

ASSOCIATION OF CAMEROONIANS IN UMEÅ



CONSTITUTION

Revised
&
Adopted in April 2013

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PREAMBLE

- Aware of our increasing number in Umeå-Sweden
- Conscious of our Cameroonian heritage
- Conscious of our desire to be our brother's keeper
- Mindful of our ambition to always protect, defend and propagate the image of Cameroon worldwide (A land of Promise and Land of Glory)
- Cognizant of the fact that unity is strength
- Fully aware that solidarity is inherent in the Cameroonian way of life,

We, Cameroonians in Umeå-Sweden: in order to form a perfect and lasting union, establish cohesion and comprehension, ensure tranquillity and camaraderie, enhance and promote our general welfare and solidarity, solemnly declare that we constitute one and the same people, hence, do ordain and establish this constitution for the Association.

PART ONE

ARTICLE I: NAME AND STATUS OF THE ASSOCIATION

1. The association shall be called ASSOCIATION OF CAMEROONIANS IN UMEÅ, with the acronym ASCAMINU.
2. The motto of the association shall be "Peace Unity and Determination"
3. The association shall be registered with the competent Swedish authorities in Umeå.
4. The headquarters of the association shall be in Umeå, in Umeå Council (Kommun) in Västerbottens Län in Sweden.
5. It shall be a non-political, Non-Religious, Non-gender, Non-Regional, or linguistically sensitive and Non-profit making association.
6. The working languages shall be English, French and Swedish.
7. It shall be affiliated to any broad-based Cameroonian association(s) with the same objectives that shall be formed in the future in Sweden, the Scandinavian or Europe and the world in general, if members deem it necessary.
8. The association shall work in close collaboration with the Cameroon High Commission in London, United Kingdom and the Cameroon Consulate in Stockholm which is responsible for Swedish-Cameroon relations.
9. The association, in order to accomplish its mission, shall abide to all Swedish laws, except otherwise not applicable.

ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES

1. To support each other in times of sorrow and happiness.
2. To serve as a melting-pot for all Cameroonians in Umeå.
3. To establish contacts with organizations having the same pre-occupations and objectives.
4. To enhance our welfare through sustainable micro-projects.
5. To propagate and promote the complex but beautiful socio-economic and cultural values of Cameroonians as a people and Cameroon as a nation.
6. To facilitate the demand for and supply of scholarships to Cameroonians'
7. To promote the exchange of services between the people and the institutions of Sweden and Cameroon.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership into the association is exclusively for residents of Umeå, and shall be acquired through any of the following ways:
 - i. **Ordinary members**
 - a) **By Birth:** this kind of membership is automatic if the individual is able to attest that he or she is the son/daughter of one or both Cameroonian parents.
 - b) **Close relatives:** foreign nationals who are married to Cameroonians or are in a registered partnership with a Cameroonian shall be granted membership into the association if they so desire and declare their intention (verbal or written).

- c) **By affiliation:** Foreign nationals who do attest their profound interest and desire for the Cameroonian way of life and culture and so declare their intention (written or verbal) for membership shall be privileged to join, upon approval by the executives.

ii. **Alumni**

Any member who leaves Umea permanently shall be an alumnus
Honorary members

iii. **The executives**

The executives can propose some members of high standing (those not under any of the above criteria) to be honorary. These, proposals will be approved by the General Assembly before endorsement.

2. All members shall have equal rights and privileges.
3. Each member shall pay a registration fee of 50 SEK, and an annual fee of 100 SEK, and shall accept to adhere to this constitution and its by-laws.

ARTICLE IV: LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership into the association can be lost through any of the following ways:

1. Resignation: Any member who so desires can resign his/her membership into the association at any time, provided he or she is not owing the association or keeping any of its documents.
2. Expulsion: Any member who grossly violates the laws of the association or involves himself/herself in other unlawful acts that can tarnish the image of the association shall be expelled from the association. Any such expulsion shall take place in accordance with points (3) to (7) of section (III) of the association's By-laws.
3. Death: Any member's membership into the association automatically terminates with his/her death.
4. The status of inactive members' status shall be reviewed by the executives after correspondence with the concerned.

ARTICLE V: FINANCES

The association shall derive its finances from:

1. Registration fees and other taxed and tasked contributions.
2. Membership Annual contribution fees.
3. Donations.
4. Gifts and grants from any genuine source(s).
5. Revenue from services performed by the association.

ARTICLE VI: ORGANIGRAM OF THE ASSOCIATION

The structures of the association shall include:

1. The General Assembly.
2. The Executive Committee.
3. The Constitutional Committee.

ARTICLE VII: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The supreme powers of the association shall be vested in the General Assembly. It shall be composed of all registered members. The General Assembly shall:

1. Elect members of the Executive and Ad hoc committees which are all accountable to the General Assembly.
2. Ratify the activities of the Executive and Ad hoc Committees.
3. With a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, shall pass a vote of non-confidence on both the Executive and Ad hoc Committees.
4. Shall receive and entertain findings of both the Executive and Ad hoc Committees and shall vote for their ratification.
5. Shall debate the annual budget and program of action of the Association.
6. The General Assembly shall meet once every month in ordinary meetings. These meetings shall be held in the last week of every month with a flexibility of one week before or after. Extra-ordinary meetings shall be convened by the president upon the request of the Constitutional Committee with the consent of the President.
7. Fifty percent plus one of the membership shall form the quorum which shall therefore allow for proceedings to start.
8. In the case of a vote each member shall have one vote.

ARTICLE VIII: THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCO)

1. It shall be composed of the following elected members who shall serve a one year mandate, renewable once, and who shall have lived in Umeå for at least three months:
 - a. President
 - b. Secretary General
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Financial Secretary
 - e. Socio-Cultural Secretary
 - f. Webmaster
2. This committee of elected members shall be answerable to the General Assembly.
3. Their services shall be free of charge, though some stipend could be allocated by the General Assembly, if need arises.
4. After debates on the budget and activities of the Association, the committee shall endorse the budget and go on to execute the program of action adopted by the Assembly.
5. No proxies shall be allowed in the committee meetings.
6. The committee shall meet at least once in two months or could at request of the President or by a two-thirds (2/3)-majority-request of the other committee members or a two-thirds (2/3)-majority-demand of the General Assembly
7. Deliberations at all committee meetings shall only proceed in the presence of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the committee members.
8. Each member shall have one vote.
9. The committee shall draw up guidelines for the Association in conformity with the agreed activities and, or budget drawn by the General Assembly.
10. All decisions shall be arrived at by a two-thirds (2/3) majority.
11. If need be, some of its members shall be elected into the Ad hoc committees.
12. All Executive Committee members shall be selfless and be prepared to attend to the Association's issues at any time whenever and wherever the need arises.

ARTICLE IX: THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE.

1. This committee shall be made up of three (3) members of very high moral standing and integrity who shall not be members of the Executive Committee.
2. It shall serve as the watchdog of the Association in order to guarantee the balance of power as spelt out in the constitution.
3. The committee shall adjudicate (interpret) in case of confusion, misinterpretation, and or other controversies of the constitution.
4. The committee shall ensure that all the articles of the constitution and the by-laws are respected to the latter.
5. It shall from time to time inform the General Assembly as to the state of compliance and attainment of the Association's goals and objectives.
6. Members of this committee shall not attend executive meetings except on invitation of the President.
7. The committee shall conduct free, fair, transparent and impartial elections.
8. Shall receive electoral protests and or petitions and examine them.
9. Shall take decisions on any such protests or petitions examined. Such decisions are final and binding.
10. In case of gross misconduct during elections, the committee shall cancel the whole election or organize partial elections as the case may be.
11. Shall call early elections, when it is ascertained by two-thirds of the General Assembly that the Executive Committee cannot perform its duties.

ARTICLE X: ADHOC COMMITTEES

1. These are temporary committees that shall be set up to handle technical and or immediate or special issues.
2. Shall be elected by the General Assembly.
3. Shall be composed of competent individuals who shall then elect their Chairperson, and or Secretary.
4. They shall be accountable to the General Assembly.
5. Their mandates are limited only to the reason(s) for their creation and they cease to exist upon completion and submission of their results, findings and or recommendations to the General Assembly.
6. Their services are free of charge but could be compensated if deemed necessary by the General Assembly.
7. The committee members shall define their strategy towards achieving their set and defined goals.

ARTICLE XI: FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

1. PRESIDENT

- a. He or she shall summon and preside over meetings (General Assembly and Exco meetings).
- b. Shall oversee and coordinate the activities of the association.
- c. Shall represent the association, whenever and wherever need be.
- d. Shall prepare and present annual reports to the General Assembly.
- e. Shall co-sign with the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer cheques and the bank account(s) of the Association, for expenses incurred by the Association.

- f. In conformity with the General Assembly, shall establish relations with other groups. Institutions, companies or individuals of goodwill who work in line with the Association's objectives.
- g. Signs and endorses documents prepared and sent by the General Secretary and returns them for onward transmission or documentation.
- h. Signs and endorses reports and recommendations of ad hoc committees.
- i. The President shall, following the resolutions of the General Assembly be the mouth-piece of the association.
- j. Shall be the head of all official delegations from the Association except he/she is absent and has delegated powers.
- k. Shall ensure the smooth running of the association.

2. SECRETARY GENERAL

- a. Shall attend to all secretarial duties.
- b. Shall call the meetings (General Assembly and Exco) after consultation with the President.
- c. Shall take and keep accurate accounts of all meetings.
- d. Shall prepare and submit reports to the General Assembly and Executive Committee.
- e. Shall represent the Association when assigned to.
- f. Shall prepare and forward circulars to the President for endorsement which he shall forward to the Public Relations Officer (PRO) for propaganda and publicity.
- g. In consultation with the President shall prepare meeting agenda.
- h. Shall keep all associations assets.

3. TREASURER

- a. Shall receive and pay money into the Association's account.
- b. Shall be responsible for approved expenditures.
- c. Shall maintain accurate records and submit same for auditing and to the General Assembly, if need be.
- d. With the President and the Financial Secretary, shall sign the cheques and the bank account(s) of the association.
- e. Shall prepare and submit reports to the Assembly and the Executive Committee for scrutiny.

4. FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- a. Shall collect the Association's assets which shall be forwarded to the Secretary General for keeps.
- b. Shall collect the Association's money which shall be forwarded to the Treasurer for keeps.
- c. Shall take and keep accurate and up-to-date financial records.
- d. Shall present financial records to both the General Assembly and the Executive Committee.
- e. Shall, with the Treasurer and the President endorse his/her signature on the cheques and other financial transactions of the Association.

5. PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

- a. Shall publicise all Executive Committee meetings.
- b. Shall be the MC of the Association at all public outings or any other occasion where such services are needed.

6. SOCIO-CULTURAL SECRETARY

- a. Shall be in charge of all social and cultural events in which the Association is involved.
- b. Shall draw up the agenda for all such events in collaboration with the President.
- c. Shall be the chairperson at all such events.
- d. Shall be charged with using the money collected for a particular event as determined by the General Assembly.
- e. Shall present a written account of how such money was used to the General Assembly at its next sitting after the occasion.

7. WEBMASTER

- a. Shall be responsible for the Association's website and Yahoo! Group.
- b. Shall keep the passwords to the Association's website and email address.

ARTICLE XII: MEETINGS

1. ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

- a. Shall take place once a month as described in Article VII(6) above.
- b. The Secretary General shall be charged with the publicity of these meetings.
- c. Shall serve as a forum for constructive debates and discussions.
- d. Each registered member shall have one vote.
- e. Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority vote.
- f. The meetings shall be presided over by the President or Secretary General if the President is more than fifteen minutes late. The Secretary General shall preside over the meetings if both the President and Vice are more than fifteen minutes late.
- g. Deliberations shall be conducted in an orderly manner.
- h. The President could appoint another member to preside over the meetings. This appointed member shall work in collaboration with those he/she is representing.
- i. The modus operandi shall be defined by by-laws.

2. ORDINARY EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

- a. Shall be publicized by the Secretary General.
- b. The meeting agenda shall be drawn up by the Secretary General in consultation with the President.
- c. It shall be presided over by the President. In his/her absence, Article XII (g) applies.
- d. Two-thirds of the members shall form a quorum to allow for deliberations.
- e. Decisions shall be based on a two-thirds majority vote.
- f. Proxies shall not be allowed.
- g. If necessary, non-executive members shall be invited by the President but they shall not vote.
- h. The Secretary General shall take down minutes during the deliberations and read out the decisions to the General Assembly during the very next meeting for discussions.
- i. Their modus operandi shall be defined by by-laws.

3. EXTRA ORDINARY MEETINGS

- a. These shall be held in consonant with the demands of article II of Part Two.
- b. Invitations to such meetings shall be issued at least forty-eight hours (two days) before the day of the meeting.
- c. Its agenda shall be short and definite.
- d. It shall be presided over by the president.
- e. Their modus operandi shall be defined Section II of the by-laws.
- f. In extremely urgent situations and if the meeting was announced, decisions shall be arrived at by any number there in attendance.

ARTICLE XIII: RELATIONS WITH OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

1. The Association shall be registered with the competent Swedish Authorities.
2. It shall be affiliated to any broad-based Cameroonian Association(s) with same objectives that shall be formed in Sweden, the Scandinavian and or Europe.
3. Relations with such affiliated groups shall be technical.
4. The Association shall organize cross-cultural events with others of the same objectives, if need be.
5. The President and other designated officials shall represent the Association in dealings with others of the same objectives.
6. The Association shall from time to time organize seminars, workshops, open-days, symposia and training sessions with members of other affiliated groups.
7. The Association shall work in close collaboration with the Cameroon Consular in Stockholm and the Cameroon High Commission in London, UK.

ARTICLE XIV: ELECTIONS

1. Executive members shall be elected every year.
2. Each member shall have one vote.
3. Their modus operandi shall be defined by Section IV (1) of the by-laws by-laws.

ARTICLE XV: CORRECTIONAL MEASURES/DISCIPLINE

To ensure the smooth functioning of the Association, some correctional measures shall be taken against defaulters.

1. Members whose activities or conduct run counter to the objectives of the Association shall be reprimanded, fined, or expelled from the Association depending on the gravity of the offence.
2. The manner in which such correctional measures shall be applied shall be defined by by-laws (Section III).
3. Every member is equal before the law.

ARTICLE XVI: OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. To meet its objectives, the Association shall from time to time be involved in some extra-curricular and social activities.
2. These activities may include, but not limited to:
 - a. Deaths
 - b. Marriages
 - c. "Born Houses" / Birthdays
 - d. Send-offs
 - e. End-of-year parties.
 - f. Reception of members of other Associations.
 - g. Invitations from other Associations.
 - h. Reception/Entertainment by individual member(s).
 - i. Graduation ceremonies.
3. Except for death occasions, participation at the other social activities is optional.
4. Their modus operandi shall be defined by Section I of the by-laws.

ARTICLE XVII: IMPEACHMENT

1. Every executive member or person with elective office shall be removed from office if impeached and found guilty of embezzlement, bribery, misuse of power or other high charges and misdemeanours.
2. This shall be possible if at least two-thirds of membership of the Association endorse the impeachment procedure.
3. Impeachment procedure shall only be introduced if the Ad hoc committee in charge of auditing finds gross abuse of office or other irregularities or upon the recommendation of the Constitutional Committee.
4. Any person(s) charged with gross betrayal, disloyalty or other high charges who shall flee from the Association by voluntary self-suspension or resignation shall be reported to the Swedish authorities for prosecution.
5. Their modus operandi shall be defined by Section III of the by-laws.

ARTICLE XVIII: AMENDMENTS

1. The article(s) and or section(s) of this constitution shall be amended only by a decision of the General Assembly.
2. The bill/motion for amendment shall be tabled at the General Assembly for vote by either the executive committee or by an individual member.
3. Seventy percent vote in favour of a change will necessitate an amendment of the said article(s) or clause(s).
4. A debate shall be allowed before a vote is cast.

PART TWO: BY-LAWS

We, Cameroonians in Sweden, and members of the Association of Cameroonians in Umeå (ASCAMINU) do commit ourselves to these by-laws in order to ensure the smooth running of the Association and to enable us achieve our goals.

I. FINANCES

To enable the smooth functioning of the Association, members shall:

1. Pay a membership registration fee of SEK 50.
2. Make other reasonable contributions agreed upon in accordance with the constitution.
3. All these contributions are compulsory except otherwise accepted by the General Assembly as free-will. Non-compliant members shall be held accounted for as debtors to the association.

II. MEETING PROCEDURE

Meeting proceedings shall be orderly and systematic and shall follow the order below:

1. Prayers.
2. Short address by the presiding officer.
3. Reading of agenda by the presiding officer.
4. Endorsement of agenda.
5. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting.
6. Corrections and endorsement.
7. Discussions on matters arising from the minutes.
8. Other matters.
9. Closing remarks and entertainment.

III. CORRECTIONAL MEASURES/DISCIPLINE

Members shall be strongly encouraged to be well-behaved and mature in their comportment and interactions during meetings and out of meetings.

1. Members who exhibit gross indiscipline shall be reported to the Constitutional Committee.
2. The Committee shall then determine whether the reported member has a case to answer or not.
3. Before any correctional measure shall be taken on a member, the member shall be given the opportunity to state and defend his/her case before the General Assembly.
4. After the General Assembly has heard from the accused, the Constitutional Committee shall then decide on the kind of correctional measure(s), if necessary to apply on the accused.
5. Decisions of the Constitutional Committee can be appealed once.
6. If a Constitutional Committee decision is appealed, the case shall be examined at a joint session of the Executive and Constitutional Committees. Decisions of these joint committees are final.
7. Except by a two-third majority vote of the General Assembly, no member shall be expelled from the Association.

8. Suspension of defaulters shall be the prerogative of the General Assembly upon recommendation by the Constitutional Committee.

IV. ELECTIONS

1. CRITERIA AND FORMALITIES

- a. The following criteria shall be observed in the selection and nomination of candidates for offices;
 - All participants (candidates and electorate) shall have complied with all financial obligations to the Association.
 - Candidates shall be of high moral standing and integrity.
 - Candidates shall have lived in Umeå for at least 3 months.
 - Nominated candidates shall express their willingness for office.
 - Candidates shall be selfless and willing to work for the Association.
- b. The date of the elections shall be announced at least two months before the election date.
- c. An Audit Committee shall be composed that same day (day of announcement) for them to begin work with the outgoing Exco.
- d. Any executive member found guilty of defrauding the Association shall not be eligible to stand for another mandate.
- e. Official campaigns shall not be allowed during the one month period preceding the day of the elections.
- f. In case of doubtful conduct of the elections and upon the receipt of official protest(s), the Constitutional Committee shall intervene as stipulated by Section IV (1) of the by-laws.

2. CONDUCT OF THE ELECTIONS

- a. It shall be the sole agenda of the day.
- b. Each member shall come with a pen.
- c. An Electoral Committee composed of the three members of the Constitutional Committee shall conduct the elections.
- d. Sixty per cent of membership shall form a quorum.
- e. The Chairman of the Committee shall call for the offices to be contested and three potential candidates shall be nominated for each position.
- f. Candidates shall be given three minutes to campaign.
- g. The Electorate shall then proceed to write the name of their preferred candidate on a piece of paper, fold it and hand it to the Chairman of the Commission who will then unfold the papers and openly count the ballots and declare the results.
- h. The above procedure shall be repeated for each position until all the positions are filled.
- i. In case of a tie, there shall be another round of voting until a winner emerges.
- j. Cancelled ballot papers shall not be counted.
- k. The newly elected President on behalf of the newly elected executive shall make a five minutes policy speech.

V. EMERGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS

1. There shall be a trouble fund in the form of a minimum balance in the account worth 500 SEK
2. In case of an emergency that has not been spelt out explicitly in the constitution, members shall be called upon to make an emergency contribution.
3. The amount to be contributed shall be agreed upon by a simple majority of the members of the Association.
4. If the emergency occurs when it is not possible to hold a meeting, the amount to be contributed shall be agreed upon via the Association Yahoo! Group.
5. All contributions received for a particular emergency shall be used solely for that emergency.

VI. WEBSITE

1. To enhance communication among members and interactions with the outside world, the Association shall create and maintain a website.
2. The website shall be created, maintained and updated by the Association's web master.
3. Being an official communication channel of the Association, all articles, information, pictures and communiqués on the website shall be approved by the President or Public Relations Officer before they are made public.
4. The President and Secretary General shall consult one another and agree before approving any web article.
5. The passwords to the Association's website, email address and Yahoo! Group shall be kept by the President, Secretary General and Webmaster.

VII. ENTERTAINMENT AT MEETINGS

1. Refreshment shall be a constant item at the end of all General Assembly meetings.
2. Each member shall contribute the sum of 50 SEK towards such refreshment. This amount must be contributed by all members, irrespective of whether they will attend the meeting or not.
3. All such contributions must have been received latest forty-eight hours (two days) before the start of the meeting.
4. All members shall take turns to arrange refreshments for the meetings.
5. The Secretary General shall draw up a schedule indicating when each member has his/her own turn.
6. The member(s) who prepare refreshment on a particular day shall also be responsible for the cleaning of the meeting venue on that same day after the meeting.

VIII. OTHER MATTERS

1. If a member officially invites the Association to a "Born House" one month in advance, each member shall contribute the sum of 100 SEK whose use shall be determined by the General Assembly.

2. In the event of the death of a member here in Umeå, each member shall be warranted to contribute an amount to be agreed upon by the General Assembly at that time. Only active members shall benefit from this gesture.
3. In the event of the death of a non-member who is a Cameroonian, each member shall also contribute an amount to be agreed upon at that times.
4. In the event of the death of a relative of a member; father, mother, direct brother or sister, child or spouse, every other member of the association shall contribute money to support this member. The amount shall be free and the member will be paid a condolence visit.
5. All contributions towards deaths are compulsory.
6. If a member officially invites the Association to his/her marriage at least one month in advance, all members shall attend the ceremony and each shall contribute the sum of 100 SEK whose use shall be determined by the General Assembly.
7. A member who is to leave Umeå for good must hand over any Association's property in his/her keeping before leaving. In extremely urgent situations in which the Association cannot be notified officially of any such urgent departure, the departing member must at least hold a discussion with the President, the Secretary General and the Treasurer.
8. The Association shall always organize an end-of-year party. An ad hoc committee shall be created and charged with the organization of such parties and shall be placed under the direct supervision of the Socio-cultural Secretary. This committee shall control all the aspects of the party, from conception to realization. However, the committee shall propose financial contributions by each member to the General Assembly.
9. If the Association is officially notified of an impending visitation from other association (s), the General Assembly shall determine the amount to be contributed for reception depending on the number of people to be received by the association.
10. Members shall be greatly encouraged to solicit the Association's intervention in case of disputes between or among members before going to higher authorities.

Drafted in Umeå, this 7th Day of October 2008 by Emmanuel Mukumu

First proofread and edited in November 2008 by Ngeh Jonathan and Enow Constance

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