



NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva Bylaws Amended by the Bureau on 15 September 2020

1. General Considerations

a) The NGO Committee on the Status of Women Geneva (hereafter referred to as the *Committee*) is an independent association under Swiss Law (“Comité ONG de la Condition de la Femme, Genève”).

b) All actions and initiatives of the Committee shall be in line with all internationally agreed women-related principles and human rights instruments, such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), ICPD (International Conference on Population and Development) and the Beijing Platform for Action.

2. The Committee

The **purposes** of the Committee shall be:

- a)** to engage with the United Nations (UN) system to raise awareness on issues relating to the status of women,
- b)** to influence global policy and monitor the implementation of existing commitments,
- c)** to maintain a global momentum for gender equality through advocacy and strategic lobbying,
- d)** to exchange information among Committee Members’ Organizations and provide a platform for strategizing,
- e)** to bring diverse voices from local and national levels to international platforms,
- f)** to draw on the experience of Committee Members to share analysis on trends and good practices.

3. Membership

- a)** Membership is defined in the Statutes under article 4.
- b)** Membership information, including membership application form, is available on the Committee’s website.

- c) Membership benefits include but are not limited to eligibility to vote and hold office, information sharing on relevant UN news, events & reports, and/or on other NGOs' research and activities, joining statements.
- d) In turn, members are expected to contribute effectively to the work of the Committee as per its mission.
- e) It is the responsibility of each member to pay its dues in a timely fashion. Failure to do so may result in membership benefits being withheld. In the event of financial difficulties, a member organization may petition the Bureau for an extension or the possibility of an in-kind donation.
- f) Payment of dues should be made within the first three months of the year. Active participation in the General Assembly is conditioned upon payment.
- g) Observers are welcome for a limited time of one year.
- h) Members who wish to resign from the Committee shall advise the Bureau in writing.
- i) After due consultation, membership may be revoked by a 2/3 vote of the Bureau. Possible reasons include but are not limited to taking any action inconsistent with the purposes of the Committee, not upholding membership responsibilities, or violating the code of conduct.

4. Organization of work and procedures

- a) The Committee shall meet at least three times a year. The Bureau may vote to hold meetings electronically for reasons of health, safety or other issues that make in-person meetings impossible. Such meetings are valid and will follow good governance practices and the rules of all in-person meetings.
- b) The minutes of each meeting shall be circulated after each meeting with a deadline given for receiving corrections to the minutes. All corrections to the minutes shall be in writing. The proposed corrected minutes will then be sent to the Members along with the agenda for the next meeting in a timely fashion.
- c) The Committee may issue position papers; where appropriate- It will generate such position papers by providing ample opportunity for members to give input.
- d) The Committee shall facilitate the production of joint statements open for signature by all members.
- e) The work of the Committee shall be organized through **Thematic Priorities** and **Initiatives**.

Thematic Priorities are defined by the newly elected Bureau at the beginning of its term of office; they may be revised at any time to reflect the focus of the Committee and its working groups.

Initiatives are either

- i. specific, concrete and time-bound activities such as events, campaigns or publication,

- ii. or longer-term research and advocacy work which takes one or more priority theme(s) forward and are organized in working groups.

At the proposal of one member or a group of members, an initiative may be submitted to the Bureau for consideration, coordination and, if required, budget approval.

e) All public actions shall be conducted to further the goals and interests of the Committee. Actions of individual members in the name of the Committee must be approved in advance by the Bureau.

f) The work of the Committee and its members shall be guided by the Committee's code of conduct in appendix.

5. The Bureau

a) The Bureau is the elected governing entity of the Committee. It shall direct its work and represent its membership.

b) The Bureau shall consist of the President, at least one Vice-President and not more than three, one Treasurer and one Secretary. The Bureau shall meet as deemed necessary.

c) All Bureau positions are served by individuals representing a member organization and serve in their own capacity.

d) Electronic Bureau meetings are valid meetings.

e) The duties of the Bureau

- i. The Bureau shall direct, support and coordinate the work of the Committee, when relevant, with other organizations, agencies and committees such as the NGO Committee on Human Rights.
- ii. The Bureau shall develop an annual plan and budget to be approved by members.
- iii. The Bureau shall define procedures for meetings and approve the Bylaws and the Code of Conduct.
- iv. The Bureau may, as appropriate, establish ad hoc task forces to examine specific issues in depth. Each task force will be provided with a specific time-bound mandate and will disband upon completion of its mandate.
- v. In the event of a vacancy in the Bureau, the Bureau is empowered to name a replacement from Committee members, which will be confirmed at the next Committee meeting.
- vi. The Bureau is responsible for all external communications, including the website and social media.

f) The *President* shall

- i. represent and act as spokesperson on behalf of the Committee,
- ii. facilitate meetings of the Committee,
- iii. bring issues of concern to the attention of the Committee,
- iv. encourage and facilitate members to speak with a common voice around issues of mutually agreed interest,
- v. provide leadership aimed at the most effective articulation and harmonization of the collective work undertaken by the Committee, in accordance with its mandate.

In all these tasks, the President shall work closely with the Vice-Presidents.

e) The *Vice-President(s)* shall

- i. work closely with the president in the spirit of shared leadership,
- ii. represent and act as spokesperson on behalf of the Committee in the absence of the President,
- iii. co-facilitate meetings of the Committee,
- iv. take on additional tasks as mutually agreed, such as the responsibility for external communications, supervise the update of the website, membership extension, relations with other organizations, Committees or UN agencies.

f) The *Treasurer* shall

- i. maintain the accounts of the Committee and present financial statements as appropriate to the Committee or as requested by members,
- ii. send notice of annual fees and invoice to Committee members, keep records of fees received, and when necessary initiate the sending of reminders,
- iii. exercise oversight on expenditure in accordance with the approved budget,
- iv. present an annual financial report and the budget to the Committee for approval by majority vote at the General Assembly,
- v. submit, when deemed necessary, proposals for annual fees revision, to be approved by the General Assembly, and to be effective for the following year.

g) The *Secretary* shall

- i. send notices of Committee meetings and circulate necessary supporting documents,
- ii. keep a record of all Committee meetings and circulate the minutes,
- iii. book meeting rooms and schedule electronic meetings as needed,

- iv. maintain an up-dated mailing-list,
- v. maintain regular communication flow in between meetings.

h) The Bureau may appoint Advisors and Task Force Chairs as necessary to aid in their work and the work of the Committee.

i) After due consultation, a Bureau member may be dismissed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Bureau. Possible reasons include but are not limited to non-performance of duties, repeated absences, conflict of interest, or violation of the code of conduct.

6. Elections

a) Elections of the members of the Bureau shall take place every three years and may also take place at a Special Meeting called for this purpose, for example, due to a presidential resignation.

b) The Committee's elections procedures are as follows:

- i. The Committee shall establish a nominations committee to coordinate the elections procedures. The nominations committee shall include at least three representatives from member organisations acting in their personal capacity, and not include any potential candidates.
- ii. Eligible candidates and voters shall be organizations with no outstanding financial obligations.
- iii. Candidates for all Bureau positions shall be individuals representing a member organization and each will serve in her own capacity.
- iv. The nominations committee shall seek suggestions from the membership and nominate candidates for office positions to be filled after establishing eligibility and willingness to serve. Member organizations may also nominate candidates for office. Such nominations shall be sent in writing to the nominations committee and have the support of at least two member organizations.
- v. The list of candidates shall be sent to the membership with their CVs a minimum of two weeks prior to the election.
- vi. Voting shall be by secret ballot of eligible member organizations, each organization having one vote. Election to office is by majority vote.
- vii. Proxy or absentee voting may be organised by the nominations committee.

7. Finances

a) Finances must comply with Swiss Law and are regulated by the Statutes.

b) Committee expenditures outside the budget shall be approved by a majority vote. However, the Bureau has the authority to approve non-budgeted expenses of up to 500 CHF.

- c)** The treasurer as single signatory is authorized to make payments for budgeted items of up to CHF. 500.
- d)** In the case of multi-stakeholder projects and financing, the financing shall be subject to a “Memorandum of Understanding” signed by all stakeholders.