**CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD BLIND UNION-ASIA PACIFIC**

(Adopted at a Special Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, 22nd September 2001, amended at the Mid-term Regional General Assemblies in Singapore, 18 November, 2003, and 31 October, 2010 in Chiba, Japan).

**ARTICLE 1 - NAME, AREA OF OPERATION AND HEADQUARTERS**

**SECTION 1: NAME**

Under the name of the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific (here and otherwise referred to as WBUAP), an association is hereby formed, under the auspices of the World Blind Union, between the representatives of organisations "of the blind" and organisations "for the blind" from those countries as defined under Art. VII of the constitution of the World Blind Union (WBU).

**ART. 1 SECTION 2: AREA OF OPERATION**

The area of operation may be revised from time to time in accordance with the constitution of WBU.

**ART. 1 SECTION 3: HEADQUARTERS**

The headquarters of WBUAP shall be located in a place to be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors.

**ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSES, FUNCTIONS, DEFINITIONS AND STATUS**

**SECTION 1: PURPOSES**

The purposes of WBUAP shall be to work in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of WBU and the resolutions of its General Assembly; to work towards the advancement of the well-being of blind and visually-handicapped people (otherwise referred to as "blind people"), with the goal of equalisation of opportunities and full participation in society; to strengthen the self-awareness of blind people, to develop their self-respect and sense of responsibility and to provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of blindness.

**ART. 2 SECTION 2: FUNCTIONS**

The functions of WBUAP shall include the following:

(a)   The progressive improvement and modernisation throughout the region of public policies and practices governing the education, health, welfare, social security, rehabilitation, employment, sports and recreation of blind people.

(b)   The promotion of the creation and development of national organisations of blind people and organisations providing services to blind people.

(c) The provision for the encouragement of the exchange of information and experience between all organisations whose activities relate to the goals of WBU in general, and WBUAP in particular.

(d)   The dissemination of relevant information and the promotion of enlightened attitudes on the part of the public towards blind individuals.

(e)   The encouragement, co-ordination, and conduct of research and studies in all fields of blindness.

(f)    The provision, promotion and co-ordination of technical and material assistance in furtherance of the aims of WBUAP in areas where such help is required.

(g)   To solicit the support of national governments, national and international organisations within the region to support programmes and policies of WBUAP.

(h)   To take any other measures necessary to achieve the purposes of WBUAP.

**ART. 2 SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS**

As defined under Art. II, Section 3 of the constitution of WBU, the following definitions shall apply:

(a)   Blind. - Throughout this constitution the term "blind" means blind and visually-handicapped. National members shall be entitled by this constitution to use their own national definition of blindness.

(b)   Organisations of Blind People. - In order to be defined as a recognised organisation of blind people, the organisation should be representative of the blind of that country, having a substantial number of members with a majority of its membership consisting of blind persons, ordinarily paying a membership fee and having a governing body with a majority of blind persons, elected by the members at regular intervals. All other organisations which do not qualify to be organisations of blind people shall be regarded as organisations for the blind in this constitution.

**ART. 2 SECTION 4: STATUS**

WBUAP is a non-governmental and not-for-profit association and being one of the regions of WBU.

**ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION 1: CLASSES**

Membership of WBUAP, as provided for under Art. III, Section 1 of the constitution of WBU and admitted by its Executive, shall be open to all countries in the Asia Pacific region and shall comprise the following categories:

(a)   National Members - those countries in the region which have been admitted to membership by WBU.

(b)   Grouped Members - where there are countries each with a general population not exceeding two million people and which wish to combine their representation.

(c)   Special Members - those countries where there is no national organisation of the blind.

(d)   International Members - those organisations which promote and co-ordinate substantial international programmes and activities for the benefit of blind people.

(e)   Associate Members - any person, organisation or foundation approved by the national delegation.

(f)    Honorary Life Members - those persons considered to have rendered long and outstanding international service to blind people.

(g)   Supporters of WBUAP - individuals or organisations within the region may, with the approval of the national members and by paying to WBUAP the stipulated fees, be accepted as members. Such applications shall be forwarded to the Secretary General, directly or be through the National Member.

**ARTICLE 4 - THE REGIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**SECTION 1: COMPOSITION**

(a)   The categories of membership as stated in Article 3, Section 1 of this constitution and who are resident in this region, together with the President, Vice-President, Secretary General, Treasurer, the three representatives to the Executive Committee of WBU and the three sub-regional representatives shall constitute the Regional General Assembly.

(b)   The Associate Members and Supporters of WBUAP may attend the Assembly in a consultative capacity.

(c)   Observers may attend the Regional General Assembly with the permission of the national delegations and the President.

(d)   Delegates to the Regional General Assembly shall consist of persons whose names are on the Secretary General's membership list sixty days prior to the opening of the Regional General Assembly except in cases of illness, emergency or admission of new members to WBUAP. A delegate unable to attend the Regional General Assembly may give his/her proxy to another delegate from the same country. Written notice of such a proxy must ordinarily be given to the Secretary General before the meeting at which it will be exercised. In the event of an emergency, and with the permission of the President, a proxy may be accepted by the Credentials Committee prior to it being exercised. In appropriate cases, the Credentials Committee may propose variations to this procedure. Any national member may question the validity of a proxy given by one of its delegates by written communication to the Secretary General, whereupon the Credentials Committee shall arbitrate on the matter, having regard to the aim of this constitution to ensure equal participation by organisation of blind people in the affairs of WBUAP.

**ART. 4 SECTION 2: PROCEDURE**

(a)   There may be Ordinary or Extraordinary meetings of the Regional General Assembly. Two Ordinary Regional General Assemblies of WBUAP shall be held, one midway between the General Assemblies of WBU and the other, referred to as the Quadrennial Regional General Assembly, shall be held at the venue of the General Assembly of WBU. Extraordinary meetings may be convened at any time by the President when such needs arise.

(b)   In exceptional cases, the Board of Directors may approve travel and maintenance expenses subject to the availability of resources.

(c)   The President shall instruct the Secretary General to send out the notice of assemblies ninety days in advance of its sitting.

**ART. 4 SECTION 3: FUNCTIONS**

The Regional General Assembly is the sovereign body of WBUAP and it shall determine the general policies to be adopted towards achieving its purposes. The functions of the Regional General Assembly shall include the following:

(a)   To consider and decide on all recommendations submitted by the Board of Directors and the Policy Council.

(b)   To receive and consider the reports on the work of the Board of Directors, Policy Council and committees.

(c)   To elect the Board of Directors.

(d)   To consider proposals and resolutions submitted by members, including amendments to the constitution. Such proposals or resolutions should reach the Secretary General sixty days prior to the Regional General Assembly and he/she shall circulate such documents to the members 45 days prior to the commencement of the meeting.

(e)   To take any other measures necessary or conducive to achieving the purposes of WBUAP.

**ART. 4 SECTION 4: VOTING**

(a)   National, Grouped, Special, International and Honorary Life Members shall each be entitled to one vote per delegate at the Regional General Assembly. Associate Members and Supporters of WBUAP shall have the right to speak but shall not be entitled to vote.

(b)   As stipulated under Art. IV, Section 4 (b) of the constitution of WBU, each National Member shall be entitled to two delegates if its population is below 20 million people, four delegates if its population is between 20 and 40 million people, and six delegates if its population is between 40 and 100 million people, eight delegates if its population is between 100 and 250 million people, and ten delegates if its population exceeds 250 million people.

(c)   Each Special Member shall be entitled to one half of the delegates to the Assembly available to a National Member with the same population.

(d)   Each International Member shall be entitled to one delegate to the Assembly.

(e)   The President, Secretary General, the Treasurer and the three representatives to the Executive of WBU shall not assume territorial status and be entitled to one vote each.

(f)    All questions shall be decided by a simple majority vote except for constitutional amendments and proposals for dissolution of WBUAP.

(g)   Voting may be by acclamation (viva voce), by roll-call, by show of hands or, if 20 percent or more of the delegates present so demand, by secret ballot. At elections when there is more than one candidate, voting shall always be by secret ballot.

(h)   The Board of Directors may invoke a postal ballot between assemblies of all registered voting delegates to the Assembly to resolve questions which it believes is outside its mandate or beyond its capacity to decide.

(i)    A quorum shall consist of a majority of delegates registered for the Assembly.

**ART. 4 SECTION 5: DELEGATIONS OF MEMBER COUNTRIES**

(a)   At least one half of the delegates in each National Member's delegation to the Assembly shall represent recognised national organisations of blind people.

(b)   At least one half of the delegates in each national member's delegation present at the Assembly must be representative of organisations of blind people unless special circumstances satisfactory to the Credentials Committee prevent that from happening.

(c)   If a country cannot agree on whether an organisation should be regarded as a recognised national organisation of the blind or on the composition of its delegation to the Assembly, it shall be referred to the Credentials Committee for help.

**ARTICLE 5 - THE POLICY COUNCIL**

**SECTION 1: COMPOSITION**

(a)   The Policy Council (here and otherwise referred to as the Council), shall be composed of the following categories of office-bearers/representatives:

(I)    The principal office-bearers, namely, the President, the Vice-President, Secretary General, and the Treasurer;

(II)  Three representatives to the Executive of WBU;

(III) Three sub-regional representatives;

(IV) Five representatives, who may be from any of the classes of members listed in Article 3, Section 1 of this Constitution, and who would normally be Chairs of the committees appointed by the Board.

(b) All members of the Council shall be elected or appointed at the Regional General Assembly in the following manner:

(1) Categories (I) and (II) above, constituting the Board of Directors, shall be elected by the Assembly.

(2) Category (III) above shall be elected at the time of the Assembly by the countries within the three respective sub-regions namely, South-East Asia, East Asia and Pacific and Oceania.

(3) Category (IV) shall immediately after the Assembly, be appointed by the Board.

(c) Members of the Council shall serve for a term of four years, starting at the close of one Quadrennial Regional General Assembly and finishing at the close of the next Quadrennial Regional General Assembly.

(d) The President may invite persons with special expertise to be present at Council meetings from time to time. The number of such persons shall not exceed three at any given time.

(e) If a vacancy occurs among the members of the Council, it shall be filled by the Board of Directors, if necessary, by postal ballot and taking into account the nature of the Council's composition. The person assuming that vacancy shall serve the remaining period of the vacated position.

**ART. 5 SECTION 2: POWERS AND FUNCTIONS**

The Council shall provide policy advice to the Board of Directors between Regional General Assemblies. The Council may report to the following Regional General Assembly on any failure by the Board to implement the policies determined by the Regional General Assemblies.

**ART. 5 SECTION 3: VOTING**

(a) Each member of the Council is entitled to one vote. In the event of a tied vote, the President may exercise a casting vote.

(b) All decisions of the Council shall be decided by simple majority of the votes cast.

**ART. 5 SECTION 4: MEETINGS**

(a) Meetings of the Council shall be ordinary or extraordinary. Extraordinary meetings may be called at any time by the President or, if requested by the majority of its members. One meeting of the Council shall be held between the Regional General Assemblies and another at the discretion of the President.

(b) Subject to the availability of funds, the travel and maintenance costs of Council members when attending meetings may be met in whole or part.

(c) The quorum for Council meetings shall be the majority of its members.

**ARTICLE 6 - BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**SECTION 1: COMPOSITION**

(a) The Board of Directors (here and otherwise referred to as the Board), shall be composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary General, Treasurer and the three representatives to the Executive of WBU.

(b) Members of the Board shall not hold territorial status during their terms of office but shall be given the status of a delegate in their own right and, if they were National delegates to the Assembly which elected them, their seats may be filled in the normal way.

(c) All members of the Board are eligible for re-election except for the President who shall be permitted to contest for two consecutive terms. However, he/she may contest after a lapse of one term.

(d) If a vacancy occurs among the members of the Board, it shall be filled by the Board, if necessary by postal ballot, and taking into account the nature of the Board's composition. The person elected shall serve for the remaining of that term of office.

**ART. 6 SECTION 2: FUNCTIONS**

(a) The Board shall be the principal administrative organ of WBUAP. It shall have power of decision and be directly responsible to the Assembly for interpreting and carrying out the general policies agreed upon by the Assembly and for the administration, management, and control of the affairs and property of WBUAP. In so doing, it shall have authority to take all necessary actions not specifically reserved to the Assembly.

(b) The Board, in consultation with the countries in the sub-regions, shall recommend to the Assembly the number and any change in the composition of sub-regions. The sub-regions shall initially be: East Asia, the Pacific and Oceania, and South-East Asia.

(c) The Board shall meet whenever the President deems it necessary or at the request of a majority of their number. Should it be necessary to obtain a solution to an urgent issue, the President may use the postal ballot, teleconferencing or any appropriate means but such decisions must be reported at the next meeting.

(d) The President shall preside over the meetings of the Assembly, the Council and the Board and shall represent WBUAP. The President shall, together with the three representatives to the Executive of WBU, attend meetings of WBU and he/she shall assume such powers which may properly be assigned by the Board or Regional General Assembly.

(e) The Vice-President shall assist the President, and deputy when the President is unavailable. The Vice-President shall assume the presidency in the event of a vacancy in that office, and shall serve as President for the remaining of the term of office.

(f) The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping the financial records of WBUAP and shall prepare the budget for consideration by the Board. He/she shall present such reports to the meetings of the Board and Regional General Assembly. He/she shall be accountable to the Board and shall perform all duties pertaining to his/her office.

(g) The Secretary General shall be responsible for keeping the proper records of WBUAP other than those under the charge of the Treasurer. He/she shall take down minutes of the Board, Council and the Regional General Assembly and circulate such minutes under the direction of the Board. He/she shall be accountable to the Board and shall perform all duties pertaining to his/her office.

(h) The representatives to the Executive and other committees of WBU shall submit written reports to the Board and Regional General Assembly on their participation.

**ARTICLE 7 - COMMITTEES**

**SECTION 1: APPOINTMENTS:**

(a) The Board shall regularly review the structure and functions of committees, but will generally follow the structure adopted at the time by WBU.

(b) The Board shall appoint Chairpersons of committees who shall be members of the Policy Council.

(c) The Chairpersons may, subject to the approval of the President, form sub-committees to cover specific fields or tasks within the scope of their committees' functions.

**ART. 7 SECTION 2: REPORTING**

All committees shall provide regular reports to the Board and the Council, and shall provide a written report to every Regional Assembly.

**ARTICLE 8 - FINANCE**

**SECTION 1: FINANCIAL YEAR**

The financial year of WBUAP shall run from 1st January to 31st December.

**ART. 8 SECTION 2: MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Membership fees of Supporters of WBUAP shall be payable within the first half of the year. A Supporter whose annual fee has not been paid during the financial year may be declared by the Board to have forfeited membership. In the event of the Board making such an order, the Supporter shall have the right to appeal to the Council.

**ART 8 SECTION 3: EXPENSES**

The Board shall not expend funds which it does not hold. All monies not in immediate use shall be deposited in an approved bank account or be invested in recognised financial instruments.

**ART. 8 SECTION 4: RECORDS**

(a) The Board shall insure that proper financial records are kept and that accepted accounting practices are followed. Accounts books and all supporting documents shall be held at the office of the Treasurer and shall be available for inspection by members of the Board and Council.

(b) All financial records must be audited each year by a qualified auditor, following which the audit certificate shall be tabled at the next Board meeting and then presented to the Council and Assembly.

(c) An audited statement showing the financial position of WBUAP shall be sent to all members within six months of the end of each financial year.

**ARTICLE 9 - AMENDMENT AND DISSOLUTION**

**SECTION 1: AMENDMENT**

(a) This constitution may be amended at any Assembly meeting, providing always that no fewer than two-thirds of the votes cast are in favour of the proposed amendments.

(b) The Board shall place before the Assembly any amendment proposed in writing by seven or more delegates.

(c) Any proposal for a constitutional amendment must be in the hands of the Secretary General 60 days before the date of the meeting at which it is to be discussed. The exact text of any such amendment, along with the names of those submitting it, must be circulated to all voting members at least 45 days before the meeting at which it shall be discussed, and there can be no alteration of the text at the time of the Regional General Assembly.

**ART. 9 SECTION 2: DISSOLUTION**

(a) If at any time a dissolution of WBUAP should prove necessary or desirable, this may be done according to the procedure laid down for amendments to this constitution except that such proceedings must be initiated by the Executive of WBU or by nine member countries covering the three sub-regions of WBUAP.

(b) In the event of dissolution, any funds or other assets owned by WBUAP shall be administered by WBU taking into consideration the wishes expressed by the Assembly of WBUAP.

(Dated: 31 October, 2010)