

## **Statutes**

### **Universal Rights Group**

#### **Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland**

#### **Article 1**

Universal Rights Group is a non-profit association governed by the present statutes and, secondarily, by Articles 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code. It is neutral politically, and non-denominational.

#### **Article 2**

The Organisation's headquarters are located in the State of Geneva.

The Association shall be of unlimited duration.

#### **Purposes, methodology and values**

#### **Article 3**

The Association shall pursue the following aims:

Support and strengthen policy-making and policy-implementation in the international human rights system by providing rigorous yet accessible, timely and policy-relevant research, analysis and recommendations. The Universal Rights Group (URG) shall provide a forum for discussion and debate on important human rights issues facing the international community and a window onto the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms – a window designed to promote transparency, accountability, awareness and effectiveness.

A key aspect of this goal is to make the international human rights system more accessible to, and bring it into closer orbit with policy-makers and other stakeholders – including the victims of human rights violations and human rights defenders – at international, regional, national and local levels.

#### **Article 4**

URG looks to support and strengthen policy-making in three main ways:

1. Through the provision of independent, respected and policy-relevant research, analysis and recommendations.
2. By providing a non-political and informal platform for dialogue, information sharing and cooperation on pressing human rights concerns.
3. By promoting knowledge, understanding and awareness at international, regional, national and grassroots levels, so as to empower individuals and groups to better engage with the international human rights system and to drive change.

#### **Article 5**

The values of the Association are as follows ('the 8 Is'):

1. Integrity, Independence and Impartiality – in order to have impact, the Association's work must be respected and credible.
2. Impact – everything the Association does will be premised on generating impact, on supporting and strengthening human rights policy-making.
3. Innovation – the Association will aim to be 'ahead of the curve' in responding strategically to important and emerging issues in order to provide policy-makers with timely guidance. It will also aim to be innovative in the way in which it delivers its outputs – with particular emphasis placed on leveraging information technology and social media.
4. Insight – the Association will also aim to help policy-makers understand and get to the heart of a particular issue, by offering new strategic thinking.
5. Inclusivity – the Association will aim to engage all stakeholders in its work. It will promote cross-regionalism and gender-balance in everything it does.

6. Integration – the Association’s work will be premised on contributing to, supporting and improving the policy output of existing human rights structures and standards. The Association will also act as a ‘bridge’ or interface between renowned international experts and policy-makers in order to promote institutional linkages and knowledge-transfer.

## **Resources**

### **Article 6**

The Association's resources come from:

- Donations;
- Legacies;
- Private and public subsidies;
- Any other resources authorized by the law.

The funds shall be used in conformity with the association's purposes and values.

## **Members**

### **Article 7**

Members shall be natural or legal persons committed to the purposes of the Universal Rights Group.

Any physical or moral person may request to join: (i) if, through their commitment or actions, they have proved their attachment to the aims of the Association, and (ii) they are not salaried by the Association.

Requests to become a member must be addressed to the Secretariat. The General Assembly (Board of Trustees) admits new members and informs the Administrative Committee accordingly.

Membership ceases:

- a) Upon death;
- b) By written resignation notified to the General Assembly at least six months before the end of the financial year;
- c) By exclusion ordered by the Administrative Committee, for just cause, with a right of appeal to the General Assembly. Appeals must be lodged within 30 days of the Administrative Committee’s decision being notified.

Only the assets of the Association may be used to meet commitments. Members have no individual responsibility.

## **Organs**

### **Article 8**

The Association's organs are:

- a) The General Assembly (Board of Trustees)
- b) The Administrative Committee
- c) Advisory Committee
- d) The Secretariat
- e) The Auditor

## **General Assembly (Board of Trustees)**

### **Article 9**

The General Assembly (Board of Trustees) is the Association's supreme authority. It is composed of all the members. The maximum number of members is set at 15 (including the Chair).

It shall hold an Ordinary Meeting at least once each year. It may also meet in extraordinary session whenever necessary, at the request of one-fifth of the members.

A Meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be considered valid if 50% or more of members are present and voting.

The Secretariat shall send notice of the meeting to members at least three weeks in advance. The convocation, including the proposed agenda, shall be sent to each member at least seven days prior to the date of the meeting.

#### **Article 10**

The General Assembly:

- a) Shall approve the admission and expulsion of members;
- b) Shall approve the office-holders of the Board of Trustees, including, at a minimum, the President (Chair) and Vice chairs;
- c) Shall approve the members of the Administrative Committee including the Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer;
- d) Shall supervise the composition of the Advisory Committee;
- e) Shall set a 2-year Global Strategic Plan to inform a 2-year programme of work for the Association, following consultations with the Secretariat and Advisory Committee;
- f) Notes the contents of the reports and financial statements for the year and votes on their adoption;
- g) Approves the annual budget;
- h) Supervises the activity of other organs, which it may dismiss, stating the grounds therefore;
- i) Appoints an auditor for the Organisation's accounts;
- j) Decides on any modification of statutes;
- k) Decides on the dissolution of the Association.

#### **Article 11**

The General Assembly is presided over by the Chair or any other member appointed by the chair.

The Chair may be supported by up to three Vice-chairs to support him/her and to help steer the Association. The Chair and Vice-chair(s) together shall constitute the Bureau of the Board of Trustees.

#### **Article 12**

Decisions of the General Assembly shall be taken wherever possible by consensus or, where that is not possible, by a majority vote of the members present. In case of deadlock, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

Decisions concerning the amendment of the Statutes and the dissolution of the Association must be approved by a two-third majority of the members present.

#### **Article 13**

Decisions will be taken on the basis of consensus. If requested by at least three members, decisions may be subject to vote.

Votes are by a show of hands. If requested by at least five members, they take place by secret ballot.

#### **Article 14**

The agenda of the ordinary annual session of the General Assembly must include:

- Approval of the record of the previous General Assembly;
- The association's annual report of activities;
- The report of the Auditor;
- Approval of the budget;
- Approval of reports and accounts;
- Approval of Administrative Committee members and auditor;
- Approval of the Chair and Vice chairs;
- Other business.

#### **Article 15**

The Association shall be validly bound by the individual signatures of the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and/or the Executive Director (Secretariat).

## **Administrative Committee**

### **Article 16**

The Administrative Committee is authorised to manage the Association's administrative business.

### **Article 17**

The Administrative Committee is composed of at least three members reporting to the General Assembly. Each member's term of office shall last for three years and is renewable three times.

The Committee meets as often as required.

### **Article 18**

The Committee members act voluntarily and can only be compensated for their effective and travel costs. Eventual fees cannot exceed that paid for official commissions. For activities exceeding the usual function, each committee member can receive appropriate compensation.

The paid employees of the association have only a consultative vote in the Committee.

### **Article 19**

The functions of the Committee are:

- a) to work with the Secretariat to attain the goals of the Association;
- b) to work with the Auditor on the annual accounts;
- c) to ensure the Statutes are applied, to draft rules of procedure, and to administer the assets of the Association.

## **Advisory Committee**

### **Article 20**

The Advisory Committee is an informal network of experts and shall contribute to the Association's substantive work.

### **Article 21**

The Advisory Committee shall be composed of individuals, especially from civil society and academia, who wish to contribute to the Association's aims.

### **Article 22**

Individuals wishing to sit on the Advisory Committee shall inform the Secretariat accordingly. Acceptance is subject to a decision of the Executive Director. That decision may be reviewed by the General Assembly.

### **Article 23**

The functions of the Advisory Committee are:

- a) to work with the Secretariat to provide substantive input to attain the goals of the Association;
- b) to provide input into the evolution of the Association's 2-year programme of work.

## **Secretariat**

### **Article 24**

The Secretariat is authorised to carry out all acts that further the purposes of the Association, in accordance with these Statutes.

### **Article 25**

The Secretariat is made up of full time employees, operating under Swiss law. It is headed by an Executive Director.

## **Article 26**

The Secretariat shall work under the guidance and supervision of the Board of Trustees. It shall implement the Global Strategic Plan and 2-year Programme of Work, as set by the Board of Trustees following consultations with the Advisory Committee.

The paid employees of the Association have only a consultative role in the General Assembly.

## **Article 27**

The functions of the Secretariat are:

- a) to work with the Board of Trustees and Advisory Committee to set and implement the Association's 2-year Global Strategic Plan and Programme of Work.
- b) to work with the Auditor and the Administrative Committee on the annual accounts;
- c) to ensure the Statutes are applied, to draft rules of procedure, and to administer the assets of the Association;
- d) to organise Meetings of the Board of Trustees and implement decisions taken.

## **Various provisions**

### **Article 28**

The financial year shall begin on 1st of January and end on 31st of December of each year. The Treasurer is responsible for the finances of the association.

The auditor appointed by the General Assembly shall audit the Association's accounts every year.

### **Article 29**

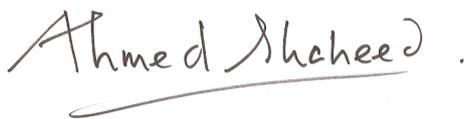
In the case of the Association being dissolved, the assets should be allotted to a non-profit organisation pursuing goals of public interest similar to those of the organisation benefiting from tax exemption. The goods cannot be returned to the founders or members, nor be used to their own profit.

The present Statutes have been approved by the Constituent General Assembly (Board of Trustees) of Universal Rights Group on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015..

For the Association

President (Chair)

Executive Director (Secretariat)

 Ahmed Shaheed .

