

# International Society for the Oral Literatures of Africa

President: Hein Willemse  
Vice-President: Antoinette Tidjani Alou  
Secretary: Stephen Belcher

January 01, 2010

## MEMO: AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

Hein Willemse drafted these amendments to the Constitution of the Society and proposed them for discussion at the 8<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of the Society to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at the Leisure Resort Hotel, Mombasa, Kenya.

In the meanwhile, members are invited to comment directly to the President with their responses copied to the Vice-President and Secretary by February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The aim of these amendments is to keep the Constitution relatively accessible and simple but at the same time cover the basics of purpose, elections, key duties and obligations, amendments and dissolution. Some detail issues were not included, for instance the matter of working languages since this should ideally be governed by convention rather than precept.

This 1<sup>st</sup> draft is made available in English while the Executive Council has commissioned a French language version. The 2<sup>nd</sup> draft version of the proposed amendments will be available in both French and English by the end of March 2010.

Sincerely

Hein Willemse  
President: ISOLA

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- Vice-President, Antoinette Tidjani Alou ([tidjanialoua@yahoo.fr](mailto:tidjanialoua@yahoo.fr));
- Secretary, Stephen Belcher ([spbelcher@mindspring.com](mailto:spbelcher@mindspring.com)).

### Legend:

Underline = existing text

~~Strikethrough~~ = deletions

Normal = Additions

## Constitution

### International Society for the Oral Literatures of Africa

#### 1. Name

- 1.1. The Society shall be known as the International Society for the Oral Literatures of Africa (ISOLA).

## 2. **Objectives**

- 2.1. The Society exists to celebrate, study and promote the oral arts of Africa, including the African Diaspora.
- 2.2. It pursues these aims by organizing regular international meetings of scholars, oral artists and other interested persons, and by any others means the General Council may from time to time determine.
- 2.3. The Society pursues these aims as a tax-exempt, volunteer, educational, learned association.

## 3. **Membership**

- 3.1. There shall be three categories of membership namely regular, life and honorary membership.
- 3.2. Regular membership is open to all persons who subscribe to the aims of the Society and upon the payment of annual dues.
- 3.3. Life membership is open to persons eligible for regular membership upon making a single payment, amounting to the sum of at least fifteen years of continued regular subscription, thereafter becoming exempt from the annual payment of dues.
- 3.4. Honorary membership is recognition of achievement and distinction. The Executive Council shall nominate and the General Meeting shall elect honorary members. The maximum number of nominees at a General Meeting shall not exceed two members. The number of honorary members is limited to 35 members at any one time.

## 4. **General Meetings**

- 4.1. General Meetings of the Society will take place during the international conference, which should be held at least two but no more than three years after the preceding conference.
- 4.2. All members will be given at least one calendar year's notice of the conference, and will be invited to attend and submit proposals for papers.
- 4.3. A quorum of the General Meeting shall be met by the registered and paid-up members present.
- 4.4. The General Council shall elect the Society's Executive Council, approve the Treasurer's financial report, approve the Society's budget and determine the annual membership subscription and any other matter the General Council may decide from time to time.

## 5. **Executive Council**

- 5.1. Election of the Executive Council: ~~At each~~ The General Meeting of the Society, ~~an international Council will~~ be elected ~~consisting of a President, Vice-President, Administrative Secretary, Treasurer and Communications Officer. and two or more Councilors with powers to co-opt.~~
- 5.2. The election for the officials of the Executive Council shall be preceded by the formal nomination of candidates, the publication of their election statements, abbreviated curricula vitae and any other information the General Meeting may from time to time stipulate.
- 5.3. The slate of candidates, their curricula vitae and election statements shall be

- published at least three calendar months before the General Meeting.
- 5.4. The General Meeting shall elect an independent member from among their number as an electoral officer who shall preside over the election of officials of the Executive Council.
  - 5.5. Should a Vice-President be unwilling or unavailable to succeed the outgoing President the General Meeting shall elect a President and Vice-President at the earliest opportunity.
  - 5.6. Elections for all positions shall take place by secret ballot.
  - 5.7. Duties of the Executive Council: The Executive Council shall advance the objectives and interests of the Society through
    - 5.7.1. organizing the Society's regular international conferences and any other gatherings that the Executive Council may deem necessary;
    - 5.7.2. the prudent administration of the Society's financial affairs in the approval of an annual budget, the collection of annual membership subscriptions, the determination and collection of conference fees and the raising of funds for projects expressly commissioned by the General Council;
    - 5.7.3. the appointment of dedicated sub-committees to organize conferences, publish publications, adjudicate awards and honorary fellowships or any other matter the Executive Council may deem necessary;
    - 5.7.4. the co-optation of individual members of the Society to assist with its operations.
  - 5.8. The Executive Council may, at its discretion, designate a registered auditor to audit its accounts;
  - 5.9. The Executive Council shall appoint an Archivist and Editor-in-chief for renewable terms of four years.
  - 5.10. A quorum of three (3) members shall constitute a legal meeting of the Executive Council.
  - 5.11. In the event of dereliction of duty or where a member, including the President and Vice-President, for whatever reason may be unwilling or unable to carry out the responsibilities of office, the Executive Council under the chairpersonship of its most senior (in service years) non-implicated elected member shall investigate the circumstances and through simple majority decide the matter and should it be necessary, make a replacement from its number or co-opt a replacement at the earliest opportunity.
  - 5.12. All members of the Executive Council shall on completion of their respective terms be obliged to deposit all documentation related to their respective positions to the Archivist.
  - 5.13. The Conference sub-committee:
    - 5.13.1. The Vice-President shall head the Conference sub-committee and the Executive Council shall appoint members from its number to assist with its operations.
    - 5.13.2. The Conference sub-committee shall oversee all arrangements for the Society's regular conferences, including the election of host institutions and local organizing committees, determination of conference budgets, the development of conferences' theme(s) and the implementation of its communication needs.
    - 5.13.3. The Local organizing committee
      - 5.13.3.1. shall report directly to the Vice-President;

- 5.13.3.2. shall be charged with organizing a specific conference;
  - 5.13.3.3. shall raise funds to subvent the costs of the Society's conference;
  - 5.13.3.4. shall on the conclusion of its conference submit within three calendar months a full report through the Archivist to the Executive Council, including a financial report, a summary of conference proceedings, a record of correspondence, minutes of meetings and a record of publications emanating from the conference;
  - 5.13.3.5. shall propose the editor(s) and/or editorial committee to produce the conference proceedings and/or selection of conference papers in conjunction with the Executive Council's Editor-in-chief and
  - 5.13.3.6. shall undertake no actions that might expose the Society to contractual obligations without the Executive Council's expressed approval.
- 5.14. ~~The President will be elected at the General Meeting; an Administrative Secretary will be elected by the Councillors at their first meeting. At least one member of the Council shall reside in or near the venue for the forthcoming conference, which will be determined at the General Meeting. A local sub-committee of the Council will be formed in or near the venue for the forthcoming conference under the chairmanship of a member of the Council, to be elected if necessary at the first meeting of the sub-committee.~~
- 5.15. ~~The Council will promote the aims of the Society in any manner it deems fit, and is also responsible through the local sub-committee for the organization of the forthcoming conference and General Meeting of the Society. The local sub-committee in co-operation with the Council has the power to co-opt members, to raise funds to subvent the costs of the conference and to establish conference fees. The Council has the right to levy a membership fee.~~

## 6. The Officials of the Society

### 6.1. The President

- 6.1.1. ~~will~~ shall represent the Society while in office, and take the chair at all meetings of the Executive Council and at the General Meeting of the Society, in the event of a tie in the voting, the President shall cast the deciding vote;
- 6.1.2. shall provide executive managerial and strategic leadership in all the activities of the Society and submit a full report to the General Meeting;
- 6.1.3. shall serve a term of two years renewable for one further term of two years and may not immediately be re-elected to the Executive Council.

### 6.2. The Vice-President

- 6.2.1. shall serve a term of two years renewable for one further term of two years and may not immediately be re-elected to the Executive Council;
- 6.2.2. shall automatically succeed to the position of President, taking into account the provision on the term renewal of the President;
- 6.2.3. shall chair the Conference sub-committee and, in consultation with the President and Convenor of the Local organizing committee, oversee the

arrangements of the Society's international conference.

### 6.3. The Administrative Secretary

- 6.3.1. shall issue notices and ~~will keep the minutes of the Society's meetings of the Council, maintain a roll of its the members of the Society and~~ conduct its official correspondence, in consultation with the President ~~communicate with them.~~

### 6.4. The Treasurer

- 6.4.1. shall manage the financial affairs of the Society, including drafting its budget for approval by the Executive Council;
- 6.4.2. shall collect the dues of the Society and all other funds payable to it, and shall pay all its bills;
- 6.4.3. shall manage the Society's Endowment Fund and following every General Meeting contribute at least 15% of revenue to it;
- 6.4.4. shall keep a record of all income and expenditure of the Society, and shall submit a financial report at every General Meeting.

### 6.5. The Communications Officer

- 6.5.1. shall be responsible for keeping members informed about the Society's activities and operations;
- 6.5.2. shall maintain the Society's website and any other communication facilities;
- 6.5.3. shall work closely with the Conference sub-committee in drafting and facilitating its communication needs;
- 6.5.4. shall work closely with the Archivist in securing the information record of the Society.

### 6.6. The Archivist

- 6.6.1. shall be appointed by the Executive Council for a renewable term of four years;
- 6.6.2. shall keep an organized record of all documentation related to the Executive Council and the General Meeting;
- 6.6.3. shall fill the gaps in the record, secure and systematize the Society's record keeping;
- 6.6.4. shall submit a report as part of the Presidential report at every General Meeting on the Society's holdings.

### 6.7. The Editor-in-chief

- 6.7.1. shall be appointed by the Executive Council for a renewable term of four years;
- 6.7.2. shall organize and liaise in consultation with the Convenor of the Local organizing committee or his/her representative the collection, editing, production and dissemination of the Society's conference proceedings and any other scholarly publications;
- 6.7.3. shall submit a report as part of the Presidential report at every General Meeting on the Society's holdings.

### 6.8. The Convenor of the Local Organizing Committee

- 6.8.1. shall be an *ex officio* member of the Executive Council and a member

- of its Conference sub-committee;
- 6.8.2. shall provide managerial leadership in organizing a specific conference as directed by the General Meeting;
  - 6.8.3. shall during the pre-conference period report regularly to the Executive Council;
  - 6.8.4. shall keep a record of all income and expenditure in organizing the Local Organizing Committee's specific conference and shall submit a financial report to the Executive Council.
  - 6.8.5. shall on the conclusion of its conference submit within three calendar months a full report to the Executive Council.

#### 6.9. The Past President

- 6.9.1. shall be a non-voting advisory member of the Executive Council for one term – two years – after leaving the Presidency.

### 7. Domicilium

- 7.1. The Society shall have a mailing address and office, the *domicilium citandi et executandi*, which shall be located at the institution at which the Archivist is employed.
- 7.2. The Executive Council may at any time decide by majority vote to transfer the domicilium of the Society.

### 8. Amendments to the Constitution

- 8.1. Members shall forward all proposed amendments to the Executive Council at least six calendar months before the General Meeting.
- 8.2. The Executive Council shall review the amendments and formally express itself on it with respect to its fiduciary responsibility and the continued protection of the Society.
- 8.3. The Executive Council must published the original proposed amendments and its formal review in an appropriate publication of the Society at least three calendar months' before the annual general meeting at which they are to be tabled.
- ~~8.4. Members should be given at least three calendar months' notice of any proposed amendments to the Constitution.~~
- 8.5. Amendments to the Constitution will be agreed by two-thirds a simple majority of members present at the General Meeting.

### 9. Dissolution

- 9.1. The Society may be dissolved only at a special meeting called for the purpose by vote of two-thirds of the members present.
- 9.2. Upon such dissolution of the Society all its property remaining after satisfaction of all its obligations shall be distributed to one or more learned societies as the Executive Council may select.

January 01, 2010