need arises from time to time.
12. The Executive Committee may establish Commissions and/or Committees to assist in the conduct of the general or specific business purposes of the Organisation.
13. The Executive Committee shall establish a reserve fund of the Organization and develop policies governing how the fund shall be managed and its resources used from time to time. No funds from this fund shall be expended without the decision of the Executive Committee or the President or Resident Vice President in case either of them is delegated by the Executive Committee.
14. The Executive Committee may from time to time make such rules and regulations as it deems necessary for the effective and proper functioning of the Organisation.

Article IX

The President and the Vice Presidents

1. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Congress and the Executive Committee with a deliberative and casting vote.
2. Any one of the Vice-Presidents may preside over meetings of the Congress and the Executive Committee in the absence of the President provided such responsibility is either through delegation by the President or by consensus of the rest of the Executive Committee Members in the absence of such delegation.
3. The President and the Vice-Presidents may perform such other functions as may be assigned to them by the Congress.
4. The President and the Resident Vice President may be delegated to handle emergency situations that might crop up in the organization that may be deemed to affect the performance of the organization and its future existence.
5. The President if resident in the country hosting the organization or the Resident Vice President shall serve as bank signatories to promote transparency and enhance effective utilization of funds of the organization. Either the President or the Resident Vice President if delegated by the President shall together with the Executive Director

sign on policy documents and EC minutes for circulation or immediate implementation, representing the rest of the EC members.

6. The duties and responsibilities of the above office bearers shall be carried out in accordance with the rules and regulations made by the Executive Committee as provided for under Article VIII (9) of this Constitution.

Article X

The Secretariat

1. The Organization shall have a Secretariat headed by the Executive Director consisting of the Executive Director, Directors, Coordinators, Associate staff and other technical and administrative support staff deployed as per the Structure of the Organization. Depending on the volume of work, the size of the organization and the available budgets the Executive Committee may appoint a Deputy Executive Director whose functions and duties are provided for in Article XII.
2. The Secretariat shall have the following duties and functions:
 - a) Assist all OSSREA governance organs in fulfilling their institutional duties and realizing OSSREA's institutional objectives;
 - b) Undertake all administrative, financial, protocol and legal affairs of the Organization under the guidance of the Executive Director;
 - c) Assist in the preparation, publishing and dissemination of OSSREA publications;
 - d) Handle and arrange all aspects of preparation and logistics for missions, meetings, conferences, workshops and other events to be organized under the auspices of the Secretariat;
 - e) Assist in the development of research and capacity building programmes and compiling of financial and progress reports to donors and partners;
 - f) Perform any other related tasks that may be assigned by the Executive Committee from time to time.

Article XI

The Executive Director

1. The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. The appointment shall be for a period of three years and upon such terms and on such conditions as the Executive Committee may from time to time set. The appointment may be renewed for further terms of three years based on excellent performance that can be proved by an excellent record of resource mobilization and sustainable growth of the organization in terms of its publications, research outputs, and transparency.
2. As the Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Director shall direct the day-to-day activities of the Organisation and shall represent the Organisation in all its dealings with third parties.
3. Without limitation to the generality of the foregoing sub-Article, the Executive Director shall:
 - a) supervise the implementation of the OSSREA strategic plans, programmes, rules and regulations and all decisions of the Congress and the Executive Committee
 - b) produce or cause to be produced the bulletin and scientific journal or journals of the Organisation;
 - c) publish or cause to be published the proceedings of the Congress and minutes of the Executive Committee;
 - d) draw up the work programmes of the Organisation for consideration and/or adoption by the Executive Committee and the Business Meeting of the Congress;
 - e) develop proposals and undertake fundraising and resource mobilisation activities for the organization;
 - f) co-ordinate the activities of Commissions and/or Committees that may be established in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 (9) of this Constitution;
 - g) act as Treasurer of the Organisation and operate its bank accounts in line with guidelines to be issued by the Executive Committee PROVIDED that no disbursements other than those necessary for the day-to-day running of the Organisation may be made by him or her without prior approval of the President, the Resident Vice-President or the Executive Committee;
 - h) without prejudice to applicable laws of the country where the Organisation has its Headquarters and having due regard to the general policies set by the Congress, hire, administer, promote, discipline, suspend or dismiss the employees of the Organisation in strict consultation of the Human Resources Manual, PROVIDED that such power shall be exercised subject to the approval of the President acting in consultation with the Resident Vice-President in case there is one; and

- i) submit the annual activity report and audited financial statements of the Organisation to the Executive Committee, to the Business Meeting of the Congress, to development partners and at the Meetings of the Liaison Officers that shall be held every two years.

Article XII

The Deputy Executive Director

1. In accordance with Article X(1) the Executive Committee may appoint a Deputy Executive Director. The appointment shall be for a period of three years and upon such terms and on such conditions as the Executive Committee may from time to time set. The appointment may be renewed for further terms of three years on the basis of appraisal of performance that warrants contract term extension.
2. The Deputy Executive Director is accountable to the Executive Director and has the following duties and functions:
 - a) Deputize the Executive Director in his/her absence.
 - b) Work closely with the Directorate of Research and Capacity Building in the development and design of new research and capacity building programmes;
 - c) Together with the Executive Director devise fund-raising and outreach strategies and mechanisms taking into account the changing development priorities;
 - d) Take responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the research and capacity building programme and ensure grants are managed according to time schedules and reports are submitted in time by the Directorate of Research;
 - e) Monitor the activities of the Directorate of Publications and Dissemination and ensure they are performed in accordance with the activity plans.
 - f) Support the Executive Director in providing intellectual leadership;
 - g) Contribute to the development of OSSREA's strategic initiatives and vision; and
 - h) Perform any other related tasks that may be assigned by the Executive Director from time to time.

Article XIII

Chapters of the Organisation

1. There shall be established in each country where OSSREA has a presence a National Chapter, which shall assist the Secretariat of the Organisation in the dissemination of information, the promotion of membership, the conduct of country-specific activities and the collection of membership fees.

2. Each Chapter shall be managed by a National Executive Committee of at least three (3) members, one of whom shall be the Liaison Officer. Committees shall be set up bearing in mind the need for gender balance depending on the composition of the Chapter's membership.
3. The National Executive Committee shall be elected by the members of the National Chapter that shall serve the office for three years renewable only for one more term.
4. The day-to-day activities of Chapters shall be carried out by the Liaison Officer in close collaboration with the National Executive Committee.
5. The Liaison Officer shall be elected by the members of the National Chapter subject to approval by the Executive Committee.
6. The immediate accountability of Liaison Officers shall be to the Executive Director of OSSREA.
7. A Liaison Officer shall be a citizen or resident of any country in which OSSREA has a presence.
8. The duties and responsibilities of Liaison Officers shall be determined by the rules and regulations laid down by the Organisation's Executive Committee.
9. In a country where there is more than one higher education or research institutions that are members of the Organisation, one contact person may represent each particular institution within that Chapter.

Article XIV

Suspension or Removal from Office

1. Any member of the OSSREA Executive Committee shall be suspended or removed from office by the Congress or the Executive Committee on any of the following grounds: corruption, dishonesty, incapacity to discharge his or her duties, or any other ground that the Congress may determine to be inconsistent with the objectives of the Organisation or with this Constitution.
2. The Executive Committee can, by a majority vote, suspend or remove the Executive Director and appoint the Deputy Executive Director or another person as Acting Executive Director. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be reported to the next Congress.
3. A Liaison Officer shall be suspended or removed from office by the Executive Committee on any of the following grounds: corruption, dishonesty, incapacity to discharge his or her duties, or any other ground that the Executive Committee may determine to be inconsistent with the objectives of the Organisation or with this Constitution.
4. The Executive Committee may from time to time make such rules and regulations as it deems necessary to govern the conduct of the Executive Director, his/her deputy and other OSSREA officials. These rules and regulations shall be communicated to each Chapter.

Article XV

Finance and Audit

1. The financial sources of the Organisation shall consist of fees to be collected from its members, government grants, donations from international organisations, non-governmental organisations and the business community, gratuitous advances and legacies from individuals and such other sources as the Executive Committee may from time to time determine.
2. The property and finances of the Organisation shall be administered and maintained in strict compliance with internationally accepted standards of financial management.
3. The Auditor of the Organisation shall be appointed by the Business Meeting of the Congress upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and shall have unrestricted access to the accounts, books, papers and documents of the Organisation.
4. The auditors appointed shall serve a maximum of two terms of three years each.

Article XVI

Amendments

1. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Business Meeting of the Congress.
2. Any motion to amend this Constitution shall be submitted to the Executive Director at least six months before the date of the next Business Meeting or at such shorter notice as the circumstances may warrant, provided that the proposals for amendments are circulated to all members at least one month before the holding of the Business Meeting.

Article XVII

Dissolution

1. The Organisation may not be dissolved except by a resolution of the Business Meeting of the Congress supported by three-fourths of the delegates of Congress eligible to vote at the Business Meeting.
2. In the event of dissolution, the assets of the Organisation shall be handled in accordance with the plans submitted by the Executive Committee to the Business Meeting and the decisions of said the Business Meeting bearing in mind the liabilities of the Organization to employees and other possible creditors, agreements with host countries and memoranda of agreement with universities or other institutions hosting chapters.

3. Proposals to dissolve the Organisation shall be submitted to the Executive Director at least six months prior to the convening of the Business Meeting and shall be circulated to all voting members at least one month before the said meeting.

Article XVIII

Interpretation

1. For purposes of matters that may take place within the Organisation, the ultimate power to interpret the Constitution shall be vested in the Business Meeting of the Congress PROVIDED that it may delegate this power to the Executive Committee as it sees fit.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-Article (1) of this Article, the phrase 'Eastern and Southern Africa' shall be interpreted to include the following countries:

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Angola | Mozambique |
| Botswana | Namibia |
| Burundi | Rwanda |
| Comoro Islands | Seychelles |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | Somalia |
| Djibouti | South Africa |
| Ethiopia | South Sudan |
| Eritrea | Sudan |
| Kenya | Swaziland |
| Lesotho | Tanzania |
| Madagascar | Uganda |
| Malawi | Zambia |
| Mauritius | Zimbabwe |

Any other regional country, whose membership is agreed upon by the Business Meeting.

Done in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this Eleventh day of December in the year Two Thousand and Thirteen.