

CLINICAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA CONSTITUTION

THE CLINICAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA

Plot No. F32A/1827, Obama

Lusaka, Zambia

DRAFT AMENDMENT

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Preamble

WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE CLINICAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA:

RECOGNISING the authority of God Almighty and the moral and ethical foundation that guides the health professions;

AFFIRMING our collective responsibility to promote and protect the highest attainable standard of health for all Zambians;

COMMITTED to upholding the values of professionalism, integrity, accountability, equity, and respect for human dignity in the delivery of healthcare services;

RECOGNISING the role of the Association in promoting unity, excellence, and continuous professional development among clinical officers and analogues;

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of democratic governance, institutional transparency, and effective representation within the Association;

RESOLVING to build a responsive and inclusive professional body that advances the interests of its members and the communities they serve;

RECOGNISING the contributions of past and present clinical officers who have advanced the profession and safeguarded health across the country;

AFFIRMING the rights of all members to participate fully and equally in the affairs of the Association without discrimination;

DIRECTING that all organs, officers, and members of the Association shall operate in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the values herein established;

DO HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION AS THE SUPREME INSTRUMENT OF THE CLINICAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA

PART I: SUPREMACY OF CONSTITUTION

Article 1: Supremacy of Constitution

1. This Constitution is the supreme and binding legal instrument of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia (hereinafter referred to as “the Association”) and shall govern all its organs, members, and affiliated structures.
2. Subject to the laws of the Republic of Zambia, any act, policy, rule, decision, regulation, or conduct by any organ, office bearer, or member of the Association that is inconsistent with this Constitution shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be null and void.
3. The validity or legality of this Constitution shall not be subject to challenge by or before any State organ, court of law, or other forum external to the Association.
4. The provisions of this Constitution shall be interpreted in a manner that—
 - a. promotes the values, aims, and objectives of the Association;
 - b. advances the democratic, professional, and ethical governance of clinical officers;
 - c. upholds accountability, integrity, and transparency within the Association.

Article 2: Defence of Constitution

Every member of the Association has the duty to—

- a. uphold, defend, and protect the Constitution;
- b. promote the unity, dignity, and integrity of the Association;
- c. resist any action, practice, or conduct that seeks to undermine this Constitution.

The National Executive Committee and all organs of the Association shall—

- a. act in accordance with and enforce this Constitution;
- b. safeguard the supremacy and integrity of this Constitution in all their actions and decisions;

- c. take disciplinary or legal steps, as provided in this Constitution, against any conduct that violates its provisions.

Article 3: Continuous effect of Constitution

1. This Constitution shall have continuous and uninterrupted force, effect, and authority at all times and in all circumstances pertaining to the governance, operations, and conduct of the Association.
2. No suspension, lapse, or interruption in the operation or enforcement of this Constitution shall be permitted, except as may be expressly provided for within this Constitution.
3. Any attempt to suspend, override, or abrogate this Constitution, in whole or in part, by any person or group of persons, shall be unlawful, null and void.
4. The rights, duties, obligations, and institutional frameworks established under this Constitution shall continue to apply to all members and organs of the Association

Article 4: The Clinical Officers Association of Zambia

1. There is hereby established the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia, hereinafter referred to as “the Association,” which shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and capable of:
 - a. suing and being sued in its corporate name;
 - b. acquiring, holding, and disposing of movable and immovable property; and
 - c. doing or performing all such acts and functions as are necessary for or incidental to the proper performance of its objectives and functions under this Constitution.
2. The Association shall be a non-partisan, non-profit, professional, and democratic body representing the interests, welfare, and development of Clinical Officers in the Republic of Zambia.
3. The Association shall operate in accordance with this Constitution, the laws of the Republic of Zambia, and the principles of professionalism, equity, accountability, and service.
4. The legal status of the Association shall not be affected by any change in its membership, leadership, or structure, and shall endure independently of such changes.

Article 5: Independent Authority

1. Independent authority vests in the members of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia, and may be exercised directly or through elected or appointed representatives or organs established under this Constitution.
2. Power that is not conferred by or under this Constitution on any organ, officer, committee, or agent of the Association is reserved for the general membership.
3. The members of the Association shall exercise their reserved powers through a general meeting, referendum, or any other mechanism provided for under this Constitution.
4. Authority shall be exercised—
 - a. in accordance with the values of democracy, professionalism, and accountability;
 - b. to uphold the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of Clinical Officers; and
 - c. for the protection and advancement of the objectives and integrity of the Association.
5. Any exercise of power or authority by a person or organ not provided for under this Constitution, or in a manner inconsistent with it, shall be null and void.

Article 6: Association symbols

1. The Association shall have the following official symbols
 - a. Name: Clinical Officers Association of Zambia or COAZ.
 - b. Logo or Emblem
 - c. Motto
 - d. Official Seal
2. The form, words, description and use of the national symbols shall be as prescribed.

Article 7: Laws of the Association

1. The Association shall be governed in accordance with the following instruments, in order of precedence:
 - a. This Constitution;
 - b. Resolutions of the General Meeting, where consistent with the Constitution;
 - c. By-laws and Regulations, enacted under this Constitution;
 - d. Membership Code of Conduct
 - e. Professional Code of Conduct
 - f. the laws and statutes which apply or extend to the Association, as prescribed
2. No by-law, policy, rule, resolution, or directive of any organ or officer of the Association shall be valid to the extent that it is inconsistent with this Constitution.

PART II: ASSOCIATION VALUES, PRINCIPLES, MISSION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Article 8: Values and Principles

1. The governance, leadership, operations, and conduct of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia shall be guided by the following core values and principles:
 - a. Professionalism and ethics
 - b. Integrity, Transparency and Accountability
 - c. Unity and Solidarity
 - d. Service to the Public
 - e. Respect for Human Rights, human dignity, equity, social justice, equality and non-discrimination
 - f. Democracy and Participation
 - g. Commitment to Excellence and Lifelong Learning

2. These values and principles shall apply to all members, office bearers, employees, and affiliated bodies of the Association and shall form the operational foundation of its programs and policies.
3. Every organ and officer of the Association shall promote and defend these values in the execution of their duties.

Article 9: Application of Association Values and principles

1. The Association values and principles shall apply to the—
 - a. interpretation of this Constitution;
 - b. formulation, enactment, and interpretation of the laws and policies of the Association; and
 - c. development, implementation, and review of the Association's strategies, programs, and decisions.
2. The President of the Association shall, at least once every calendar year, deliver a report to the General Meeting on the progress made in the application and promotion of the national values and principles under this Part.

Article 10: Mission, Aim and Objectives

1. Mission

The mission of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia is to unite, represent, and advance the professional interests, development, and welfare of Clinical Officers and mid-level clinical practitioners across the country.

2. Aim

To serve as the Voice and governing professional body for Clinical Officers and mid-level Clinical practitioners, promoting their dignity, rights, training, regulatory compliance, and contribution to health and national development

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Association shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. To advocate for the professional recognition, protection, and progression of clinical officers and mid-level clinical practitioners.
- b. To promote high standards of ethics, clinical practice, and continuing professional development.
- c. To engage with government, regulatory bodies, institutions, and partners on matters affecting healthcare and Clinical Officer practice.
- d. To safeguard the welfare, rights, and working conditions of members.
- e. To contribute to the formulation, implementation, and review of health and education policies, and systems at national and sub-national levels.
- f. To strengthen the unity, discipline, and professional identity of members.
- g. To support academic and training institutions in shaping curricula and clinical training for clinical officers and mid-level clinical practitioners..
- h. To promote partnerships, both local and international, aimed at strengthening the role and contribution of Clinical Officers in healthcare delivery.
- i. To publish and disseminate research findings, policy briefs, and working papers to influence policy and the society
- j. Provide advocacy in matters of health
- k. To perform other functions incidental to the attainment of these objectives

PART III: PROTECTION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF MEMBERSHIP

Article 11: Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of members

1. Every member of the Association shall be entitled to the full enjoyment of the rights and freedoms guaranteed under this Constitution, subject only to such limitations as are reasonably required for the protection of the rights of others, the Public and the integrity of the Association.
2. The rights and freedoms of members shall include, but are not limited to
 - a. the right to equal membership status, regardless of gender, ethnicity, creed, social origin, or political affiliation;
 - b. the right to participate in the affairs and activities of the Association, including the right to vote and to stand for office, in accordance with this Constitution;
 - c. the right to freedom of expression, opinion, and conscience in relation to matters affecting the profession and the Association;
 - d. the right to access information held by the Association
 - e. the right to fair and impartial treatment in all disciplinary or administrative proceedings;
 - f. the right to associate, organize, and be represented within the structures of the Association;
 - g. the right to access support, protection, and representation from the Association in professional, legal, or employment-related matters.
3. Rights and freedoms of members are subject to the laws of Zambia to such an extent as provided
4. Rights and freedoms are subject to membership type, and shall be prescribed
5. Notwithstanding Article II (2)(4), Full membership shall enjoy all the rights and freedoms provided in Article II (2)
6. No member shall be subjected to arbitrary suspension, expulsion, or restriction of rights except in accordance with the rules of natural justice and procedures prescribed under this Constitution.

Article 12: Protection of Right to Protection Identity and Recognition

1. Every member of the Association shall have the right to be recognized and protected in their professional identity as a Clinical Officer or mid-level clinical practitioner, as defined under applicable laws and regulatory frameworks of the Republic of Zambia.
2. The Association shall take all lawful and necessary steps to—
 - a. promote national and institutional recognition of the role, qualifications, and scope of practice of Clinical Officers;
 - b. prevent misrepresentation, marginalization, or unlawful restriction of the professional identity or functions of its members;
 - c. defend members against acts or policies that undermine their professional status, dignity, or rights.
3. The Association shall maintain an official and regularly updated Register of Members, and may issue identification credentials or certifications for purposes of professional recognition, representation, and verification.
4. Any violation of a member's right to professional identity and recognition shall constitute a breach of this Constitution and shall be subject to redress in accordance with its provisions.

Article 13: Protection of Right to Professional Liberty

1. Every member of the Association shall have the right to professional liberty, which includes the freedom to practice within the legally defined scope of their profession, subject to the provisions of this Constitution and applicable laws and regulations of the Republic of Zambia.
2. The right to professional liberty shall include:
 - a. the freedom to exercise professional judgment and clinical decision-making without undue interference, intimidation, or coercion;

- b. the right to participate in lawful academic, research, and advocacy activities related to the profession;
 - c. the right to engage in continuous professional development and pursue career advancement in accordance with national training frameworks;
 - d. the freedom to associate and collaborate with peers, institutions, and professional bodies, both nationally and internationally.
- 3. No member shall be unjustly or arbitrarily prevented, restrained, or disqualified from practicing as a Clinical Officer or mid-level clinical practitioner, except in accordance with a lawful process as provided under this Constitution and relevant statutory regulations.
- 4. The Association shall take all lawful measures to protect its members from:
 - a. professional suppression, victimization, or unlawful administrative sanctions;
 - b. unjust restrictions on licensure, scope of practice, or employment based on political, religious, or other non-professional grounds;
 - c. any acts, policies, or practices that amount to professional discrimination or denial of legitimate clinical authority.
- 5. Any infringement of a member's professional liberty shall be justiciable under this Constitution and the internal dispute resolution and disciplinary mechanisms of the Association.

Article 14: Protection from Exploitation and Coersed Labour

- 1. A member of the Association shall have the right to be free from exploitation, abuse, and coerced labour, in any form and under any circumstances, whether in the public, private, or non-governmental sector.
- 2. A member shall not be—
 - a. compelled to accept or perform duties under duress, intimidation, or threat of sanction without lawful cause or due process;

- b. subjected to any form of labour that is degrading, exploitative, or inconsistent with the conditions of service and scope of practice prescribed under the law;
 - c. denied just compensation, recognition, or entitlements for professional services rendered.
- 3. The Association shall take all lawful and necessary steps to—
 - a. advocate for and protect members from forced deployment, unpaid or underpaid labour, and other forms of unjust employment practices;
 - b. promote fair labour standards and decent working conditions, in accordance with national laws and international conventions;
 - c. support members in reporting, challenging, and seeking redress for exploitation or coercion in the workplace.
- 4. The Association shall, where necessary, pursue legal remedies or institutional engagement on behalf of its members where such exploitation or coerced labour is identified.
- 5. Any person, employer, or authority that contravenes the provisions of this Article may be subject to internal sanction, public condemnation, and referral to competent legal or regulatory bodies.

Article 15: Protection from Inhuman and Degrading Treatment

- 1. A member of the Association shall not be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, whether in the course of professional duties or in any setting related to their membership, employment, or professional identity.
- 2. The dignity and integrity of every member shall be respected and protected at all times, including during—
 - a. employment, deployment, or disciplinary procedures;
 - b. interactions with supervisors, employers, regulatory bodies, and the general public;
 - c. professional evaluations, investigations, or legal proceedings.
- 3. The Association shall take proactive and remedial measures to—
 - a. prevent acts of humiliation, verbal abuse, physical harm, or psychological intimidation against any member;

- b. provide support and protection to members who are victims of inhuman or degrading treatment in the workplace or in professional contexts;
 - c. raise awareness and advocate for institutional safeguards that protect the dignity of Clinical Officers in all sectors of practice.
- 4. Any act or omission that constitutes inhuman or degrading treatment shall be deemed a violation of this Constitution and shall be subject to disciplinary action and, where necessary, referral to appropriate legal or human rights authorities.

Article 16: Protection from Deprivation of Professional entitlement

1. A member of the Association shall not be unlawfully deprived of any professional entitlement, recognition, opportunity, or benefit to which they are duly entitled by virtue of their training, registration, licensure, or standing within the Association.
2. The professional entitlements protected under this Article include, but are not limited to—
 - a. the right to fair consideration for appointments, promotions, or clinical responsibilities within the member's lawful scope of practice;
 - b. the right to equal access to professional development, continuing education, and advancement opportunities facilitated or endorsed by the Association;
 - c. the right to receive certificates, credentials, or documentation issued by the Association upon fulfilment of lawful requirements;
 - d. the right to be consulted and represented in matters that affect their professional role and recognition.
3. No member shall be denied any of the above entitlements except—
 - a. in accordance with a fair and transparent process as provided for under this Constitution or relevant professional regulatory frameworks; and
 - b. after being afforded the right to be heard and to appeal any adverse decision.

4. The Association shall establish mechanisms to—
 - a. identify and redress instances of unlawful or unfair deprivation of members' professional entitlements;
 - b. advocate for members whose professional recognition or progression is hindered unjustly by external institutions or regulatory bodies;
 - c. protect members from exclusionary or discriminatory practices within institutional or professional settings.
5. Any person or authority, including internal office bearers, found to have unlawfully deprived a member of their professional entitlements shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings and, where appropriate, referral to external oversight or legal bodies.

Article 17: Protection of professional Privacy and integrity

1. Every member of the Association shall have the right to professional privacy and integrity, which shall be respected and protected by the Association, its office bearers, and all affiliated persons or institutions.
2. The right to professional privacy and integrity includes—
 - a. protection from unauthorized access to, or disclosure of, personal, academic, employment, licensure, or disciplinary records;
 - b. protection against false, malicious, or unverified allegations that may injure a member's reputation or professional standing;
 - c. the right to confidentiality in any internal or external inquiry, mediation, or disciplinary procedure, except where disclosure is required by law or with the member's consent;
 - d. the right to fair, dignified, and respectful treatment in all processes involving the evaluation of a member's conduct, competence, or eligibility.
3. The Association shall ensure that—

- a. all records, files, and correspondence relating to members are securely maintained and only accessed by authorized persons for legitimate purposes;
 - b. due process and principles of natural justice are observed in all matters that may affect a member's reputation, licensure, or employment;
 - c. no member shall be publicly named, shamed, or defamed by the Association or its representatives before the conclusion of a lawful and impartial process.
- 4. Any breach of a member's professional privacy or violation of their integrity shall constitute misconduct and may attract disciplinary sanctions, including liability for reputational or procedural harm caused.
- 5. The Association shall adopt and implement a Privacy and Data Protection Policy consistent with this Constitution and applicable national laws

Article 18: Rights to fair Disciplinary Process

- 1. A member of the Association shall have the right to a fair, just, and impartial disciplinary process in any proceedings instituted under this Constitution or the rules of the Association.
- 2. Disciplinary action against a member shall only be taken—
 - a. in accordance with established rules and procedures of the Association;
 - b. upon clear notification of the allegations and grounds of complaint;
 - c. after the member has been given reasonable time and opportunity to respond to the charges or complaint;
 - d. before a properly constituted and impartial disciplinary body; and
 - e. in compliance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- 3. Every member subject to disciplinary proceedings shall have the right to—
 - a. be informed in writing of the nature and particulars of the complaint or allegation;
 - b. be heard in person or in writing;
 - c. be represented by a person of their choice;

- d. call witnesses and present evidence;
 - e. receive written reasons for any decision made;
 - f. appeal or seek review of any adverse decision within the Association's internal appellate framework.
- 4. Sanctions or penalties shall be proportionate to the nature and gravity of the misconduct, and shall not be imposed arbitrarily or discriminatorily.
- 5. The Association shall maintain records of all disciplinary proceedings and ensure confidentiality, except where disclosure is required by law or consented to by the affected member.
- 6. The Association shall, by regulation, prescribe detailed disciplinary procedures, codes of conduct, and appeal mechanisms consistent with the provisions of this Constitution.

Article 19: Freedom of Conscience and belief

- 1. Every member of the Association shall have the right to freedom of conscience, thought, belief, and opinion, including academic and professional convictions, consistent with the ethical and legal frameworks governing the clinical profession.
- 2. No member shall be—
 - a. compelled to subscribe to any ideology, doctrine, or belief system that is contrary to their conscience;
 - b. discriminated against or subjected to disciplinary action on the basis of their lawful religious, philosophical, or ethical beliefs;
 - c. denied participation in the activities or benefits of the Association on the grounds of their conscience or belief, except where such belief violates the provisions of this Constitution, established codes of conduct, or the laws of Zambia.
- 3. The freedom under this Article does not extend to actions or expressions that—
 - a. incite hatred, discrimination, or violence;
 - b. undermine the integrity of the Association or the dignity of the profession;

- c. contravene public health laws, professional standards, or lawful Association policies.
- 4. The Association shall ensure that policies, programs, and engagements respect the diverse beliefs of its members, while maintaining professional unity, inclusivity, and ethical integrity.

Article 20: Freedom of Expression and professional opinion

1. Every member of the Association shall have the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold, articulate, and disseminate professional opinions and ideas within the bounds of ethics, law, and professional responsibility.
2. This freedom includes the right to—
 - a. express views on matters relating to health, clinical practice, public policy, and the profession of Clinical Officers;
 - b. participate in academic, scientific, or policy debates without fear of censorship, discrimination, or disciplinary action;
 - c. contribute to media, publications, conferences, and institutional platforms in a manner that reflects professional competence and personal conviction.
3. In exercising this freedom, every member shall—
 - a. uphold the dignity, reputation, and integrity of the Clinical Officer profession and the Association;
 - b. avoid dissemination of false, misleading, defamatory, or harmful information;
 - c. comply with the ethical standards, confidentiality obligations, and codes of conduct prescribed by the Association and other regulatory authorities.
4. The Association shall promote an environment that encourages open, respectful, and informed expression of professional opinions while safeguarding public trust, patient welfare, and internal cohesion.

5. No member shall be victimized or sanctioned for expressing a dissenting or minority professional view, provided that such expression is lawful, respectful, and grounded in evidence or experience.

Article 21: Protection of Freedom of Assembly and Association

1. Every member of the Association shall have the right to freely assemble, associate, and participate in lawful activities of the Association and other professional or civil bodies, in accordance with this Constitution and the laws of Zambia.
2. This right includes the freedom to—
 - a. attend and participate in meetings, forums, and assemblies convened by the Association or its organs;
 - b. form, join, or belong to professional groups, committees, or interest-based platforms within or outside the Association;
 - c. associate for purposes of advocacy, academic collaboration, or advancement of professional interests, provided such association does not undermine the unity and integrity of the Association.
3. No member shall be—
 - a. compelled to join any specific internal grouping within the Association;
 - b. denied the right to organize or participate in lawful gatherings or professional associations;
 - c. subjected to discrimination, retaliation, or disciplinary action on the basis of their lawful association or assembly.
4. The exercise of this freedom shall be subject to—
 - a. respect for the rights and freedoms of other members;
 - b. adherence to the Constitution, Code of Conduct, and resolutions of the Association;
 - c. compliance with any lawful limitations prescribed for the maintenance of order, discipline, and professional ethics.

5. The Association shall facilitate inclusive and participatory platforms to ensure active engagement of members in its governance and professional affairs.

Article 22: Protection of Freedom of Movement

1. Every member of the Association shall have the right to freedom of movement in the exercise of their professional duties and association-related activities, subject to the laws of Zambia and the provisions of this Constitution.
2. This freedom includes the right to—
 - a. move and reside freely within the Republic of Zambia for purposes of employment, clinical practice, education, or participation in Association functions;
 - b. participate in professional activities, conferences, and deployments across geographical and institutional boundaries;
 - c. travel abroad for purposes of continuing professional development, training, exchange programs, or representation of the Association, subject to relevant regulations.
3. No member shall be arbitrarily restricted, transferred, or denied professional opportunities based on location, institutional affiliation, or their engagement with Association activities, except in accordance with a lawful and justifiable process.
4. The Association shall advocate for fair and equitable deployment, mobility, and access to opportunities for its members across all regions and institutions.
5. The exercise of this right may be subject to reasonable administrative or legal limitations necessary for—
 - a. the protection of public health or national security;
 - b. the enforcement of disciplinary measures or legal restrictions as provided for under law;
 - c. the maintenance of institutional or contractual obligations, provided such limitations are not discriminatory or punitive in nature.

Article 23: Protection from Discrimination on the Ground of professional category, Race, Religion, or ethnicity

1. Every member of the Association is equal in dignity, rights, and obligations and shall be entitled to full and equal participation in the affairs of the Association without discrimination.
2. No member shall be subjected to any form of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of—
 - a. professional category or specialization within the clinical officer cadre;
 - b. race, tribe, ethnic origin, or language;
 - c. religious belief or spiritual orientation;
 - d. gender, marital status, disability, or socio-economic background.
3. Discrimination for purposes of this Article includes any act, policy, omission, or expression that—
 - a. unfairly excludes or limits a member's access to rights, benefits, representation, or opportunities within the Association;
 - b. undermines the professional recognition, voice, or dignity of a member based on their identity or status;
 - c. imposes undue burdens, restrictions, or differential treatment not based on merit, conduct, or legitimate criteria.
4. The Association shall—
 - a. uphold and enforce equality, non-discrimination, and inclusiveness in all its activities, decisions, and policies;
 - b. take active steps to redress historical, systemic, or institutional imbalances affecting any group of members;
 - c. prohibit and sanction any form of discriminatory behaviour or expression by office bearers, members, or partners.

5. A member who believes they have been subjected to discrimination under this Article shall have the right to lodge a complaint with the COAZ council
6. Nothing in this Article shall prevent the Association from taking affirmative or corrective action aimed at promoting equitable representation and participation of underrepresented groups.

Article 24: Protection of Students and Junior members From Exploitation

The Association shall recognize and uphold the rights of students and junior members, including newly qualified and early-career Clinical Officers, to be protected from all forms of exploitation, abuse, and unfair treatment in professional, academic, and training environments.

1. For purposes of this Constitution, “students and junior members” include—
 - a. Clinical officer and or mid-level clinical students enrolled in accredited institutions of learning;
 - b. probationers or provisional licensed, interns, or early-career Clinical Officers and mid-level clinical practitioners with less than 2 years of post-qualification experience.
2. The Association shall advocate to ensure that—
 - a. students and junior members are not assigned responsibilities that exceed their training, scope of competence, or regulatory authorization;
 - b. no member is subjected to unpaid, underpaid, or coerced labour in the name of internship, volunteering, or apprenticeship, unless in special circumstances or in the interest of the public
 - c. mentorship, supervision, and evaluation processes are fair, non-exploitative, and conducive to professional development.
3. Students and junior members shall have the right to—
 - a. a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in the association;
 - b. report cases of abuse, harassment, or exploitation without fear of retaliation or victimization;

- c. participate in the affairs of the Association through designated structures and representation.

4. The Association —

- a. Shall establish specific guidelines and codes of conduct to govern the treatment and support of students and junior members;
- b. Shall collaborate with training institutions, employers, and regulatory authorities to monitor and enforce protections under this Article;
- c. May take action against any member, official, or institution found to have exploited or mistreated a student or junior member

Article 25: Limitation of Rights during Emergency Situations

1. The rights and freedoms provided under this Constitution may be limited or temporarily suspended during a period of declared emergency or national disaster, where such limitation is
 - a. necessary and proportionate to the nature and extent of the emergency;
 - b. in the interest of public health, safety, or national security;
 - c. consistent with the principles of legality, necessity, and non-discrimination.
2. The Association may, during an emergency situation, take exceptional measures to
 - a. reassign members to critical health service areas as may be required;
 - b. modify or suspend non-essential programs, benefits, or services;
 - c. restrict physical meetings, assemblies, or travel where public safety demands it, provided that reasonable alternatives are explored.
3. No limitation under this Article shall—
 - a. permit acts of inhuman or degrading treatment;

- b. nullify the right to a fair disciplinary process or access to justice within the Association;
 - c. target any member or group of members on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or professional category.
- 4. Any action taken by the Association under this Article shall be time-bound, subject to oversight, and reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains justified and proportionate.
- 5. Upon the cessation of the emergency or national disaster, all rights and freedoms under this Constitution shall be fully restored without delay

Article 26: Provisions Relating to Restriction and Disciplinary

1. The rights and freedoms of members under this Constitution may be restricted only in accordance with lawful, fair, and transparent procedures where—
 - a. a member has contravened this Constitution, the Code of Conduct, or any directive of the Association;
 - b. the restriction is necessary to protect the reputation, integrity, or operational effectiveness of the Association;
 - c. the restriction is imposed as a disciplinary sanction following due process.
2. The Association shall establish a Disciplinary and Ethics Committee or such other body as may be prescribed in the by-laws to—
 - a. receive and investigate complaints or allegations against any member;
 - b. conduct hearings in accordance with the principles of natural justice, including the right to be heard and to respond to allegations;
 - c. impose appropriate sanctions, including warnings, suspensions, restrictions, or expulsion, where warranted.
3. Disciplinary measures shall be guided by the following principles—
 - a. legality and predictability of rules and procedures;

- b. proportionality of the sanction to the misconduct;
 - c. impartiality, non-discrimination, and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty.
- 4. A member subjected to any restriction or disciplinary action shall have the right to—
 - a. be informed in writing of the grounds for the action;
 - b. be given reasonable opportunity to be heard, defend themselves, and present evidence;
 - c. appeal the decision to a higher organ or appellate structure established under this Constitution or Association rules.
- 5. The Association shall not impose any disciplinary action that is arbitrary, discriminatory, or inconsistent with the values and principles enshrined in this Constitution.
- 6. Nothing in this Article shall limit the Association's duty to refer serious or criminal misconduct to competent authorities as required by law.

Article 27: Referral of Professional Misconduct

- 1. Where a member of the Association is suspected of professional misconduct that may constitute a violation of this Constitution, the Code of Conduct, or applicable laws, the Association shall have the authority to investigate and refer the matter to relevant regulatory or legal bodies for further action.
- 2. The Association shall ensure that any referral of professional misconduct
 - a. is based on credible evidence following a fair and thorough internal investigation;
 - b. respects the rights of the member to due process and confidentiality during preliminary proceedings;
 - c. is made in a timely manner to appropriate institutions including professional regulatory councils, law enforcement agencies, or judicial bodies.
- 3. The Association shall cooperate with such bodies and provide all necessary documentation or testimony required for the proper adjudication of the alleged misconduct.

4. No member shall be shielded from accountability for professional misconduct by reason of their membership in the Association.

Article 28: Enforcement of Member Rights and Provisions

1. The Association shall establish effective mechanisms for the enforcement of the rights, freedoms, and protections guaranteed under this Constitution to its members.
2. Members shall have the right to
 - a. seek redress for violations of their rights under this Constitution through internal complaint, mediation, and dispute resolution mechanisms;
 - b. have access to impartial and accessible forums within the Association for the enforcement of their rights;
 - c. be represented or assisted in proceedings relating to the enforcement of their rights.
3. The Association shall take all necessary steps to
 - a. investigate complaints of rights violations promptly and fairly;
 - b. impose corrective or disciplinary measures against persons found responsible for infringing member rights;
 - c. provide protection against victimization or retaliation for members exercising their rights under this Constitution.
4. The Association shall promote awareness among members of their rights and available enforcement mechanisms.
5. Nothing in this Article shall preclude members from seeking enforcement of their rights through external legal or regulatory institutions, where appropriate.

Article 29: Declaration of Institutional State of Emergency

1. The Association may declare an Institutional State of Emergency in circumstances where there exists a serious threat to the safety, security, integrity, or effective functioning of the Association or its members
2. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to
 - a. internal conflicts or crises that threaten the governance or operations of the Association;
 - b. widespread misconduct or violations of this Constitution that jeopardize the Association's reputation or objectives;
 - c. external threats or emergencies that significantly impact the welfare or security of members.
3. The declaration of an Institutional State of Emergency shall be made by the National Executive Committee in consultation with the COAZ council.
4. Upon declaration of an Institutional State of Emergency, the Association may—
 - a. suspend or modify normal governance procedures and meetings for the duration of the emergency;
 - b. implement extraordinary measures necessary to restore order, discipline, and effective administration;
 - c. temporarily restrict certain rights or freedoms of members, in accordance with this Constitution and subject to proportionality and necessity;
 - d. establish special committees or task forces to manage the emergency situation.
5. The State of Emergency shall be—
 - a. time-bound, with an initial duration not exceeding ninety (90) days;
 - b. subject to review and renewal with clear justification;
 - c. lifted as soon as the conditions necessitating the declaration have ceased.

6. Members shall be duly informed of the declaration, measures taken, and their rights and obligations during the State of Emergency.
7. Any action taken under the Institutional State of Emergency shall remain subject to oversight by the COAZ council and shall not contravene the core principles set out in this Constitution.

Article 30: Declaration of Public Health Emergency Engagement

1. The Association shall recognize the declaration of a Public Health Emergency by the Government of Zambia or relevant health authorities as a basis for coordinated professional engagement and response by its members.
2. Upon such declaration, the Association shall—
 - a. mobilize and coordinate members to support public health interventions and service delivery in accordance with national guidelines;
 - b. promote adherence to infection prevention, control measures, and ethical standards in emergency response;
 - c. liaise with government, health institutions, and partners to advocate for the welfare, safety, and adequate protection of members engaged in emergency response.
3. During a Public Health Emergency, the Association may—
 - a. recommend temporary adjustments to professional duties and deployment of members to meet urgent health service needs;
 - b. facilitate training, capacity building, and information dissemination relevant to the emergency;
 - c. monitor and report on the working conditions, risks, and challenges faced by members in the emergency context.
4. The Association shall ensure that

- a. members' rights and freedoms are respected to the greatest extent possible, notwithstanding exigencies of the emergency;
- b. no member is subjected to unjust or exploitative practices in the course of emergency response;
- c. mechanisms are in place for support, grievance redress, and welfare of members engaged during the emergency

Article 31: Declaration of Threat to Member Welfare or Professional Integrity

1. The Association may, through a resolution of the National Executive Committee, declare a Threat to Member Welfare or Professional Integrity where it is determined that—
 - a. there exists a persistent or imminent condition that endangers the health, safety, economic wellbeing, or mental welfare of members;
 - b. the professional rights, ethical standards, or regulatory protections of Clinical Officers are being systematically undermined or violated; or
 - c. the conditions of service, recognition, or fair treatment of members fall below acceptable or lawful standards, resulting in harm or risk of harm.
2. Upon such declaration, the Association shall—
 - a. issue a formal notice outlining the nature and scope of the threat, and the sectors or categories of members affected;
 - b. engage relevant institutions, stakeholders, or authorities to demand corrective action, policy intervention, or legal remedy;
 - c. implement internal protective and advocacy mechanisms to shield affected members from further harm, intimidation, or disadvantage;

- d. if necessary, activate the Association's emergency welfare response, including legal aid, psychosocial support, or representation.
- 3. The declaration may further empower the Association to—
 - a. suspend non-essential activities and redirect resources toward addressing the declared threat;
 - b. mobilize public support, media engagement, or lawful advocacy actions, including petitions and consultative forums;
 - c. initiate class-action or collective bargaining measures in defence of the affected members.
- 4. Any declaration made under this Article shall—
 - a. be time-bound and reviewed at least every ninety (90) days;
 - b. cease upon confirmation that the threat has been adequately addressed or no longer exists;
 - c. be communicated promptly to all members and relevant stakeholders.
- 5. Nothing in this Article shall prevent the Association from escalating the matter to regional or international platforms where domestic remedies are exhausted or ineffective.

Article 32: Interpretation and Savings

1. Interpretation

- a. This Constitution shall be interpreted in a manner that promotes its purposes, values, and principles, and advances the dignity, unity, and professionalism of Clinical Officers in Zambia.
- b. Where a question arises as to the meaning, scope, or application of any provision of this Constitution, such provision shall be construed purposively, in light of the objectives of the Association and the need to protect and uphold the rights of its members.
- c. Words importing the singular include the plural and vice versa; words importing one gender include all genders; and references to persons include natural and legal persons.

2. Precedence of this Constitution

This Constitution shall prevail over any other rules, regulations, by-laws, decisions, or instruments of the Association that are inconsistent with it. Any such inconsistent provisions shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be null and void.

3. Savings and Transitional Provisions

- a. All acts, decisions, resolutions, appointments, or transactions validly made under the previous governing instruments of the Association shall remain valid and in effect as if made under this Constitution.
- b. All rules, by-laws, and policies of the Association existing at the time of the coming into force of this Constitution shall remain in force until amended, repealed, or replaced in accordance with this Constitution.
- c. The structures and offices of the Association existing immediately before the commencement of this Constitution shall, subject to review and revalidation, continue to operate under the authority of this Constitution until properly reconstituted.

4. Power to Make Regulations

The National Executive Committee shall, within six (6) months of the coming into force of this Constitution, promulgate regulations and policies necessary to give effect to its provisions.

PART IV: MEMBERSHIP

Article 33: Existing membership

1. All persons who, at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, are duly registered members of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia shall be deemed to be members under this Constitution.
2. The rights, obligations, and status of such members shall continue uninterrupted, subject to compliance with the provisions of this Constitution and any rules, codes of conduct, or regulations issued under its authority.
3. No member deemed to have validly acquired membership under the previous constitution or governing instruments shall be disqualified solely on the basis of the coming into force of this Constitution.
4. The Association shall, within a period not exceeding twelve (12) months from the date of adoption of this Constitution, conduct a verification and regularization exercise to
 - a. update the membership register;
 - b. confirm the categories and standing of members; and
 - c. harmonize membership records in accordance with the new constitutional framework.
5. Nothing in this Article shall be construed as limiting the Association's authority to regulate the conditions, categories, and status of membership as provided in subsequent Articles of this Part.

Article 34: Categories of Membership

1. The membership of the Association shall consist of the following categories
 - a. Full Members
 - b. Associate Members
 - c. Student Members
 - d. Honorary Members
 - e. Affiliate Members
 - f. Life Members
 - g. Retired Members
2. The rights, obligations, privileges, and limitations attached to each category of membership shall be prescribed in the Association's regulations or membership by-laws.

Article 35: Membership Eligibility

1. Full Membership Eligibility

A person shall qualify for Full Membership of the Association if they

- a. hold a valid qualification as a Clinical Officer or mid-level clinical practitioner recognized by the Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ);
- b. possess a current license or registration to practice clinical medicine in Zambia;
- c. demonstrate good professional standing, with no outstanding disciplinary sanctions or unresolved ethical complaints;
- d. have paid the prescribed membership fees and complied with any registration or administrative requirements of the Association.

2. Associate Membership Eligibility

Eligibility for Associate Membership shall include persons who—

- a. are qualified Clinical Officers or mid-level clinical practitioners not currently engaged in active clinical practice;
- b. are Clinical Officers practicing outside the jurisdiction of Zambia;
- c. meet any additional criteria established by the National Executive Committee.

3. Student Membership Eligibility

Student Membership shall be open to individuals who—

- a. are formally enrolled in an accredited institution offering Clinical Officer training or equivalent mid-level clinical education;

- b. subscribe to and uphold the values and objectives of the Association;
- c. comply with any registration procedures and payment of applicable fees as determined by the Association.

4. Honorary Membership Eligibility

Honorary Membership may be conferred on individuals who—

- a. have rendered distinguished service or contribution to the Clinical Officer profession or the Association;
- b. do not otherwise meet the criteria for Full or Associate Membership;
- c. are nominated and approved in accordance with this Constitution.

5. Affiliate Membership Eligibility

Affiliate Membership may be granted to

- a. institutions, organizations, or individuals from related health professions who support the objectives of the Association;
- b. persons meeting any conditions prescribed by the National Executive Committee.

6. Life Membership Eligibility

- a. Life Membership shall be conferred Life membership may be conferred upon a Full Member who—
- b. has rendered distinguished and long-standing service to the profession and the Association;
- c. has been an active, compliant member for not less than fifteen (15) consecutive years; and
- d. is nominated by at least five members and approved by the National Executive Committee.

7. Retired Membership

- a. Retired Membership shall be granted to Full Members who have formally retired from active professional practice and apply accordingly.
- b. The Association shall have the power to verify eligibility and require evidence or documentation to support membership applications.
- c. Membership shall be granted only upon compliance with the eligibility criteria and payment of any prescribed fees, as determined by the Association's regulations.

Article 36: Membership by Professional Lineage (Descent)

1. The Association recognizes the principle of professional lineage and shall allow membership to individuals who are direct descendants of registered members of the Association, subject to the provisions of this Article.
2. Eligibility for membership by professional lineage shall be granted to persons who—

- a. Previously practiced as Clinical officers or mid-level clinical practitioners
 - b. have a qualification in Clinical Officer training programs or equivalent mid-level clinical education; and
 - c. meet all other membership requirements as specified in this Constitution and associated regulations.
3. Membership by professional lineage shall be subject to the same rights, privileges, and obligations as Full Members, once all standard eligibility criteria, including professional qualification and registration, are met.
4. The Association shall maintain a register of members by professional lineage to document and preserve the heritage and continuity of professional service.
5. This provision shall not exempt any applicant from fulfilling the requisite professional qualifications, ethical standards, or payment of membership dues.
6. The National Executive Committee shall develop guidelines to govern the verification and admission process for membership by professional lineage.

Article 37: Membership by registration

1. Membership of the Association shall be acquired through a formal registration process, subject to the provisions of this Constitution and any regulations prescribed by the Association.
2. The Association shall maintain a Register of Members, recording the names, categories, dates of registration, and other relevant details of all members.
3. Registration shall be confirmed upon successful verification of eligibility and payment of fees, at which point the applicant shall become a member with full rights and obligations pertaining to their membership category.

Article 38: Membership by Honorary Recognition

1. The Association may confer Honorary Membership upon individuals who have rendered exceptional and distinguished service to the Clinical Officer profession, healthcare development, or the objectives of the Association.
2. Eligibility for Honorary Membership shall include persons who
 - a. may not meet the standard professional qualification criteria for Full Membership;
 - b. have demonstrated outstanding contributions in areas such as healthcare policy, education, research, public service, or advocacy relevant to the profession.
3. Nominations for Honorary Membership shall be
 - a. submitted by members of the National Executive Committee or General Assembly;
 - b. supported by a detailed recommendation outlining the nominee's contributions and suitability.
4. The conferral of Honorary Membership shall
 - a. be approved by a two-thirds (⅔) majority vote of the General Assembly or the COAZ council;
 - b. be valid for life unless revoked for a just cause.
5. Honorary Members shall
 - a. enjoy the privileges and rights as determined by the Association, except where expressly limited by this Constitution or Association by-laws;
 - b. not be required to pay membership fees unless otherwise specified.
6. The Association shall maintain a register of Honorary Members, recording the date and basis of conferment

Article 39: Dual Membership

1. A member of the Association may hold membership in other professional bodies or associations, provided that such dual membership does not—
 - a. create a conflict of interest with the objectives, values, or regulations of the Association;
 - b. compromise the member's obligations, duties, or ethical responsibilities to the Association.
2. Members shall disclose any existing memberships in other professional bodies at the time of registration and whenever there is a material change.
3. The Association reserves the right to review and determine the compatibility of any dual membership and may impose conditions, restrictions, or require resignation from one of the bodies to resolve conflicts.
4. Dual membership shall not exempt a member from compliance with the provisions of this Constitution, including payment of fees, participation in Association activities, and adherence to disciplinary processes.
5. Failure to disclose dual membership or non-compliance with the Association's conditions regarding dual membership may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or termination of membership.

Article 40: Renunciation and Termination of Membership

1. Renunciation of Membership

- a. Any member may voluntarily renounce their membership by submitting a written notice of resignation to the Association in the prescribed form and manner.
- b. Such renunciation shall take effect upon acknowledgment of the notice by the Association, subject to the member's fulfillment of all outstanding obligations to the Association, including a maximum of a 3 month administrative window, payment of dues or fees.

2. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated by the Association under the following circumstances

- a. Non-payment of prescribed membership fees or dues within the stipulated period, after notice;
- b. Breach of the provisions of this Constitution, the Association's Code of Conduct, or any other rules and regulations of the Association;
- c. Conviction of a criminal offence or professional misconduct that undermines the reputation or integrity of the Association;
- d. Conduct detrimental to the interests, objectives, or reputation of the Association;
- e. Failure to maintain professional licensure or registration as required by law;
- f. Any other grounds as prescribed by the Association's disciplinary procedures.

3. Procedural Fairness

- a. No member shall be terminated without being given a fair hearing in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- b. The member shall be notified in writing of the grounds for proposed termination and shall have the opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
- c. The decision to terminate membership shall be made by the competent disciplinary or adjudicatory body established under this Constitution or the Association's by-laws.

4. Effects of Termination

- a. Upon termination, the member shall immediately cease to be entitled to any rights, privileges, or benefits of membership.
- b. The member shall return any Association property or materials in their possession.
- c. Terminated members shall remain liable for any outstanding obligations incurred prior to termination.

5. Appeal

Members whose membership has been terminated shall have the right to appeal the decision within a prescribed timeframe and in accordance with the Association's established appeal procedures.

Article 41: Membership Governance and Admissions

1. The Secretary General shall have primary responsibility for the governance of membership affairs, including admission, registration, classification, and maintenance of membership records.
2. The Secretary General shall-
 - a. oversee the processing and verification of all membership applications in accordance with this Constitution and the Association's regulations;
 - b. ensure adherence to eligibility criteria and due diligence in admitting members into the various categories prescribed;
 - c. maintain and regularly update a Register of Members with accurate and current information;
 - d. advise the National Executive Committee on policies and procedures governing membership admissions, renewals, and disciplinary matters;
 - e. ensure confidentiality and proper handling of member data in compliance with applicable laws and ethical standards.
3. The Association shall establish clear, transparent, and accessible admission procedures to facilitate timely processing of membership applications.
4. The National Executive Committee shall have final authority to approve or reject membership applications
5. Membership admission shall be subject to payment of prescribed fees as determined by the Association, which may be periodically reviewed.
6. The Association shall ensure equitable access to membership for eligible applicants without discrimination on grounds of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, or any other protected status under this Constitution.
7. The Association shall publicize membership criteria, benefits, obligations, and admission procedures to promote awareness and encourage membership growth.

Article 42: Rights of Members

1. Every member of the Association, regardless of category, shall be entitled to—
 - a. participate in the activities, programs, and governance of the Association, subject to the rights and limitations of their membership category;
 - b. vote at General Assemblies or meetings, where applicable to their membership category;
 - c. stand for and hold office in the Association in accordance with the eligibility criteria and provisions of this Constitution;
 - d. receive timely information and communication from the Association regarding matters affecting members;
 - e. access professional development opportunities, training, and resources provided or facilitated by the Association;
 - f. protection of their professional rights, dignity, and welfare as prescribed in this Constitution;
 - g. fair and transparent disciplinary and grievance procedures;
 - h. benefit from services, programs, and initiatives of the Association aimed at promoting their professional growth and welfare.
2. Full Members shall enjoy all rights and privileges, including unrestricted voting rights and eligibility for all offices and committees of the Association.
3. Associate, Student, Honorary, Affiliate, Life, and Retired Members shall have rights and privileges as prescribed by the Association's by-laws, which may include limited or special participation rights.
4. No member shall be denied membership rights arbitrarily or without due process, including the right to be heard and to appeal decisions affecting their rights.
5. The Association shall safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of members' personal and professional information in all its dealings

Article 43: Responsibilities of Members

1. Every member of the Association shall uphold and adhere to the principles, values, and objectives of the Association. Members shall—
 - a. maintain high standards of professional conduct, ethics, and integrity in their practice;
 - b. comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies governing the profession;
 - c. respect the rights, dignity, and welfare of fellow members, patients, and the public;
 - d. participate actively in the activities, meetings, and programs of the Association, contributing to its growth and effectiveness;
 - e. pay timely membership fees and dues as prescribed by the Association;
 - f. protect and promote the reputation, unity, and professional integrity of the Association and its members;
 - g. report any professional misconduct or violations of the Constitution or the Association's regulations;
 - h. safeguard the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of their professional duties.
2. Members shall not engage in any conduct that—
 - a. undermines the objectives, values, or reputation of the Association;
 - b. constitutes discrimination or harassment;
 - c. violates any disciplinary, ethical, or legal standards applicable to the profession.
3. Members shall participate in continuing professional development programs developed by the association as part of their commitment to maintaining competency and excellence.
4. Failure to comply with these duties and obligations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

Article 44: Reference to Membership of Institution

1. The Association shall maintain and provide official certification or references confirming the membership status of individuals upon request by members or authorized institutions.
2. Such certification shall include—
 - a. confirmation of the member's category of membership;
 - b. the period of membership;

- c. any current standing or status, including whether the member is in good standing or subject to disciplinary action.
- 3. Requests for membership references shall be made in writing to the Secretary General or designated officer and shall be processed within a reasonable timeframe as prescribed by the Association.
- 4. The Association shall ensure the accuracy, confidentiality, and integrity of all information provided in membership references.
- 5. Membership references shall be issued only to the member concerned or to third parties authorized in writing by the member, except where required by law or regulatory authorities.
- 6. The Association reserves the right to withhold or restrict issuance of membership references in circumstances where the member's status is under investigation or subject to disciplinary proceedings.

PART V: REPRESENTATION OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Article 45: Principles of electoral systems and process

- 1. The electoral system and processes of the Association shall be guided by the principles of
 - a. fairness, transparency, and integrity;
 - b. inclusiveness and equal opportunity for all eligible members;
 - c. accountability and democratic representation;
 - d. confidentiality and security of the voting process;
 - e. compliance with this Constitution and any applicable laws or regulations.
- 2. Elections shall be conducted in a manner that promotes free expression of the will of the members, without intimidation, coercion, or undue influence.
- 3. The Association shall establish clear procedures, timelines, and regulations to govern nomination, campaigning, voting, and the declaration of results.
- 4. The electoral process shall be overseen by an independent Electoral Commission appointed by the National Executive Committee.
- 5. Disputes arising from electoral processes shall be resolved expeditiously in accordance with established grievance and appeal mechanisms.

Article 46: Franchise

1. The right to vote and stand for election in the Association's electoral processes shall be vested in members who—
 - a. hold Full Membership status;
 - b. have paid all prescribed membership fees and dues within the stipulated period prior to the election; and
 - c. meet any additional eligibility criteria prescribed by the Association.
2. Associate, Student, Honorary, Affiliate, Life, and Retired Members shall not have voting rights unless expressly provided for in the Association's by-laws.
3. No member shall be disenfranchised arbitrarily; any restriction of franchise shall be pursuant to the provisions of this Constitution.
4. The Association shall maintain an updated and accurate Register of Voters to facilitate the electoral process.

Article 47: Electoral systems

1. Elections to the office of President and Secretary General of the Association shall be conducted directly under a majoritarian electoral system, where the winning candidate must receive more than fifty percent (50%) of the valid votes cast.
2. Elections to other National Executive Committee shall be conducted under a first-past-the-post electoral system, where candidates receiving the highest number of valid votes shall be declared winners.
3. Elections to other representative bodies or sub-committees within the Association shall also be conducted under a first-past-the-post electoral system or other suitable electoral methods as prescribed by the Association's regulations.
4. A branch, or unit of the association shall return only three representatives to offices prescribed in the by_laws.

Article 48: Electoral process

1. The conduct of elections within the Association shall be governed by the principles of transparency, fairness, inclusiveness, accountability, and professionalism, in accordance with this Constitution and any regulations made under it.
2. The Electoral Commission of the Association, appointed by the National Executive Committee and ratified by the COAZ Council, shall be the sole body responsible for the administration, supervision, and management of all electoral processes of the Association.
3. The Electoral Commission shall—
 - a. develop and publish electoral regulations and a schedule for each election cycle;
 - b. prepare and update the voter register;
 - c. receive and vet nominations;
 - d. manage the campaign environment;
 - e. conduct and oversee voting and counting procedures;
 - f. declare and publish results;
 - g. manage and adjudicate electoral disputes.

4. The electoral process shall include the following phases:

- a. **Notice of Election**

The Electoral Commission shall publish a general notice of election not less than ninety (90) days prior to the election date, specifying the positions open for contest, nomination requirements, and key dates.

- B. **Nomination of Candidates**

Nominations shall be submitted in the prescribed form within the nomination period, supported by at least two (2) fully subscribed members in good standing. The Commission shall verify eligibility and publish the final list of candidates.

- C. **Campaign Period**

Candidates shall be granted equal opportunity to campaign under conditions that promote professionalism, decorum, and unity. Campaigns shall be conducted over a period not exceeding sixty (60) days and shall end forty-eight (48) hours before polling.

D. Voting

Voting shall be by secret ballot and may be conducted manually or electronically, as determined by the Electoral Commission. Only members in good standing, appearing on the certified voter register, shall be eligible to vote.

E. Counting and Declaration of Results

Vote counting shall be conducted transparently in the presence of designated agents or observers. The Electoral Commission shall declare the results within twenty-four (24) hours of the close of polling and publish them in an official communiqué.

5. A member aggrieved by the conduct or outcome of an election may file a petition to the Electoral Commission within seventy-two (72) hours of the declaration of results. The Commission shall hear and determine the petition within fourteen (14) days, and its decision shall be final.
6. No candidate shall assume office unless duly declared elected and upon taking the prescribed oath or affirmation of office. Such assumption of office shall occur not later than thirty (30) days following the declaration of election results.
7. The Association shall strive to ensure equitable representation of gender, geography, and professional diversity in its electoral outcome

Article 49: System for administering elections

The system for administering elections shall be prescribed

Article 50: Access to media and communication platforms

A candidate contesting an election shall have access to the Media and association platforms, especially during election campaigns.

Article 51: Electoral candidates

1. A person shall qualify to be nominated as a candidate for election to the national Executive committee if that person—
 - a. is a full member of the Association in good standing;
 - b. has been a member of the Association for a continuous period of at least three (3) years immediately preceding the nomination;
 - c. is not under disciplinary suspension or sanction at the time of nomination;
 - d. has not been convicted of a professional offence or criminal offence involving dishonesty, fraud, or moral turpitude within the preceding five (5) years;
 - e. meets any additional position-specific qualifications prescribed under this Constitution or by electoral regulations.
2. A person shall qualify to be nominated as a candidate for election to the provincial Chairperson if that person
 - a. is a full member of the Association in good standing;
 - b. has been a member of the Association for a continuous period of at least two (2) years immediately preceding the nomination;
 - c. is not under disciplinary suspension or sanction at the time of nomination;
 - d. has not been convicted of a professional offence or criminal offence involving dishonesty, fraud, or moral turpitude within the preceding five (5) years;
 - e. meets any additional position-specific qualifications prescribed under this Constitution or by electoral regulations.

3. A person shall qualify to be nominated as a candidate for election to the district or branch committee if that person
 - a. is a full member of the Association in good standing;
 - b. has been a member of the Association for a continuous period of at 6 months immediately preceding the nomination;
 - c. is not under disciplinary suspension or sanction at the time of nomination;
 - d. has not been convicted of a professional offence or criminal offence involving dishonesty, fraud, or moral turpitude within the preceding five (5) years;
 - e. meets any additional position-specific qualifications prescribed under this Constitution or by electoral regulations.
4. A member may only contest for one elective position in a given electoral cycle.
5. All candidates shall subscribe to and uphold the Association's Code of Conduct for Elections, as issued by the Electoral Commission.
6. The Electoral Commission shall verify all nominations, vet candidates, and publish a final list of duly nominated candidates not less than thirty (30) days before the date of elections.
7. A candidate who knowingly provides false information during the nomination process or engages in corrupt or unethical campaign practices shall be disqualified by the Electoral Commission.
8. No candidate shall—
 - a. use Association resources, symbols, or official privileges for campaign purposes;
 - b. incite violence, hatred, tribalism, or discrimination;
 - c. engage in vote-buying, coercion, or undue influence over voters.
9. A candidate may withdraw their candidacy by submitting a written notice to the Electoral Commission not less than ten (10) days before the scheduled date of the election.

10. In the event of the death, disqualification, or withdrawal of a candidate after the close of nominations, the Electoral Commission shall take appropriate measures to proceed with the election in accordance with electoral regulations.

Article 52: Nominations

1. A person intending to contest an elective position in the Association shall be nominated in the manner prescribed by this Constitution and the Electoral Commission of the Association.
2. A nomination shall—
 - a. be made on a form prescribed by the Electoral Commission;
 - b. be endorsed by not fewer than five (5) full members in good standing;
 - c. be accompanied by a declaration of eligibility and intent to stand; and
 - d. be submitted within the nomination period as publicly announced by the Electoral Commission.
3. The Electoral Commission shall, within seven (7) days of the close of nominations, publish a provisional list of nominated candidates.
4. Any objection to the nomination of a candidate shall be submitted in writing to the Electoral Commission within three (3) days of the publication of the provisional list, and the Electoral Commission shall determine such objections within five (5) days.
5. The final list of approved candidates shall be published not later than thirty (30) days before the election.
6. A candidate may withdraw their nomination by written notice to the Electoral Commission at least ten (10) days before the election

Article 53: Unopposed candidates

1. Where only one candidate is validly nominated for an elective office at the close of nominations, the Electoral Commission shall declare that candidate duly elected to the office, without the necessity of a vote.
2. Where no candidate is nominated for a particular office—
 - a. the Electoral Commission shall extend the nomination period by not more than three (3) days; and
 - b. if no candidate is nominated after the extended period, the office shall be deemed vacant, and the National Executive Committee shall appoint a qualified member to act in that capacity until a by-election is held.
3. A candidate elected unopposed shall assume office in the same manner and with the same powers and obligations as one elected through a vote.

Article 54: Electoral code of conduct

A candidate shall comply with a prescribed electoral code of conduct.

Article 55: Losing candidate not eligible for certain appointments

1. A candidate who contests an election for any office within the Association and is duly declared unsuccessful shall not be eligible for appointment to any office or position within the Association related to that same electoral cycle, except where the appointment is expressly authorized by this Constitution.
2. This restriction shall apply from the date of the declaration of the election results until the commencement of the next general election cycle.
3. Any appointment made in violation of this Article shall be null and void.

Article 56: Election date for National elections and Branch Elections

1. National elections for the offices of the National Executive Committee, Professional Coordinators and Provincial Chairperson positions shall be held every three (3) years on a date prescribed by the Electoral Commission, subject to approval by the COAZ Council.
2. Branch elections shall be conducted not less than thirty (30) days prior to the National elections, in accordance with the electoral calendar issued by the Electoral Commission.
3. The Electoral Commission shall give notice of all election dates at least sixty (60) days before the commencement of the electoral process.
4. In exceptional circumstances, including emergencies or force majeure, the Electoral Commission may, with the approval of the COAZ Council, postpone elections for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days.
5. Any such postponement shall be communicated promptly in writing to all members, together with reasons and new election dates.

Article 57: By-elections

1. By-elections shall be held to fill vacancies arising in any elective office before the expiration of the term due to resignation, death, removal, or incapacity of the office bearer.
2. The Electoral Commission shall issue a notice for the by-election within **thirty (30) days** of the vacancy occurring.
3. By-elections shall be conducted in accordance with the electoral system and procedures provided for in this Constitution and related regulations.
4. The person elected in a by-election shall serve only the remainder of the term of the vacated office.

5. In cases where a vacancy occurs within **six (6) months** of the expiration of the term of office, the COAZ Council may, at its discretion, decide to leave the position vacant until the next general election.

Article 58: Representation of Provinces, Districts, Branches and delimitation

1. The Association shall be divided into Provincial Chapters, Districts, Sub_districts, and Branches for purposes of elections and representation to the National Executive Committee
2. The number of Provincial Chapters shall correspond to the number of established administrative zones
3. The number of District, Subdistrict and Branches shall be Prescribed.
4. The Electoral Commission of the Association shall determine the names and boundaries of the Branches for purposes of electoral and administrative representation.
5. The Electoral Commission shall, at intervals of not more than **Five (5) years**, or as the need arises, review the names and representation branches to reflect changes in membership demographics, service distribution, and professional deployment.
6. The names and boundaries of all Branches shall be published in the official communications of the Association
7. A member or branch aggrieved by a delimitation decision of the Electoral Commission may petition the COAZ Council for review, and the decision of the Council shall be final
8. The delimitation process shall be guided by the principles of equity, transparency, member representation, and professional cohesion.

Article 59: Matters to take into account when delimiting

1. In delimiting Chapters, Branches, and Representation Units of the Association, the Electoral Commission of the Association shall take into account the following matters:
 - a. The geographical distribution and concentration of members;
 - b. The existing administrative boundaries as recognized by the Government of the Republic of Zambia;
 - c. The number of health facilities and deployment of Clinical Officers and mid-level practitioners;
 - d. Accessibility and communication infrastructure within the proposed boundary;
 - e. The need to ensure effective representation and service delivery;
 - f. Cultural, linguistic, and community cohesion where applicable; and
 - g. Any other matter that the Electoral Commission considers necessary for equitable and effective delimitation.
2. The delimitation process shall ensure that no member is disenfranchised or disadvantaged by reason of location, cadre, or service station.
3. The Electoral Commission shall consult widely with stakeholders, including Branch and Chapter leadership, during the delimitation process.
4. Final delimitation maps and descriptions shall be published and distributed at least ninety (90) days before any scheduled general election.

Article 60: Professional Groupings and caucuses

1. The Association shall recognize and facilitate the formation of professional groupings and caucuses within its membership, based on area of specialization, interest, or function, including but not limited to:
 - a. Clinical Officers General;
 - b. Mental health & Clinical Psychiatry Providers;
 - c. Specialized clinical officers
 - d. Clinical Anaesthetists;
 - e. Medical Licentiates;
 - f. Ophthalmic and eye service providers;
 - g. Emergency Practitioners;
 - H. Students and Trainees.
 - i. Any other grouping as deemed necessary
2. Professional groupings and caucuses shall operate under the general guidance of the National Executive Committee and shall be required to:
 - a. Register with the Office of the Secretary General;
 - b. Develop terms of reference aligned with the objectives of the Association;
 - c. Elect their own National Coordinator

d. Participate in policy dialogue, development of professional standards, training initiatives, and member mobilization.

3. Caucuses shall not operate as separate legal entities and shall not engage in activities contrary to the Constitution of the Association.
4. The National Executive Committee may dissolve, suspend, or restructure a caucus where it acts in a manner inconsistent with the values, objectives, or regulations of the Association.

Article 61: Tenure of Office

1. A person elected or appointed to an office under this Constitution shall, unless otherwise provided, hold office for a term of three (3) years, effective from the date of swearing-in or official assumption of duty.
2. A person may be re-elected or re-appointed to the same office for one further term only, and shall not serve more than two (2) terms in the same office, whether consecutively or non-consecutively.
3. Where a person assumes office to fill a vacancy in the course of a term:
 - a. If the remainder of the term is less than eighteen (18) months, it shall not be counted as a full term for purposes of re-election eligibility;
 - b. If the remainder is eighteen (18) months or more, it shall be considered a full term.
4. The tenure of office for appointed officers or committee members shall be guided by the instrument of appointment but shall not exceed the tenure of the appointing authority unless otherwise provided.
5. A person shall vacate office upon—
 - a. the expiry of the term of office;
 - b. resignation;
 - c. removal in accordance with the Constitution;
 - d. incapacity to perform functions of office due to mental or physical infirmity;
 - e. death; or

f. assumption of an office that creates a conflict of interest or is incompatible with the current position.

PART VI: LEGISLATURE

Article 61: Principles of legislative authority

1. The legislative authority of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia derives from its members and shall be exercised in a manner that protects this Constitution and promotes democratic and accountable governance within the Association.
2. The legislative authority shall be exercised in a manner that—
 - a. Respects and upholds the Constitution of the Association;
 - b. Protects the rights and dignity of Clinical Officers and members;
 - c. Promotes transparency, inclusivity, and participatory decision-making;
 - d. Ensures responsiveness to the evolving needs and realities of the membership and the health sector.
3. No person or organ shall exercise legislative authority outside the provisions of this Constitution or contrary to the democratic will of the members.

Article 62: The General Assembly and Legislative Authority

The legislative authority shall be vested in the General Assembly, which shall act on behalf of the membership and in the collective interest of the profession

Article 63: Functions of the General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall be the supreme legislative and policy-making organ of the Association and shall exercise its authority in accordance with this Constitution.
2. Without prejudice to the generality of clause (1), the functions of the General Assembly shall include the following:
 - a. To deliberate on and determine the strategic direction, legislative policies, and professional standards of the Association;
 - b. To elect the President and other national office bearers in accordance with this Constitution;
 - c. To approve the Association's annual budget, financial statements, and audit reports;
 - d. To consider and approve proposed amendments to this Constitution and any subsidiary legislation or regulations of the Association;
 - e. To admit ratify new branches and honorary memberships;
 - f. To adopt resolutions, declarations, and policy positions that guide the governance and advocacy mandate of the Association;
 - g. To receive and consider reports from the National Executive Committee and the the COAZ Council;
 - h. To provide direction on matters referred to it by the Council, National Executive or members of the Association;
 - i. To exercise any other powers or perform any other functions conferred on it by this Constitution or any law made under its authority.

Article 64: Introduction of Motions and Resolutions

1. A member of the General Assembly, a Committee of the Association, or any organ established under this Constitution may introduce a motion or resolution for debate and consideration by the General Assembly.
2. A motion or resolution shall be introduced in writing and submitted to the Secretary General not less than thirty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, except in cases of urgency as determined by the Chairperson of the Assembly.
3. The General Assembly shall not consider any motion or resolution that—

- a. Contravenes this Constitution or any laws of the Republic of Zambia;
 - b. Has the effect of undermining the dignity, rights, or status of any member or professional category;
 - c. Lacks sufficient grounds, justification, or relevance to the objectives of the Association.
4. A motion or resolution shall be adopted by a simple majority of members present and voting, unless otherwise specified in this Constitution.

Article 65: Financial Motions

1. A financial motion is a motion that—
- a. Imposes or alters a fee, levy, or charge payable to the Association;
 - b. Authorizes expenditure from the funds of the Association;
 - c. Relates to the appropriation or allocation of Association resources or finances;
 - d. Has the effect of impacting the financial obligations or entitlements of any member or organ of the Association.
2. A financial motion may only be introduced by—
- a. The Treasurer-General;
 - b. The National Executive Committee; or
 - c. A standing committee duly authorized by the Council or General Assembly.

3. No financial motion shall be debated or passed unless it is accompanied by a financial statement and recommendation from the Finance and Audit Committee.
4. The adoption of a financial motion shall require a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.

Article 66: Presidential assent and referral

1. A resolution, statute, or policy passed by the General Assembly shall be submitted to the President of the Association for assent within seven days of its adoption.
2. The President shall, within fourteen days of receipt—
 - a. Assent to the resolution or statute and cause it to be published or implemented; or
 - b. Refer the matter back to the General Assembly or to the council with written reasons for reconsideration.
3. Where a resolution or statute is referred back and is passed again by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly or Approved by the Council, the President shall assent to it without further objection.
4. Failure by the President to assent or refer the resolution within the stipulated period shall be deemed assent, and the statute or resolution shall take effect accordingly.

Article 67: COAZ statutory and Policy Instruments

1. The Association shall enact statutory instruments, regulations, guidelines, and policy directives for the effective implementation of this Constitution and the operationalization of its functions.

2. A statutory or policy instrument shall be issued under the authority of:
 - a. The General Assembly and COAZ Council, where the matter affects legislation or general policy;
 - b. The National Executive Committee, for administrative or operational guidelines, implementation or coordination.
3. All statutory instruments and policy directives shall—
 - a. Be consistent with this Constitution;
 - b. Be published in the official communication channels of the Association;
 - c. Take effect on the date of publication or as may be specified therein.
4. Any statutory or policy instrument inconsistent with this Constitution shall be void to the extent of its inconsistency

Article 68: Composition of General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall be the highest professional gathering of members of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia and shall be convened once every calendar year.
2. The General Assembly shall:
 - a. Serve as a platform for professional dialogue, scientific presentations, and policy engagement;
 - b. Receive and consider annual reports from the President, Secretary General, and other organs of the Association;

- c. Approve the Association's strategic direction, financial statements, and key resolutions;
 - d. Elect office bearers of the National Executive Committee every three (3) years;
 - e. Provide an open forum for members to raise and deliberate on matters of concern affecting the profession;
 - f. Promote unity, collaboration, and networking among members across all regions and specializations.
3. The General Assembly shall be composed of:
- a. All paid-up members of the Association in good standing;
 - b. Student representatives from recognised academic institutions;
 - c. Delegates from provincial branches, thematic chapters, and professional caucuses;
 - d. Invited guests, observers, and stakeholders as determined by the National Executive Committee.
 - e. the COAZ council
4. The General Assembly shall be convened by the President of the Association, in consultation with the Secretary General, and notice of such meeting shall be given not less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of assembly.

Article 69: Nominated Members

1. The National Executive Committee may nominate not more than fifteen (15) members to attend the General Assembly to ensure representation of:

- a. Retired Clinical Officers;
 - b. Persons living with disabilities;
 - c. Marginalised groups or underrepresented regions;
 - d. Relevant institutional or honorary members who have significantly contributed to the profession.
2. Nominated members shall have observer status, and may participate in discussions, but shall not have voting rights unless otherwise conferred or are full members

Article 70: Qualifications and disqualifications of Members of Delegates

1. A person shall qualify to be a delegate to the General Assembly if that person—
- a. Is a registered and paid-up member of the Association;
 - b. Has no outstanding disciplinary case before the Association;
 - c. Is in good standing with their regulatory authority.
 - d. is nominated to attend by the national executive committee
2. A person shall be disqualified from serving as a delegate to the General Assembly if that person
- a. Has been convicted of a criminal offence involving professional misconduct, or fraud
 - b. Has been declared mentally unfit by a competent authority;
 - c. Is serving a suspension or ban from taking part in activities of the Association;

d. Has not attended at least one professional or CPD activity organised by the Association in the past year.

Article 71: Nominations to General Assembly

Nomination shall be prescribed

Article 72: Vacation of office by a delegate

1. A delegate shall vacate office where that delegate—
 - a. Resigns or pronounces non-attendance of General assembly by written notice to the Secretary General;
 - b. Ceases to be a member in good standing;
 - c. Is removed by their nominating body for breach of mandate or professional conduct;
 - d. Is elected or appointed to a national executive office, and cannot serve concurrently as a delegate;
 - e. Dies, is incapacitated, or becomes otherwise unable to serve.

Article 73: Petition of election Outcomes

1. A member of the Association may petition the outcome of an election held during the General Assembly within seven (7) days after the announcement of the official results.
2. A petition shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary General and copied to the Electoral Commission of the Association, clearly stating the grounds of complaint.

3. The petition shall be determined by an independent Disciplinary and Electoral Appeals Tribunal constituted by the COAZ Council within fourteen (14) days of receipt.
4. The decision of the Tribunal may be appealed to the Council, whose decision shall be final and binding.

Article 74: Leader of General Assembly Business

1. The President of the Association shall preside over the General Assembly and serve as the Leader of General Assembly Business.
2. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall preside. If both are absent, the Secretary General or a senior officer elected by the National Executive Committee shall act as presiding officer.
3. The Leader of General Assembly Business shall:
 - a. Guide the Assembly's proceedings in accordance with the Constitution, Rules of Procedure, and agenda;
 - b. Ensure orderly debate, presentation of motions, and resolution of matters;
 - c. Invite guest speakers;
 - d. Uphold professional decorum of the Assembly.

Article 75: Sitzings of the General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall hold one ordinary sitting each year, called the Annual General Assembly, to be convened by the Secretary General, under the direction of the President.

2. The National Executive Committee may, in consultation with the COAZ Council, convene an Extraordinary General Assembly where matters of urgency or national interest arise.
3. Notice of an ordinary sitting shall be issued at least ninety (90) days in advance, while an extraordinary sitting shall be convened with at least fourteen (14) days' notice.
4. The quorum for the General Assembly shall be prescribed 1/3 of General Assembly registered attendees

Article 76: Speech, privileges and immunities

1. Every member of the Association shall enjoy freedom of speech and expression during General Assembly proceedings, subject to rules of order and professional ethics.
2. No member shall be liable in any court or disciplinary forum for words spoken or documents presented in the course of General Assembly debates or submissions, provided such are not defamatory, unlawful, or in breach of medical codes.
3. Members and invited guests attending the Assembly shall be granted professional and academic respect, and protected from intimidation, reprisal, or discrimination for participation in Assembly business.
4. The General Assembly may adopt rules regulating conduct, speech limits, and sanctions for disorderly conduct, subject to this Constitution.

Article 77: Procedure of the General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall adopt and operate in accordance with Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure.

2. The General Assembly shall deliberate based on a prepared agenda, which shall be circulated to members at least thirty (30) days prior to an ordinary sitting.
3. All matters before the Assembly shall be debated, subject to time limits and decorum rules as may be determined by the Leader of Assembly Business or Presiding Officer.
4. Decisions of the General Assembly shall be made by consensus or, where consensus is not possible, by voting.

Article 78: Voting in the General Assembly

1. Every registered delegate or member of the association shall have one vote.
2. Decisions shall be made by simple majority, unless otherwise provided by this Constitution.
3. In the event of a tie, the Presiding Officer shall have a casting vote in addition to a deliberative vote.
4. Voting may be conducted by show of hands, secret ballot, or electronic means, as may be determined by the Assembly for each session or resolution.
5. Proxy voting shall not be permitted unless provided for by specific regulations and approved by the Council

Article 79: Amendment of the Constitution

1. This Constitution may be amended by the General Assembly, sitting in a duly convened session, with the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of delegates present and voting.
2. A proposal to amend the Constitution shall:

- a. Be submitted in writing to the Secretary General not less than ninety (90) days before the General Assembly;
 - b. Be circulated to all members at least sixty (60) days prior to debate.
3. No amendment shall be made that contradicts the national laws, the objectives of the Association, or professional ethics.
4. A constitutional review may be initiated by:
 - a. A resolution of the COAZ Council;
 - b. A petition signed by at least one-third (1/3) of registered members;
 - c. A directive from the General Assembly.

Article 80: Committees of General Assembly

1. The General Assembly may establish Standing or Ad hoc Committees to facilitate the execution of its functions.
2. Such Committees may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Planning and Secretarial Services Committee;
 - b. Registration committee;
 - c. Policy and Legislative Committee;
3. The composition, tenure, and terms of reference of each Committee shall be determined by the National Executive Committee.
4. Committees shall report to the General Assembly and may invite expert or observer input as needed.

Article 81: Term and Adjournment of the General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall be deemed to be in session for the duration of its announced period, not exceeding five (5) consecutive calendar days, unless extended by resolution.
2. The Assembly may adjourn its sittings to a later date or time, provided that the total session does not exceed thirty (30) cumulative days in a calendar year unless under extraordinary circumstances.
3. Adjournments may also occur due to public health emergencies or other force majeure events

Article 82: Speaker and Deputy Speakers of General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall elect a **Speaker** and **two Deputy Speakers** from among its delegates to preside over debates and proceedings in the absence of the President or Vice President or Secretary General.
2. The Speaker and Deputy Speakers shall:
 - a. Ensure impartial moderation of debates;
 - b. Enforce procedural rules and maintain order;
 - c. Uphold the rights and privileges of all members.
3. The tenure of the Speaker and Deputy Speakers shall align with the term of the General Assembly.

Article 83: Removal of Speaker on specified grounds

1. The Speaker or Deputy Speaker of the General Assembly may be removed from office by a resolution of the General Assembly supported by not less than two-thirds of all members present and voting.
2. A motion for removal shall only be brought on the following grounds:
 - a. Gross misconduct or violation of this Constitution;
 - b. Mental or physical incapacity to perform the functions of the office;
 - c. Abuse of office or serious breach of General Assembly Standing Orders.

Article 84: Clerk of the General Assembly

1. There shall be a Clerk of the General Assembly who shall be appointed by the National Executive committee
2. The Clerk shall be the principal administrative officer of the General Assembly and shall perform the following functions:
 - a. Keep official records and minutes of the Assembly;
 - b. Provide procedural advice to the Speaker and Assembly members;
 - c. Ensure publication and dissemination of resolutions, statutes, and policy instruments.

Article 85: Other Officers of the General Assembly

May be prescribed

Article 86: Presidential address to the General Assembly

1. The President of the Association shall, at the official opening of each General Assembly, deliver a Presidential Address outlining:
 - a. The state of the Association;
 - b. Key professional, regulatory, and policy priorities;
 - c. Progress made in implementing resolutions of the previous Assembly;
 - d. The Association's vision and call to action for the current term.
2. The Presidential Address shall be recorded in the Assembly proceedings and may form the basis of debate or committee deliberations.

Article 87: Vote of censure

1. The General Assembly may pass a vote of censure against any officer holding National office or provincial office for conduct deemed incompatible with the values and duties of office.
2. A motion of censure shall be filed by at least 25% of the members of the Association and shall state clearly the grounds for such censure.
3. The officer concerned shall be given adequate notice and an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
4. A vote of censure shall require the support of at least two-thirds of the General Assembly members present and voting.
5. The effect of a successful vote of censure shall be as determined by the Assembly, including suspension, reprimand, or removal.

Article 88: Right to petition and make comments

1. Every member of the Association shall have the right to petition the General Assembly or the Council, on matters affecting—
 - a. The governance and performance of the Association;
 - b. The professional interests, rights, and welfare of members;
 - c. The conduct or actions of any office bearer or organ of the Association; or
 - d. Proposals for amendments to policy or constitutional provisions.
2. A petition shall—
 - a. Be submitted in writing, signed by the petitioner or petitioners;
 - b. State the grounds and relief or action sought;
 - c. Be addressed to the appropriate organ of the Association; and
 - d. Be reviewed within a reasonable period not exceeding **thirty (30) days** from the date of receipt
3. The General Assembly or the COAZ council shall prescribe and publish procedures for the submission, receipt, review, and response to petitions and member commentary.

Article 89: Public access and participation at General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall be conducted in a manner that is open, inclusive, and participatory, subject to limitations necessary for security, order, and proper conduct of proceedings.

2. The Association shall ensure that—

a. Members and accredited observers may attend and participate in open sessions of the General Assembly;

b. Adequate notice is given prior to the convening of the General Assembly, including venue, agenda, and procedures for participation;

c. Mechanisms are provided for remote participation or observation, including through digital platforms, where feasible.

3. The General Assembly shall allocate time and space for public comments, member questions, and professional input during open sessions.

4. Closed or restricted sessions may be held where matters of confidentiality, discipline, security, or sensitive negotiations are under discussion, as may be determined by the Speaker or presiding officer.

PART VII: NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

Article 90: Principles of executive authority and functions of the national executive

1. Executive authority of the Association derives from its members and shall be exercised in a manner that promotes:

a. The values, objectives, and principles enshrined in this Constitution;

b. Accountable, ethical, and participatory leadership;

c. Efficient and responsive administration of the affairs of the Association.

2. The National Executive shall be responsible for:

a. The overall management, coordination, and policy implementation of the Association;

b. Representing the Association at national, regional, and international levels;

c. Supervising all subordinate organs, committees, and branches;

d. Ensuring financial accountability and proper use of Association resources;

e. Convening the General Assembly and implementing its resolutions.

Article 91: Presidency and vesting of executive authority

1. The executive authority of the Association shall vest in the President of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia, who shall be the:

a. Head of the National Executive;

b. Head of the Association; and

c. Chairperson of the National Executive Committee.

2. The President shall exercise this authority in accordance with this Constitution and decisions of the General Assembly and the Council.

3. The President shall be supported in executing executive functions by:

a. The Vice President;

b. The Secretary General;

c. The Treasurer General;

d. National Secretary – Coordination and Publication

e. National Secretary – Professional Welfare, Training and Development (PT&D)

Article 92: Executive functions of President

The President shall

1. Uphold, defend, and promote the Constitution and objectives of the Association.
2. Convene and preside over meetings of the National Executive Committee, and General Assembly, except where delegated.
3. Sign or ratify instruments, communiqués, and declarations made on behalf of the Association.
4. Appoint or assign duties to officers and representatives of the Association as authorised under this Constitution or by the COAZ Council.
5. Represent the Association in engagements with government, regulatory bodies, other associations, and partners.
6. Issue executive directives, subject to ratification where necessary, to address urgent or exceptional matters.
7. Signatory to the associations accounts
8. Ensure the enforcement of decisions of the General Assembly, Council, and National Executive Committee.

Article 93: Confirmation of presidential decisions and instructions

1. All major decisions, directives, or appointments made by the President in exercise of executive authority shall be subject to confirmation by:

- a. The Council or general assembly, if the decision pertains to policy, constitutional or electoral consequence;
 - b. The National Executive Committee, if it pertains to administrative, governance or operational issues;
2. Where confirmation is required, such shall be sought at the next scheduled meeting of the relevant organ, and failure to confirm shall render the decision void ab initio, unless otherwise provided by this Constitution.
3. In the event of an emergency or urgency, provisional decisions of the President shall take immediate effect but must be ratified within ninety(90) days.

Article 94: Approval of appointments

1. All key appointments to statutory offices within the Association, including the Electoral Commission and member Disciplinary Committee, shall be subject to the approval of the General Assembly
2. The President shall submit the names of appointees to the General Assembly for approval by a simple majority of members present and voting.
3. The General Assembly shall consider the suitability, qualifications, and integrity of the nominees before approving any appointment.
4. Where the General Assembly does not approve an appointment, the President shall submit an alternative nominee within thirty days.
5. In circumstances where the General Assembly is unable to convene or reach a quorum for purposes of considering appointments, the COAZ Council shall assume the authority to preside over and approve the said appointments.
6. Approvals made by the COAZ Council in accordance with Clause (5) shall have full legal effect and shall be deemed to have been made by the General Assembly for all purposes under this Constitution

Article 95: Ratification of appointments and measures by National Assembly

1. Any substantive measure or decision of the National Executive Committee or President affecting the membership, policy direction, or legal obligations of the Association shall be ratified by the General Assembly or the COAZ council.
2. A decision or measure requiring ratification shall not take effect unless ratified, except in cases of emergency as determined under Article 30 or 31.
3. Where ratification is withheld, the National Executive shall revise or withdraw the measure accordingly.

Article 96: Advisory Committee on prerogative of mercy

1. There is established an **Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy**, which shall advise the President on matters relating to disciplinary clemency, remission, or pardon.
2. The Committee shall consist of—
 - a. The Vice President (Chairperson);
 - b. The Secretary General;
 - c. One member of the Disciplinary Committee; and
 - d. One senior member appointed by the Council.
3. The Committee shall meet as necessary and may invite relevant persons to provide evidence or opinion on disciplinary matters.

Article 97: Prerogative of mercy

1. The President may, after consultation with the Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy—
 - a. Grant a pardon, either free or subject to lawful conditions, to any member found guilty of professional misconduct;
 - b. Substitute a less severe form of penalty for any disciplinary sanction imposed;
 - c. Remit the whole or any part of a sanction imposed on a member.
2. The exercise of this power shall be guided by principles of equity, justice, professional reform, and the dignity of the profession.
3. A written record shall be maintained of each case in which the prerogative of mercy is exercised.

Article 98: Protection of National Executive from legal proceedings

1. No legal proceedings shall lie against the President, Vice President, Secretary General, or any member of the National Executive Committee in respect of anything done or omitted to be done in good faith in the execution of the functions of office under this Constitution.
2. This immunity shall not extend to acts of gross misconduct, criminality, or acts done in bad faith.
3. Any member aggrieved by actions of the National Executive may petition the COAZ Council or General Assembly for review or redress.

Article 99: Returning officer for National elections

1. There shall be a **Returning Officer** for every national election of the Association who shall be responsible for the overall management, oversight, and declaration of election results for the office of the President and other national offices of the Association.
2. The Returning Officer shall be appointed by the Electoral Commission of the Association and ratified by the COAZ Council.
3. A person shall not be appointed as a Returning Officer unless that person—
 - a. is of high integrity, impartiality, and proven administrative competence;
 - b. is not a candidate or officeholder in the election for which they are appointed; and
 - c. is not an immediate past member of the National Executive Committee.
4. The Returning Officer shall—
 - a. supervise the receipt, tallying, verification, and announcement of results;
 - b. ensure compliance with the Electoral Code of Conduct;
 - c. declare the final results and duly elected candidates within a reasonable period not exceeding three (3) days from the date of election; and
 - d. submit an official report of the election to the General Assembly and the COAZ Council.
5. A person aggrieved by any action or omission of the Returning Officer may petition the Electoral Commission or the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the procedures prescribed in this Constitution and electoral regulations.

Article 100: Qualifications and disqualifications for nomination as presidential candidate

1. A person qualifies to be nominated as a presidential candidate of the Association if that person—
 - a. is a full member of the Association in good standing;
 - b. has served in a leadership capacity within the Association, or in a recognized professional or health institution, for a minimum of three (3) years;
 - c. has not been convicted of a criminal offence involving dishonesty, fraud, or gross professional misconduct; and
 - d. has not been declared legally incapacitated by a competent court.
2. A person is disqualified from nomination as a presidential candidate if that person—
 - a. is currently serving a suspension or disciplinary sanction from the Association;
 - b. has previously served in the National Executive of the Association for two terms, whether consecutive or non-consecutive;
 - c. resigned from elective office within the Association and has not elapsed a period of ten (10) years since such resignation; or
 - d. holds an executive position in another national health professional association or political party.

Article 101: Election of President

1. The President of the Association shall be elected through a direct election by eligible full members of the Association, conducted under a majoritarian electoral system.
2. A candidate shall be declared duly elected as President if that candidate receives a majority of the valid votes cast in the election.
3. Where no candidate receives a majority of the valid votes cast, or where two or more candidates receive an equal highest number of valid votes, a run-off election shall be held between the two candidates who obtained the highest and equal number of valid votes.
4. The run-off election referred to in clause (3) shall be conducted within thirty days of the initial election, in accordance with the rules and procedures established by the Electoral Commission of the Association.

Article 102: Disqualification for run-off

1. A candidate who participated in the first round of the presidential election but did not place in the top two shall be disqualified from participating in the run-off.
2. The run-off shall be conducted within twenty-one (21) days of the declaration of the first-round results.

Article 103: Election petition

1. A petition challenging the validity of a presidential election shall be filed with the COAZ council within seven (7) days of the declaration of results.
2. The petition shall state the grounds of the challenge and may include allegations of procedural irregularities, fraud, or disqualification of the declared winner.

3. The Council shall determine the petition within fourteen (14) days of filing and may—
 - a. uphold the election;
 - b. nullify the election and order a fresh one; or
 - c. declare another candidate duly elected if evidence so warrants.

Article 104: Transition period before assuming office

1. Upon the declaration of the President-elect, a transition period of not more than thirty (30) days shall commence to ensure a smooth handover of responsibilities.
2. The outgoing President shall remain in office in a caretaker capacity during the transition period

Article 105: Assumption of office

1. The President-elect shall assume office upon taking the prescribed oath or affirmation of office before the General Assembly or Council at a formal inauguration session.
2. The oath or affirmation shall include a pledge to uphold the Constitution of the Association, preserve the dignity of the office, and promote the welfare of members.

Article 106: Tenure of office of President and vacancy

1. The term of office for the President shall be three (3) years and shall commence on the date of assumption of office.
2. A person shall not hold office as President for more than two (2) terms.
3. The office of the President shall become vacant if the holder—
 - a. dies;
 - b. resigns by written notice to the Council and the General Assembly;
 - c. is removed from office through a vote of censure or disciplinary action; or
 - d. is disqualified under Article 100.
4. Where a vacancy occurs before the expiry of the term, the Vice President or Secretary General shall assume the presidency for the remainder of the term until the next Annual general Assembly, subject to ratification by the COAZ Council.

Article 107: Removal of President on grounds of incapacity

1. The President may be removed from office if they are found to be physically or mentally incapable of performing the functions of the office.
2. A motion for removal on grounds of incapacity shall—
 - a. be initiated by not less than one-third of the members of the COAZ Council or the General Assembly; and
 - b. be supported by a qualified medical report from a panel of at least three (3) independent and certified medical professionals appointed by the Council.
3. The motion shall be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration.

4. The President shall be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard before the vote is taken.
5. A resolution to remove the President on grounds of incapacity shall be passed by at least two-thirds of the members present and voting in the General Assembly.
6. Upon passage of the resolution, the office of President shall immediately become vacant and be filled in accordance with Article 106(4).

Article 108: Impeachment of President

1. The President may be impeached for—
 - a. gross misconduct in the performance of official functions;
 - b. violation of the Constitution of the Association;
 - c. abuse of office, including corruption or fraud; or
 - d. actions that bring the Association into disrepute.
2. A notice of intention to move a motion for impeachment shall be signed by not less than one-third of the full members and submitted to the COAZ council
3. The COAZ council shall, within seven (7) days, summon a special sitting of the General Assembly to deliberate on the motion.
4. The President shall be given not less than fourteen (14) days' notice and shall have the right to respond to the allegations in writing and in person.
5. The General Assembly shall vote on the motion, and a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting shall be required for impeachment to pass.
6. Where the President is impeached, the office shall be declared vacant, and succession shall proceed in accordance with Article 106(4).

Article 109: Performance of executive functions during absence of President

1. Where the President is temporarily absent, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to perform the duties of the office, the Vice President shall assume the role of Acting President and shall perform all executive functions until the President resumes office.
2. Where the office of Vice President is vacant or the Vice President is also unable to act, the Secretary General or a senior member of the National Executive Committee to act in that capacity.
3. The Acting President shall not exercise powers to make substantive appointments, dissolve organs, or approve constitutional amendments unless the absence or incapacity exceeds ninety (90) days.
4. The President shall notify the COAZ Council in writing of any temporary absence from duty

Article 110: Vice-President, election to office and swearing in

1. There shall be a Vice-President of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia who shall be elected during national elections.
2. A candidate for election to the office of Vice-President shall meet the same qualifications and shall be subject to the same disqualifications as those prescribed for the office of President under this Constitution, save that they shall not have previously held or sworn in the office of tVice-President twice.
3. The Vice-President shall be elected by a majority of the valid votes cast in a national election conducted in accordance with the electoral provisions of this Constitution.
4. The Vice-President-elect shall take and subscribe to the Oath or Affirmation of Office before assuming the functions of the office, in a manner prescribed

5. The Vice-President shall not concurrently hold any other elected office within the Association during their tenure

Article 111: Tenure of office fo Vice-President, Qualifications and disqualifications for nomination as Vice presidential candidate

1. The Vice-President shall hold office for a term of three years and shall be eligible for re-election to the same office for another term.
2. The office of Vice-President shall become vacant if the holder—
 - (a) dies;
 - (b) resigns by notice in writing to the President;
 - (c) is removed from office in accordance with this Constitution;
 - (d) assumes the office of President pursuant to Article 106(4); or
 - (e) ceases to be a member of the Association.
3. Where a vacancy occurs in the office of Vice-President, the President shall nominate a replacement from among eligible members of Executive to act as vice president, subject to ratification by the COAZ Council
4. A person shall be qualified to be nominated as Vice-President if that person—
 - (a) is a Full Member of the Association in good standing for at least three consecutive years;
 - (b) has not been convicted of professional misconduct or an offence involving dishonesty within the preceding five years;

(c) has held a leadership or governance position within the Association or any of its organs; and

(d) meets such other criteria as may be prescribed

5. A person shall be disqualified from nomination as Vice-President if that person—

(a) has previously held the office or sworn in twice in the National Executive;

(b) has resigned from elective office within the Association and has not completed a ten-year cooling-off period;

(c) is legally incapacitated, insolvent, or subject to disciplinary proceedings; or

(d) is not in good standing with the Association or any professional regulatory authority.

Article 112: Functions of Vice-President

1. The Vice-President shall assist the President in the execution of the executive functions of the Association and shall act in the place of the President in the event of the latter's absence, illness, or incapacity.
2. The Vice-President shall serve as the liaison between the National Executive Committee and the General Assembly and shall be responsible for the coordination of inter-branch activities and the harmonisation of national policies.
3. The Vice-President shall represent the President at designated meetings, functions, or national engagements when delegated, and shall perform such other functions as may be assigned by the President, the Council, or this Constitution.
4. The Vice-President shall be an ex-officio member of Technical standing committees of the Association and shall ensure the proper implementation of resolutions passed by the General Assembly

Article 113: The Secretary General

1. There shall be a Secretary General of the Association who shall be the chief administrative officer, principal spokes person and record-keeper of the Association, responsible for the coordination of institutional affairs, the execution of resolutions of the Council and General Assembly, and the supervision of the administrative functions of the Secretariat

Article 114: Functions of the Secretary General

1. The Secretary General shall be responsible for—
 - a. providing strategic leadership to the Secretariat and managing the day-to-day affairs of the Association;
 - b. keeping custody of the Constitution, official records, instruments, and documents of the Association;
 - c. coordinating the implementation of resolutions passed by the Council, the National Executive Committee, and the General Assembly;
 - d. overseeing membership governance, including admission, registration, and issuance of membership credentials in accordance with this Constitution;
 - e. convening and recording minutes of all official meetings, including Council and General Assembly sittings, and maintaining proper records thereof;
 - f. managing correspondence and communication within and on behalf of the Association;
 - g. serving as Secretary to the General Assembly, the Council, and the National Executive Committee;
 - h. issuing certified copies of resolutions, policies, and constitutional extracts as required;
 - i. coordinating institutional partnerships, projects, and programs in line with the objectives of the Association;

- j. Signatory to the associations accounts
- k. performing any other functions assigned under this Constitution or by resolution of the Council or General Assembly

Article 115: Qualifications and disqualification, Tenure of office for the secretary General and Vacancy

1. The Secretary General shall hold office for a term of three years and may be re-elected for one further term only.
2. A person shall be qualified for nomination and election as Secretary General if that person—
 - (a) is a Full Member of the Association in good standing for at least five consecutive years;
 - (b) possesses demonstrable experience in administration, governance, or institutional leadership;
 - (c) has not been convicted of an offence involving professional misconduct, dishonesty, or abuse of office within the preceding five years; and
 - (d) meets such other criteria as may be prescribed by the electoral code of the Association.
3. A person shall be disqualified from election or appointment as Secretary General if that person—
 - (a) has served, elected or sworn in any national executive office twice;
 - (b) has resigned from elective office within the Association and not completed a ten-year cooling-off period;

(c) is legally incapacitated, declared insolvent, or subject to disciplinary proceedings; or

(d) is not in good standing with the Association or any recognised professional regulatory authority.

4. The office of Secretary General shall become vacant if the holder—

(a) dies;

(b) resigns by notice in writing addressed to the President;

(c) is removed from office in accordance with this Constitution; or

(d) ceases to be a member of the Association.

5. Where a vacancy occurs in the office of Secretary General, the President, in consultation with the National executive committee, shall appoint an Acting Secretary General from among qualified Full Members of the Association, who shall serve until a substantive Secretary General is elected at the next General Assembly.

6. A person appointed as Acting Secretary General shall meet the same qualifications as required for substantive appointment to the office of Secretary General.

Article 116: The Treasurer General

1. There shall be a Treasurer General of the Association who shall be elected by the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and shall be responsible for the oversight and stewardship of the financial affairs of the Association, subject to the direction of the National Executive Committee

Article 117: Functions of the Treasurer General

The Treasurer General shall, subject to the direction of the National Executive Committee and in accordance with this Constitution, perform the following functions—

1. oversee the financial management systems of the Association, including budgeting, planning, and internal controls; in consultation with the secretary General
2. cause to be prepared and presented to the National Executive Committee the annual budget of the Association for consideration
3. ensure that full, accurate, and up-to-date financial records are maintained and preserved in accordance with accepted accounting standards;
4. coordinate the timely preparation and submission of annual financial statements for audit
5. in consultation with the secretary general manage the financial assets and liabilities of the Association
6. oversee resource mobilisation strategies, fundraising initiatives, and financial reporting obligations to funding partners and members;
7. advise the National Executive Committee on matters relating to fiscal policy, sustainability, and financial risk management; and
8. perform such other duties as may be assigned by this Constitution, the General Assembly, or the National Executive Committee.
9. Be signatory to the association accounts

Article 118: Qualifications and Tenure of office of the Treasurer General

1. A person shall be qualified to be elected as Treasurer General if that person—

(a) is a Full Member of the Association in good standing for a period of not less than three (3) consecutive years preceding the election;

(b) holds, or has demonstrable experience in, accounting, financial management, economics, or a related field;

(c) has not been convicted of a criminal offence involving dishonesty, fraud, corruption, or breach of trust;

(d) has held a position of leadership, fiduciary responsibility, or financial oversight within the Association or a comparable institution; and

(e) meets any additional criteria as may be prescribed by this Constitution or by electoral regulations.

2. A person shall be disqualified from being elected as Treasurer General if that person—

(a) has served, elected or sworn in any national executive office twice;

(b) has previously resigned from elective office and has not completed a ten-year cooling-off period;

(c) is declared insolvent, mentally or legally incapacitated, or is under suspension or disciplinary proceedings; or

(d) is not in good standing with the Association or any professional regulatory authority to which the member is subject.

3. The Treasurer General shall hold office for a term of three years and may be re-elected for one further term only.

4. Where a vacancy arises in the office of Treasurer General, the President shall, subject to ratification by the COAZ Council, appoint an Acting Treasurer General

from among eligible Full Members of the Association, who shall meet the qualifications prescribed in this Article and shall serve until the next sitting of the General Assembly.

Article 119: National Secretary – Coordination and Publication

There shall be a National Secretary – Coordination and Publication of the Association who shall be elected by the General Assembly and shall serve as the officer responsible for coordinating internal communication, disseminating official publications, and ensuring the preservation of institutional memory and documentation of the Association.

Article 120: Functions of the National Secretary – Coordination and Publication

The National Secretary – Coordination and Publication shall, subject to the direction of the Secretary General and the National Executive Committee, perform the following functions—

1. coordinate communication between the various organs, branches, and membership structures of the Association;
2. supervise the compilation, publication, and dissemination of official newsletters, statements, journals, communiqués, and any other publications of the Association;
3. maintain an updated archive of all official publications, press releases, conference proceedings, policy documents, and communiqués issued by the Association;
4. ensure that minutes, resolutions, and decisions of the General Assembly, Council, and National Executive Committee are accurately recorded and published in accordance with established procedure;
5. provide support in the preparation of official reports for external stakeholders, including government agencies, international partners, and allied associations;

6. promote the visibility of the Association's work through coordinated publication efforts and dissemination strategies; and
7. perform such other duties as may be assigned by this Constitution, the General Assembly, the Council, or the National Executive Committee.

Article 121: Qualifications and Tenure of office of the National Secretary – Coordination and Publication

1. A person shall be qualified for election as National Secretary – Coordination and Publication if that person—

(a) is a Full Member of the Association in good standing for at least three consecutive years immediately preceding the election;

(b) demonstrates proficiency in written and verbal communication and publication practices, and has experience in documentation, journalism, or public affairs;

(c) has not been convicted of a disciplinary offence or criminal offence involving dishonesty or professional misconduct within the preceding five years; and

(d) meets such other requirements as may be prescribed under this Constitution or in regulations issued by the Electoral Commission of the Association.

2. A person shall be disqualified from election to this office if that person—

(a) has served, elected or sworn in any national executive office twice;

(b) has resigned from elective office within the Association and has not completed a ten-year cooling-off period;

(c) is under suspension, disciplinary review, or legal incapacity; or

(d) is not in good standing with the Association or any relevant regulatory authority.

3. The National Secretary – Coordination and Publication shall hold office for a period of three years and may be re-elected for one further term only.
4. Where a vacancy occurs in the office, the President shall, in consultation with the Secretary General and subject to ratification by the COAZ Council, appoint an Acting National Secretary – Coordination and Publication who meets the same qualifications prescribed under this Article, until the next sitting of the General Assembly.

Article 122: National Secretary – Professional Welfare, Training and Development (PT&D)

There shall be a National Secretary – Professional Welfare, Training and Development, hereinafter referred to as “National Secretary – PT&D”, who shall be elected by the General Assembly and shall be responsible for matters relating to the continuing professional development, welfare, and educational advancement of members of the Association.

Article 123: Functions of National Secretary –PT&D

The National Secretary – PT&D shall, in consultation with the Secretary General and subject to the direction of the National Executive Committee, perform the following functions—

1. design, coordinate, and implement continuing professional development (CPD) programmes and capacity-building initiatives for members of the Association;

2. liaise with relevant regulatory authorities, institutions of higher learning, and partner organisations on matters relating to training, certification, and accreditation of courses and workshops;
3. advocate for and promote the welfare, career progression, and skills enhancement of members in all professional categories;
4. develop and maintain a comprehensive database on training opportunities, scholarships, fellowships, and mentorship programmes accessible to members;
5. monitor compliance with CPD requirements as may be set by the Association or relevant professional councils;
6. produce periodic reports on training and development activities and submit such reports to the executive, the council and the General Assembly;
7. coordinate efforts to support members in remote, under-resourced, or underserved areas to access training and welfare opportunities; and
8. perform any other duties assigned under this Constitution or as may be delegated by the Secretary General or the National Executive Committee.

Article 124: Qualifications and Tenure of office of the Executive Secretary – PT&D

1. A person shall be eligible for election as National Secretary – PT&D if that person—
 - (a) is a Full Member of the Association in good standing for not less than three consecutive years;
 - (b) holds a recognised qualification in education, health sciences, administration, or a related field, with demonstrable experience in training, education, or professional development;

(c) has not been convicted of professional misconduct or a criminal offence involving dishonesty in the preceding five years; and

(d) meets such additional criteria as may be prescribed by the Electoral Commission of the Association.

2. A person shall be disqualified from election to this office if that person—

(a) has served, elected or sworn in any national executive office for twice;

(b) has resigned from an elective office in the Association and has not undergone a ten-year cooling-off period;

(c) is suspended, legally incapacitated, or under disciplinary sanction; or

(d) is not in good standing with the Association or any relevant professional licensing authority.

3. The National Secretary – PT&D shall hold office for a period of three years and shall be eligible for re-election for one further term only.

4. Where a vacancy arises, the President shall, in consultation with the Secretary General and subject to ratification by the Council, appoint an Acting National Secretary – PT&D who meets the same qualifications prescribed in this Article, until the next sitting of the General Assembly.

Article 125: Impeachment and Removal from office of other Executive Members

1. The procedure and grounds for the impeachment of any member of the National Executive, other than the President, shall apply mutatis mutandis as provided for in Article 107 and 108 of this Constitution.

Article 126: Finances of the National Executive

1. The National Executive shall ensure the prudent management, administration, and accountability of the financial resources of the Association in accordance with this Constitution, any enacted financial regulations, and applicable laws.
2. The funds of the Association shall be derived from—
 - (a) subscriptions, dues, and levies payable by members;
 - (b) grants, donations, and contributions from lawful sources;
 - (c) proceeds from investments, properties, business ventures, or commercial activities of the Association;
 - (d) monies appropriated or allocated by the General Assembly pursuant to duly enacted appropriation statutes; and
 - (e) any other lawful source approved by the Association.
3. The financial year of the Association shall commence on the first day of January and end on the thirty-first day of December of each year or as otherwise prescribed by the Council.
4. The National Executive shall prepare and submit to the General Assembly appropriation statutes detailing the estimated revenues and expenditures of the Association for the ensuing financial year.
5. Financial management shall be decentralized to national offices, branches, and chapters in accordance with regulations enacted by the Council, which shall specify powers, responsibilities, and reporting requirements.
6. The National Executive shall not incur any financial obligations beyond the approved budget except with the prior authorization of the COAZ Council and subsequent ratification by the General Assembly.

7. The Treasurer General shall prepare an annual budget proposal, inclusive of provisions for national office allowances, administrative salaries, expenses, and allowances payable to officers and staff of the Association, which shall be approved by the National Executive and submitted to the Council for onward consideration and ratification by the General Assembly.
8. All funds of the Association, including decentralized funds, shall be held in accounts approved by the National Executive and operated under prescribed signatory protocols requiring joint signatures from the President, Secretary General, and Treasurer General, or authorized officers at branch or chapter level as per financial regulations.
9. The financial records and accounts of the Association, including decentralized units, shall be subject to annual audit by an independent auditor appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Council.
10. The National Executive shall submit an annual financial report, inclusive of audited accounts and budget performance of both central and decentralized units, to the General Assembly every financial year.
11. The financial year of the Association shall be January to December

PART VIII: THE COAZ COUNCIL

Article 127: Principles of Council authority

1. The authority of the Council of the Association shall be exercised in accordance with the following principles: the Council shall uphold and safeguard the Constitution of the Association,
2. Ensure institutional continuity and promote the long-term governance stability of the Association;
3. The Council shall act in the public interest and in the interest of the membership of the Association, free from political, sectional or personal influence;

4. The Council shall provide independent oversight, protect the integrity of the Association and promote accountability, transparency and adherence to constitutional values and ethical standards;
5. The Council shall act to strengthen governance, institutional systems and policy implementation structures within the Association;
6. The Council shall operate in a manner that supports the National Executive and other organs of the Association, without interfering in their operational independence, except where intervention is provided for under this Constitution; and
7. The Council shall ensure inclusive, consultative and principled decision-making and maintain a high standard of integrity, professionalism and impartiality in the performance of its functions.

Article 128: Vesting of Council authority and performance of Council function

1. The authority of the Council of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia is hereby vested in accordance with this Constitution and shall be exercised in the promotion of constitutionalism, institutional continuity, and strategic oversight of the Association.
2. The Council shall be the apex governance and advisory organ of the Association, with powers to:
 - (a) advise and guide the National Executive and General Assembly on constitutional, policy, and governance matters;
 - (b) provide checks and balances in the administration of the Association;
 - (c) ratify or review statutory instruments, appointments, or decisions referred to it under this Constitution;

(d) initiate or recommend the establishment of commissions or committees of inquiry, including forensic and disciplinary reviews;

(e) oversee constitutional compliance and ensure adherence to the principles of democratic governance within the Association; and

(f) provide institutional memory and safeguard the ethos, mission, and legacy of the Association.

3. The Council shall exercise its authority independently and shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority, save as otherwise provided in this Constitution.

Article 129: Structure of the Council

1. There is hereby established the Council of the Clinical Officers Association of Zambia, which shall serve as the highest policy, governance, and advisory organ of the Association, constituted to promote continuity, institutional memory, and sectoral oversight.
2. The Council shall consist of the following members:
 - (a) one former President of the Association;
 - (b) one former Secretary General of the Association;
 - (c) one representative from an accredited institution responsible for the training of Clinical Officers;
 - (d) one representative of a registered trade union representing Clinical Officers;
 - (e) one individual with extensive knowledge and experience in health, health systems, or public governance;

(f) one representative of the general public, who shall not be a current or former holder of elective office within the Association;

(g) three members appointed by the General Assembly

3. The members of the Council shall hold office for a term of three years and may be reappointed for one further term only.

4. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Council shall be elected by the Council from among its members at the first sitting of each term.

5. A person shall not be eligible for appointment to the Council if that person—

(a) is not in good standing with the Association or with any relevant professional regulatory body;

(b) has been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, fraud, or professional misconduct within the preceding five years;

(c) is a serving member of the National Executive, other than as provided under clause (6); or

(d) has served two full terms on the Council.

6. The current President and Secretary General of the Association shall serve as the Secretariat to the Council and shall attend all sittings of the Council in an ex officio and non-voting capacity, to provide administrative and technical support and ensure institutional alignment.

Article 130: Ranking of the council

1. The Council shall rank as the highest oversight body within the Association, subordinate only to the General Assembly in matters of constitutional supremacy.

2. All organs, officers, and members of the Association shall be subject to the oversight and lawful directives of the Council in matters of governance, compliance, and constitutional interpretation.
3. In the event of a conflict between decisions of the Council and other organs of the Association, the decision of the Council shall prevail, unless set aside by a resolution of the General Assembly.

Article 131: Functional independence

1. The Council shall exercise its functions independently and impartially and shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution.
2. Members of the Council shall perform their duties in good faith, free from conflict of interest, and shall uphold the integrity and autonomy of the Council.

Article 132: Finances of the council

1. The Council shall be allocated an annual operational budget by the National Executive as appropriated.
2. The funds of the Council shall be used exclusively for the performance of its constitutional functions, including meetings, reviews, investigations, and secretariat support.
3. The Council shall have financial autonomy in managing its allocated resources, in accordance with financial regulations and audit requirements established by the Association.
4. The financial year of the Council shall correspond to the financial year of the Association, running from 1st January to 31st December.

5. The Council shall submit an annual financial and activity report to the General Assembly within ninety (90) days after the close of the financial year.

Article 133: Jurisdiction of the Council

1. The Council shall have jurisdiction over the following matters:
 - a. Oversight of the implementation of the Constitution and resolutions of the General Assembly;
 - b. Review and ratification of policy instruments, regulations, and appointments as required by this Constitution;
 - c. Initiation of investigations or inquiries into matters affecting the governance, ethics, or functioning of the Association;
 - d. Resolution of inter-organ disputes within the Association;
 - e. Interpretation of constitutional provisions
2. The Council shall issue advisory opinions, binding directives, or recommendations in the exercise of its jurisdiction.

Article 134: Sitzings of the council

1. The Council shall hold at least two ordinary sittings in each calendar year and may convene additional meetings as necessary.
2. An extraordinary sitting of the Council may be convened upon:
 - a. Resolution of the Council Chairperson;

- b. Written request by not fewer than one-third of the Council members; or
 - c. Request by the President of the Association, in consultation with the Secretary General.
3. The quorum for a meeting of the Council shall be two-thirds of its voting members.
 4. Decisions of the Council shall be by consensus or, where necessary, by a majority of members present and voting.

Article 135: Establishment and composition of Constitutional Review Committee

1. The Council shall establish a Constitutional Review Committee every ten (10) years, or as directed by the General Assembly, to review and recommend amendments to the Constitution of the Association.
2. The Committee shall consist of:
 - a. One former President or Secretary General of the Association;
 - b. One member of the Council appointed by the Chairperson;
 - c. Two representatives elected by the General Assembly;
 - d. One legal practitioner with experience in governance or constitutional law, nominated by the Council;
 - e. One academic or governance expert with relevant experience, nominated by the Council;
 - f. One representative from a regulatory body or training institution.

3. The Council shall publish the terms of reference and timeframe for the review process, and the Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Council for onward submission to the General Assembly.

Article 136: Jurisdiction of Constitutional Review Committee

1. The Constitutional Review Committee shall have the mandate to:
 - a. Review and propose amendments to the Constitution of the Association in accordance with resolutions of the General Assembly or directives of the Council;
 - b. Receive and consider submissions from members, organs, and affiliates of the Association relating to constitutional reforms;
 - c. Conduct research, consultations, and stakeholder engagement necessary to inform constitutional review;
 - d. Draft and present a report with proposed constitutional amendments to the Council within the prescribed timeframe.
2. The Constitutional Review Committee shall not exercise any executive or disciplinary powers and shall act strictly within the scope of its terms of reference as determined by the Council.

Article 137: Sitzings of Constitutional Review Committee

1. The Constitutional Review Committee shall convene as often as necessary to fulfil its mandate, subject to the timeframe and procedural guidelines established by the Council.

2. The first sitting of the Committee shall be convened within thirty (30) days of its appointment.
3. A quorum for meetings of the Committee shall be a simple majority of its members.
4. The Committee shall operate by consensus; where consensus is not possible, decisions shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.
5. The Committee shall keep a written record of all its proceedings, findings, and recommendations, and shall submit its final report to the Council within the period specified.

Article 138: Establishment and composition of Council Appeals committee

1. There is hereby established a Council Appeals Committee which shall serve as the appellate organ of the Council in all matters arising from decisions of internal organs, disciplinary bodies, or any administrative authority established under this Constitution.
2. The Council Appeals Committee shall be composed of:
 - a. One former Council member appointed by the Council as Chairperson;
 - b. One legal practitioner with at least seven years' post-admission experience;
 - c. One representative from the Clinical Officers' professional union;
 - d. One representative of the public with knowledge of governance or ethics;
 - e. Two members appointed by the Council from among Full Members of the Association not holding elective office.
3. The Secretary General shall serve as Secretary to the Committee but shall have no voting rights.

Article 139: Jurisdiction of Council Appeals committee

1. The Council Appeals Committee shall have appellate jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals against:
 - a. Decisions of the Disciplinary Committee or Ethics Panels established under this Constitution;
 - b. Decisions of organs of the Association relating to elections, appointments, suspensions, or dismissals;
 - c. Administrative actions or decisions of officers of the Association that are alleged to be unlawful, procedurally improper, or contrary to the Constitution.
2. The Committee may affirm, vary, or overturn any decision under appeal, and may issue such remedial or consequential orders as are necessary to ensure justice and adherence to constitutional principles.
3. The decisions of the Council Appeals Committee shall be final within the Association, subject to review by the General Assembly or a court of competent jurisdiction.

Article 140: Sitzings of Council Appeals committee.

1. The Council Appeals Committee shall sit as often as may be required to discharge its functions, and at such venues as the Chairperson may determine in consultation with the Secretary General.
2. The quorum for a sitting of the Committee shall be four members, including the Chairperson.

3. Appeals shall be heard and determined within sixty (60) days of filing, unless an extension is granted by the Council on reasonable grounds.
4. Proceedings of the Committee shall be conducted in accordance with principles of natural justice, and all parties shall be given a fair opportunity to be heard.
5. The Committee shall maintain a register of appeals and decisions, which shall be accessible to members of the Association subject to confidentiality requirements.

Article 141: Establishment and composition of Member Disciplinary Committee

1. There is hereby established a Member Disciplinary Committee, which shall be responsible for ensuring ethical and professional conduct among members of the Association.
2. The Member Disciplinary Committee shall be composed of:
 - a. A Chairperson appointed by the Council from among former senior officers of the Association or individuals of distinguished professional standing;
 - b. Two members elected by the General Assembly from among Full Members in good standing;
 - c. One legal practitioner nominated by the Council and approved by the General Assembly;
 - d. One representative from the health professions regulatory authority or relevant statutory body, as may be invited in advisory capacity.
3. The Secretary General shall designate an officer of the Secretariat to serve as Secretary to the Committee, without voting rights.
4. The term of office for members of the Committee shall be three (3) years, renewable once, and members shall serve independently and impartially.

Article 142: Jurisdiction Member Disciplinary Committee

1. The Member Disciplinary Committee shall have jurisdiction to:
 - a. Investigate complaints of professional misconduct, unethical conduct, or breaches of the Constitution or Code of Ethics by members;
 - b. Conduct hearings into disciplinary matters referred by the Executive, Council, or any organ of the Association;
 - c. Impose appropriate sanctions, including reprimand, suspension, expulsion, or referral to regulatory authorities;
 - d. Recommend policy and regulatory reforms aimed at improving discipline and ethical standards within the Association.
2. The Committee shall not have criminal jurisdiction but may refer cases to law enforcement or regulatory bodies where necessary.

Article 143: Sitzings of Member Disciplinary committee

1. The Member Disciplinary Committee shall convene as often as required to discharge its mandate, but not less than four times per year.
2. A sitting shall be convened upon:
 - a. Receipt of a formal complaint;
 - b. Referral by the Council, Executive, or General Assembly; or
 - c. A motion of inquiry initiated by the Committee itself.

3. The quorum for any sitting of the Committee shall be three members, including the Chairperson.
4. The Committee shall ensure all proceedings are conducted in accordance with principles of natural justice, and the respondent shall be afforded a full and fair hearing.
5. The Committee shall issue its written findings and rulings within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of each matter.

Article 144: Finances of the Member Disciplinary Committee

1. The operational and administrative expenses of the Member Disciplinary Committee shall be funded from the approved annual budget of the Association.
2. The Council shall allocate specific funds to the Committee to enable the discharge of its functions, including investigation costs, sitting allowances, expert consultation, and secretariat support.
3. The Chairperson of the Committee shall submit to the Treasurer General an annual financial statement detailing expenditure and resource needs for the subsequent year.
4. The Committee shall operate within the limits of the budgetary allocation unless additional funding is approved by the Council.
5. The financial operations of the Committee shall be subject to audit and financial reporting requirements applicable to all organs of the Association.

Article 145: Procedures of the Member Disciplinary committee

1. The Member Disciplinary Committee shall regulate its proceedings in accordance with rules of procedure approved by the National executive in consultation with the Council

2. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Committee shall:
 - a. Conduct a preliminary assessment to determine admissibility and jurisdiction;
 - b. Notify the member concerned in writing, outlining the specific allegations and affording not less than fourteen (14) days to respond;
 - c. Where necessary, hold oral hearings, summon witnesses, or request documentation relevant to the inquiry;
 - d. Keep an accurate record of all proceedings, evidence adduced, and decisions rendered.
3. A member subject to disciplinary proceedings shall have the right to:
 - a. Be heard in person or through a representative;
 - b. Cross-examine witnesses;
 - c. Present evidence in their defence;
 - d. Appeal any adverse decision in accordance with this Constitution.
4. The Committee shall deliver its decision in writing, stating the reasons for the findings and specifying any sanction imposed.

Article 146: Appeals to the Member Disciplinary committee

1. An appeal may lie to the Member Disciplinary Committee against any adverse action or sanction imposed by a lower disciplinary authority or officer of the Association.

2. An appeal shall be lodged within fourteen (14) days of the date of the decision being appealed against, unless the Committee grants leave to file out of time for good cause.
3. The appeal shall:
 - a. Be in writing;
 - b. Clearly state the grounds of appeal;
 - c. Be accompanied by all relevant documents or records of the decision appealed from.
4. The Committee may:
 - a. Uphold, vary, or set aside the decision appealed against;
 - b. Substitute its own decision; or
 - c. Remit the matter for reconsideration by the original decision-making body.
5. The Committee shall deliver its ruling on appeal within sixty (60) days of receipt of the appeal, unless extended for good reason.

Article 147: Judgement Passed After Appeals

1. A decision of the Member Disciplinary Committee rendered on appeal shall be final within the internal disciplinary framework of the Association.
2. Where the Committee upholds the original disciplinary action, the judgment shall take immediate effect unless otherwise stated in the ruling.
3. The Committee may direct specific remedial actions, including reinstatement of a member, removal of sanctions, or reparation where necessary.

4. The Association shall implement any judgment passed after appeal, and failure to comply shall constitute grounds for further disciplinary action.
5. A judgment of the Committee on appeal may only be reviewed by the Council Appeals Committee or the General Assembly, where expressly provided by this Constitution.

PART IX: GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DEVOLVED GOVERNANCE

Article 148: System of devolved governance

1. The Association shall adopt and maintain a devolved governance system aimed at promoting inclusive participation, operational efficiency, and equitable representation across all regions and sectors.
2. Devolved governance shall be grounded in the principles of:
 - a. Democratic accountability and transparency;
 - b. Subsidiarity and proximity to members;
 - c. Responsiveness to local needs and priorities;
 - d. Respect for the functional autonomy of lower structures; and
 - e. Equity in access to resources, opportunities, and representation.
3. The National Executive and the Council shall ensure that the system of devolved governance is aligned with the overall objectives, policies, and legal frameworks of the Association.
4. No provision under this Part shall be construed as limiting the oversight authority of the Council or the powers of the National Executive under this Constitution.

Article 149: Sub-structures of COAZ governance

1. The Association shall establish devolved sub-structures to promote inclusive governance, facilitate implementation of programmes, and enhance professional engagement at various levels of representation.
2. The sub-structures of the Association shall include the following:
 - a. **Provincial Coordinator** – established in each province to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Association’s mandate at the provincial level;
 - b. **District Committees** – constituted in every district as the primary operational arms of the Association, responsible for member mobilisation, programme implementation, and reporting; the composition of District Committees shall reflect the provisions set out under **Article 153(2)**;
 - c. **Branch Committees** – established at institutional or local health facility level, formed by not less than fifteen (15) members of the Association within a defined facility, programme, or locality, and governed by the composition and leadership structures provided under **Article 155(1)–(3)**;
 - d. **Professional National Coordinators** – composed of Representatives belonging to a specific cadre, clinical discipline, or specialty area, appointed or elected to advance professional development, promote discipline-specific advocacy, and provide strategic representation within the Association
3. The sub-structures established under clause (2) shall operate in accordance with the principles of functional autonomy, democratic representation, and upward accountability, as guided by the general principles outlined in **Article 148**.
4. The internal composition, election procedures, leadership roles, and tenure of the respective sub-structures shall be as prescribed by regulations enacted, and shall

be consistent with the minimum standards specified under **Articles 153 to 155** of this Constitution.

5. The National Executive shall, in consultation with the Council, ensure that adequate administrative and financial support is extended to sub-structures to enable the effective discharge of their functions.
6. Each sub-structure shall submit annual operational and financial reports to the National Executive, which shall compile and transmit a consolidated report to the Council and General Assembly

PART X: PROVINCES, DISTRICTS AND SUB-DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Article 150: Provinces, districts, Sub-Districts and branches

1. The governance structure of the Association shall be devolved into Provinces, Districts, Sub-Districts and branches for the purpose of enhancing inclusiveness, responsiveness, and localized service delivery to members.
2. Each Province shall comprise all Districts within its geographical boundary, as defined by national administrative divisions, and shall serve as the primary coordinating level between the national and district structures.
3. A District shall be the principal unit of localized administration and coordination of the Association's activities, as referenced under **Article 149(2)(b)**, and shall operate under the guidance of the Provincial structure.
4. A Sub-District shall be established where necessary to further decentralize the operations of the Association within a district and to ensure closer interaction with members in rural or high-density areas.
5. The composition, functions, powers, and procedures of Provincial, District, and Sub-District structures shall be prescribed by this Constitution and any relevant statutes or regulations enacted by the General Assembly.

6. The composition of District and Branch Committees shall conform to the provisions of **Article 149(3)**, and shall reflect equitable representation, professional diversity, and gender balance.
7. The Association shall ensure that each level of administration is adequately resourced and empowered to implement programs, mobilize members, and report on professional and governance matters in a manner consistent with the Constitution.

PART XI: SUB-STRUCTURE AND LOCAL CHAPTER GOVERNANCE

Article 151: System of sub-structure governance

1. The Association shall adopt a decentralized governance framework which empowers sub-national structures—namely, Provincial, District, and Sub-District organs—to undertake professional, administrative, and representational functions in alignment with the objectives of the Association.
2. Each sub-structure shall operate under the supervision and coordination of the national organs and in accordance with the Constitution, by-laws, and statutory instruments of the Association.
3. The governance of each sub-structure shall be vested in elected and appointed representatives, whose composition, powers, and functions shall be prescribed in this Constitution and the subsidiary instruments made under it

Article 152: District Representatives

1. Every district shall elect District Representatives to serve as the official voice of members at the district level and to participate in provincial and national consultative processes.

2. District Representatives shall:

- a. Represent the interests and professional concerns of members within their respective jurisdictions;
- b. Coordinate with the Provincial and National leadership on matters of policy, welfare, and service delivery;
- c. Facilitate local implementation of Association programs and directives;
- d. Submit periodic reports to the Provincial coordinator and the National Secretariat;
- e. Mobilize participation in Association activities including elections, CPD programs, and conferences

Article 153: Election of District, Sub-District and branch Representatives, composition and tenure

Shall be prescribed by the National executive

Article 154: Provincial Leadership

1. Each province shall be led by a Provincial Coordinator who shall be elected from among the District Representatives in the province.
2. The Provincial Coordinator shall—
 - a. Preside over all provincial meetings and serve as the liaison between the province and the National Executive;
 - b. Coordinate the activities of District Representatives and ensure compliance with Association policies;

- c. Report to the executive through the National Secretary – Coordination and Publication;
 - d. Perform such other functions as may be delegated or prescribed.
- 3. The term of office for the Provincial Coordinator shall be three years, renewable once.
 - 4. Finances of the office of provincial coordinator shall be determined and appropriated by the national executive and allocation shall be prescribed

Article 155: Conduct of Representatives

- 1. Every elected or appointed representative shall uphold the values, objectives, and dignity of the Association and shall act in good faith and in the best interest of the membership.
- 2. A representative shall—
 - a. Refrain from conduct likely to bring the Association into disrepute;
 - b. Declare any conflict of interest and recuse themselves from proceedings where such conflict arises;
 - c. Remain accountable to the members they represent and to the superior organs of the Association;
 - d. Comply with any Code of Conduct

Article 156: Accountability of Representatives

1. Every District Representative and Provincial Coordinator shall submit an annual performance and financial report to the Provincial Committee, copied to the National Secretariat.
2. The National Executive shall establish performance benchmarks for representatives and shall oversee periodic reviews.
3. A representative may be recalled or removed or suspended from office by resolution of the members within the district or province or by 2/3 of the national executive on grounds of failure to perform functions.
4. Representatives found to have breached their duties or violated the Constitution shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings before the appropriate Committee, in accordance with **Articles 141 to 147**.

Article 157: Vacation of office of Representatives and vacancies

1. A Representative shall vacate or be removed office upon—
 - (a) death;
 - (b) resignation in writing to the Provincial Leadership and copied to the National executive committee;
 - (c) ceasing to be a Member of the Association;
 - (d) removal from office in accordance with this Constitution or any statute enacted under it;
 - (e) failure to perform duties without reasonable cause for a continuous period exceeding three months; or

(f) assumption of any national office inconsistent with Branch, district or provincial representation.

2. A vacancy arising under this Article shall be declared by the National Executive within fourteen days of its occurrence and communicated to the Electoral Commission for action in accordance with this Constitution.

Article 158: By-elections for Representatives

1. A by-election shall be held to fill a vacancy in the office of Representative where—
 - (a) the remainder of the term exceeds twelve months; or
 - (b) directed by the National executive in the interest of good governance.
2. A by-election shall be conducted by the Electoral Commission within thirty days of the declaration of the vacancy.
3. The person elected in a by-election shall serve the unexpired term of the predecessor and shall be eligible for election thereafter in accordance with this Constitution.

Article 159: Elections and petitions

1. Elections for Representatives at any level shall be conducted by the Electoral Commission in accordance with **Article 99** and any rules made under this Constitution.
2. An election petition challenging the outcome of a Representative election shall be submitted to the Council Appeals Committee in accordance with **Article 139**, within fourteen days of the declaration of the election results.

3. The Council Appeals Committee shall hear and determine the petition in accordance with **Article 140**, and its decision shall be final and binding.

Article 160: Enforcement of judgment against local Leadership

1. Any disciplinary or judicial decision against a Representative or Local Leadership shall be enforced by the National Executive.
2. Where a Representative fails to comply with a lawful decision, the National executive may—
 - (a) suspend or remove the Representative;
 - (b) declare the office vacant;
 - (c) withhold privileges or funding allocated to the respective Chapter.

Article 161: Revenue and Resources of local Chapters

1. Local Chapters shall be entitled to a portion of the Association's revenue, as allocated by the National Executive, to support devolved operations and member services.
2. A Local Chapter may raise additional resources from—
 - (a) fundraising activities;
 - (b) contributions or grants from recognised institutions;
 - (c) other lawful sources approved by the National Executive
3. All revenues and resources raised or received by a Chapter shall be accounted for and managed in accordance with the financial rules of the Association.

Article 162: Local Chapter Funds

1. Every Local Chapter shall establish and operate a Chapter Fund, which shall be used solely for activities authorised under this Constitution or as approved by the National Executive.
2. The Chapter Fund shall be operated under guidelines approved by the Council and shall be subject to audit and oversight by the National Executive.
3. Expenditure from the Chapter Fund shall be authorised by the District or Provincial Leadership, in consultation with the Secretary General
4. Each Chapter shall submit annual financial reports to the Treasurer General.

Article 163: Equalization Support Fund

1. There is hereby established an Equalization Support Fund, which shall be administered by the National Executive in accordance with this Constitution and financial regulations enacted thereunder.
2. The purpose of the Equalization Support Fund shall be to provide financial support to members of the Association
3. The Fund shall be financed from:
 - a. A designated percentage of the Association's annual revenues as appropriated by the General Assembly;
 - b. Grants, donations, or contributions earmarked for equalization purposes;
 - c. Any other lawful source as approved by the association.
4. The National Executive shall prescribe regulations for the allocation, utilization, and audit of the Equalization Support Fund.

Article 164: Legislation on local Chapters

1. The Council shall, in consultation with the National Executive and the General Assembly, enact such regulations, statutes, or standing orders as may be necessary for the proper governance, accountability, and operation of Provincial, District, Sub-District and branch Chapters of the Association.
2. Without prejudice to the generality of clause (1), such legislation may provide for:
 - a. The establishment and dissolution of local chapters;
 - b. The conduct and tenure of local chapter leadership;
 - c. Financial management and reporting obligations;
 - d. Dispute resolution mechanisms; and
 - e. Disciplinary measures and oversight frameworks.
3. All local chapters shall operate in accordance with this Constitution and the instruments issued under this Article.

PART XIII: SECRETARIAT AND EMPLOYEES OF THE ASSOCIATION

Article 165: Values and principles of Administrative Service

1. The administrative service of the Association shall be governed by values and principles of:
 - a. Integrity, transparency, and accountability;
 - b. Professionalism and merit-based recruitment;

- c. Efficiency, responsiveness, and impartiality;
 - d. Gender equity, inclusiveness, and non-discrimination; and
 - e. Loyalty to the objectives and mandate of the Association.
2. The Secretariat and administrative employees shall serve the Association in a non-partisan, competent, and diligent manner, and shall uphold the Constitution and interests of the Association in the performance of their duties.

Article 166: Establishment of Administrative Offices

1. There shall be established such administrative offices within the Association as may be necessary for the effective and efficient implementation of its functions and operations.
2. The National Executive shall, in consultation with the Council, determine the structure, grades, and staffing levels of the administrative service, and shall establish:
- a. The Offices of Executive members;
 - b. Departments or Units necessary for policy, finance, research, membership, communications, and other operational needs;
 - c. Provincial administrative secretariats as required under this Constitution.
3. The administrative offices shall form the permanent institutional Secretariat of the Association.

Article 167: Holding of office

1. A person shall hold office within the administrative service of the Association in accordance with:
 - a. A valid contract of employment or appointment;
 - b. The human resource policies and terms and conditions of service established by the Association; and
 - c. The applicable laws, codes of ethics, and disciplinary regulations prescribed by the Council.
2. A person holding administrative office shall vacate office:
 - a. Upon expiry or lawful termination of contract;
 - b. Upon resignation, removal, retirement, or death; or
 - c. Where otherwise declared disqualified under the disciplinary procedures of the Association.
3. The appointment, promotion, suspension, or dismissal of employees of the Association shall be conducted in accordance with transparent procedures and due process, as may be prescribed.

Article 168: Office of The President

1. There shall be established within the Secretariat an administrative Office of the President, which shall support the President in the execution of their constitutional duties and functions.

2. The Office of the President shall consist of such technical, administrative, and support staff as may be necessary for the effective discharge of the responsibilities of the Presidency.
3. The staff of the Office of the President shall be appointed by the National Executive, and shall operate under the direction and supervision of the President.
4. The office shall be allocated finances for the purpose of operation, allowances, salaries and any incidental to the forgoing

Article 169: Office of The Secretary General

1. There shall be established an Office of the Secretary General, which shall be responsible for coordinating the day-to-day operations and strategic activities of the Association as directed by the Secretary General.
2. The Office of the Secretary General shall:
 - a. Maintain records of the Association;
 - b. Coordinate implementation of General Assembly , executive and Council decisions;
 - c. Supervise communication, public relations, and policy support functions of the Secretariat.
3. The Office shall be staffed by competent personnel appointed in accordance with the approved human resource framework and shall be accountable to the Secretary General.
4. The office shall be allocated finances for the purpose of operation, allowances, salaries and any incidental to the forgoing

Article 170: Office of the Legal Advisor

1. There shall be an Office of the Legal Advisor within the Secretariat, responsible for providing legal counsel to the Association on all matters pertaining to its governance, operations, and compliance.
2. The Legal Advisor shall:
 - a. Interpret the Constitution and internal regulations of the Association;
 - b. Represent the Association in legal proceedings, where applicable;
 - c. Advise the National Executive, Council, and organs of the Association on legal risks and obligations.
3. The Legal Advisor shall be appointed by the Council upon recommendation of the National Executive and shall possess legal qualifications and experience as prescribed.

Article 171: Finance and Administration office

1. There shall be a Finance and Administration Office within the Secretariat, responsible for the management of financial operations, accounting, procurement, asset management, and general administration.
2. The Office shall:
 - a. Operate under the authority of the Treasurer General and in collaboration with the Secretary General;
 - b. Ensure proper maintenance of financial records and compliance with internal controls;

- c. Support the implementation of the Association's budget, payroll, and resource utilization systems.
3. The head of the Finance and Administration Office shall be appointed by the National Executive in accordance with the approved recruitment procedures and shall be accountable to the Secretary General.

Article 172: Employees of the Association

1. The Association shall employ such number of persons as may be necessary for the execution of its constitutional and administrative functions.
2. Employees of the Association shall be:
 - a. Appointed on merit through transparent and competitive recruitment processes;
 - b. Governed by terms and conditions of service set out in the human resource policy;
 - c. Required to act in accordance with the values, objectives, and integrity standards of the Association.
3. No employee of the Association shall:
 - a. Engage in partisan politics or participate in elective contests within the Association unless duly resigned;
 - b. Use their position for personal or financial gain contrary to ethical standards; or
 - c. Disclose confidential information acquired in the course of their duty without lawful authority.

4. The rights, duties, and liabilities of employees shall be prescribed in a code of conduct and terms of service approved by the Council.

PART XIV: PENSION BENEFIT

Article 173: Pension benefit

1. The Association shall establish a Pension Benefit Scheme for eligible office bearers of the National Executive, Council recognition of their service to the Association.
2. The Pension Benefit Scheme shall be administered in accordance with guidelines, eligibility criteria, and benefit structures as may be prescribed by the Council and ratified by the General Assembly.
3. A person shall qualify for pension benefit under this Article if that person—
 - a. Has served a full term or terms in an elective constitutional office within the Association;
 - b. Has not been removed from office through impeachment or disciplinary action;
 - c. Has not voluntarily resigned before completing a term, except on health or compassionate grounds;
 - d. Has not been convicted of professional misconduct or a criminal offence during their term of office.

Article 174: Review of pension benefit

1. The Council shall, every three years, initiate a review of the pension benefits payable under this Part, taking into account inflationary trends, fiscal sustainability, and the financial status of the Association.

2. Any review under clause (1) shall be subjected to ratification by the General Assembly before coming into force.
3. The Association may, upon the recommendation of the Council and subject to approval by the General Assembly, engage independent actuarial or financial experts to advise on the sustainability and adjustment of pension benefits.

Article 175: Payment of pension benefits

1. The payment of pension benefits shall be made from a designated Pension Fund established for this purpose, which shall be managed prudently in accordance with financial regulations prescribed by the Council.
2. The Pension Fund shall derive its income from—
 - a. Appropriations by the General Assembly;
 - b. Contributions from revenue-generating activities of the Association;
 - c. Voluntary contributions, endowments, or lawful donations earmarked for pension;
 - d. Interest or returns from investments made using pension funds.
3. Pension benefits shall be paid in such form and manner as shall be prescribed, and shall not be withheld except where—
 - a. The beneficiary is found to have committed gross misconduct while in office;
 - b. There exists a lawful court or disciplinary order barring such payment.
4. The Council shall report annually to the General Assembly on the status, disbursements, and investments of the Pension Fund.

PART XVI: ASSOCIATION FINANCE AND BUDGET

Article 198: Principles relating to Association finance

1. The financial resources of the Association shall be governed by principles of transparency, accountability, prudence, equity, and sustainability.
2. All revenues, expenditures, investments, and liabilities of the Association shall be managed in accordance with this Constitution, financial regulations, and any applicable statutes approved by the General Assembly.
3. The Association shall promote fiscal decentralization, ensuring equitable allocation and utilization of resources across all organs and sub-structures.

Article 199: Imposition of Member Levies or fees

1. No fee, levy, or charge shall be imposed on members of the Association except as approved by the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the Council.
2. The national executive shall determine the categorization and amount of any proposed levy, subscription, or fee and submit such proposal to the General Assembly for approval.
3. All members shall be obligated to comply with the prescribed financial obligations, subject to applicable exemptions or concessions.

Article 200: Consolidated Fund of the Association

1. There is established a Consolidated Fund of the Association into which shall be paid—
 - a. All monies received or raised by or on behalf of the Association;

- b. Grants, donations, and contributions from lawful sources;
 - c. Income derived from investments, property, and commercial ventures;
 - d. Any other lawful funds received for the benefit of the Association.
2. The Consolidated Fund shall serve as the primary account for financing the operations and obligations of the Association and shall be administered by the National Executive in accordance with financial regulations.

Article 201: Withdrawal from Consolidated Fund

1. No monies shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund except—
- a. Under authority of an appropriation statute enacted by the General Assembly;
 - b. In accordance with financial estimates approved under Article 202;
 - c. To meet expenditure obligations as authorized by this Constitution or as prescribed by financial regulations.
2. Emergency withdrawals not contemplated in the annual financial estimates shall only be made with the prior approval of the Council and subsequent ratification by the General Assembly.

Article 202: Annual financial estimates of revenue and expenditure

1. The National Executive shall prepare and submit to the general assembly, not later than three months before the end of each financial year, estimates of the Association's revenue and expenditure for the ensuing financial year.

2. The General Assembly shall deliberate and provide approval at the Annual General Meeting.
3. The approved estimates shall constitute the basis for all financial operations of the Association in the relevant financial year.
4. Any expenditure outside the approved estimates shall require supplementary appropriation.

DRAFT AMENDMENT

Article 203: Financial appropriation and Supplementary provisions

Article 204: Limitation and conditions of warrant

Article 205: Budget and planning Legislation

Article 206: Investment of Association funds

Article 207: Borrowing and lending by the Association

Article 208: Association debt

Article 209: Compensation Fund

Article 210: Association procurement and disposal of institutional assets

Article 211: Financial report of the Association

Article 212: Auditor's report

PART XVII: ACCOUNTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Article 213: Association Banking and Financial Management

Article 214: Oversight of Association Accounts

Article 215: Legislation and regulations on Association Finances

PART XVIII: MEMBER DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

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Article 218: Appointment into the Disciplinary Committee

Article 219: Composition of the Disciplinary committee

Article 220: Procedures of the Disciplinary Committee

Article 221: Finances of the Disciplinary Committee

PART XX: THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Article 222: Principles of the Electoral Commission of COAZ

Article 223: Establishment of the electoral commission

Article 224: Procedures of the Electoral commission

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PART XX: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 226: Official language and use and status of local languages

Article 227: Nominations and appointments

Article 228: Oath of office and prescribed oaths

Article 229: Code of conduct and ethics

Article 230: Conflict of interest

Article 231: Emoluments payable under Constitution

Article 232: Funding, expenses and emoluments charge on Consolidated Fund

Article 233: Definitions

Article 234: Interpretation of Constitution

Article 235: Grammatical variation

Article 236: Computation of time

Article 237: Power to appoint includes power to remove

Article 238: Implied power

Article 272: Legislation to give effect to Constitution

Article 273: Power to make by-laws, Resolutions and Regulations

Article 274: Time for performance of function

Article 275: Exercise of power between publication and commencement of Association Laws .

ANNEX: FUNCTIONS OF NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL CHAPTERS OF DEVOLVED GOVERNANCE (Article 148)

A. Exclusive national functions

B. Concurrent national and provincial functions

C. Local chapter exclusive functions

DRAFT AMENDMENT