



Statutes

Article 1. Name, Status and Seat

- a) The name of this organisation is International Health Co-operative Organisation, hereinafter referred to as IHCO.
- b) IHCO is a Sectoral Organisation of the International Co-operative Alliance, ICA in accordance with article 28 of the statutes of the latter.
- c) The primary seat of IHCO is the same as for the ICA and the secondary seat is the same as for the member organisation represented by the Chairperson.

Article 2. Role and Structure

The IHCO is a voluntary association of consumer (user), producer (provider) and multi-stakeholders health co-operatives which seek to provide high-quality, cost-effective community health care based on freedom of choice, integration of services, and ethical working conditions.

Article 3. Objectives

As a Sectoral Organisation of the ICA, IHCO shall:

- a) provide a forum for the discussion and exchange on issues of relevance to its member organizations;
- b) provide information about the nature and role of health co-operatives to international agencies and bodies, specifically United Nations bodies, to national governments, to the media and to public opinion;
- c) promote the development of health co-operatives;
- d) collaborate with ICA Regional Organisations, ICA Thematic Committees and other ICA Sectoral Organisations;
- e) carry out functions and activities that arise from the objects and activities of the ICA.

Article 4. Membership

- a) Membership shall be open to co-operative organisations which are full members of ICA, associated members of ICA, members of full members of ICA or members of associated members of ICA and have as their main objective either:
 - i. the provision of health care to their members;



- ii. the provision of self-employment for health professionals;
 - iii. the integration of consumers' and producers' co-operatives in a higher degree co-operative structure;
 - iv. the promotion of health co-operatives or related activities as education or research.
- b) Full members of IHCO are:
- i. the full members of ICA who have chosen to participate in IHCO;
 - ii. the members of full members of ICA that have been confirmed by the latter as eligible to participate and have chosen to participate in IHCO;
 - iii. the associate members of ICA of the category defined in article 7, b, i of ICA Statutes who have chosen to participate in IHCO; and
 - iv. the members of associate members of ICA of the category foreseen in article 7, b, i of ICA Statutes, that have been mandated to represent the latter in IHCO.
- c) Associate members of IHCO are the associate members of ICA of the categories defined in article 7, b, ii and iii of ICA Statutes, that have chosen to participate in IHCO.
- d) Members and associate members shall normally be national or regional organisations, except in countries where these structures do not exist.

Article 5. Admission of members

- a) ICA members entitled and interested in participating in IHCO shall communicate this intention by writing to the IHCO Secretariat and the ICA central office, indicating the category of membership as defined in article 4.
- b) The decision of admission is made by the IHCO Board and communicated to the ICA member and the ICA central office by writing.
- c) New members will become members of IHCO with the rights and duties of membership from the date of the communication referred in paragraph 5.b above.

Article 6. Suspension of voting rights

Members' voting rights will be suspended if the member does not fully discharge financial obligations to the ICA set out in the terms and conditions of the ICA Statutes and Bye-Laws.



Article 7. Cessation and withdrawal of membership

- a) Membership of IHCO ceases in the following cases:
 - i. the member ceases to be a member of ICA or loses any other condition of eligibility as set out in article 4;
 - ii. the member decides to withdraw its membership under the terms and conditions of paragraph b below; or
 - iii. the member is expelled under the provisions of paragraph c below.
- b) A member of the IHCO that decides to withdraw from membership should communicate its decision by writing to the Secretariat of IHCO with copy to the ICA central office. Cessation of membership is immediate on the date of such communication.
- c) The IHCO Board shall evaluate the conformity of the requirements of membership according to the Rules of IHCO and may request the ICA Board to expel a member on the grounds of non-compliance to the present Rules or the ICA Statutes and Bye-Laws.

Article 8. The General Assembly

- a) The IHCO General Assembly shall be convened every two years, normally at the time of the ICA General Assembly. Extraordinary General Assemblies may be convened upon decision of the IHCO Board.
- b) A quorum for the General Assembly is formed by a majority of member organisations.
- c) Notice of General Assembly meetings will be sent by mail to each member organisation at least two months before the date of the meeting and the agenda at least one month before the date of the meeting.
- d) Each full member organisation shall be entitled to appoint up to three voting delegates.
- e) Associate members may attend the General Assembly, without voting rights.
- f) Unless the Board decides otherwise, all member organisations may send additional, non-voting representatives to General Assembly meeting.
- g) Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of votes. The Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
- h) The functions of General Assembly shall be:
 - i. to approve the report of the IHCO Board;



- ii. to approve future work plans, financial statements and budgets;
- iii. to elect a Chairperson who represents IHCO at the General Assembly and Board of the ICA;
- iv. to elect Vice-Chairpersons who shall be nominated by IHCO Regional Committees, if they exist. A first Vice-Chairperson shall be elected from a different region than the Chairperson;
- v. elect other IHCO Board members;

Article 9. Regional Committees

- a) The General Assembly can, after proposal by the Board, decide on the establishment of Regional Committees and have to approve their tasks and rules.
- b) Regional meetings of members may also be convened by the Board in order to deal with regional issues or on initiative of the IHCO Vice-Chairperson from the region.
- c) The Vice-Chairpersons shall normally be nominated at the IHCO regional meetings of members in according to the ICA region, and be officially elected by the General Assembly.

Article 10. Board

- a) The Board shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons, and as many other members as decided by the General Assembly.
- b) A meeting of the Board shall be called, at least once per year, by the Chairperson, who shall represent the organization and preside over meetings of the General Assembly and Board.
- c) The Board shall be elected for a period of 4 years. Re-election shall be permitted. Vacancies shall be filled through co-option by the Board until the next General Assembly.
- d) The Board shall approve the admission of new members according to article 4.
- e) The Board shall provide the General Assembly with reports on the organization's activities, finances, work programs and budget, and shall seek to implement any resolutions passed by the General Assembly. The Board can make intermediary updates of work plan and budget during years when General Assembly is not held, in exceptional cases.
- f) Extraordinary Board meetings may be called by the Chairperson or at the request of two-thirds of the member organizations.



- g) The Board shall submit regular reports to the ICA, and shall invite the ICA President and Director-General, or their representatives, to attend IHCO General Assembly or IHCO Board meetings.

Article 11. Secretariat

- a) The Secretariat shall undertake activities according to the decisions of the Board, and shall provide the Board with regular reports on IHCO's activities and finances.
- b) The Secretariat shall normally be located within the member organisation represented by the Chairperson, unless decided otherwise by the Board.
- c) In order to ensure the most effective communication, each member organisation shall appoint an appropriate person, to act as liaison officer with Secretariat of IHCO. Such liaison officers shall keep the Secretariat of IHCO informed of relevant developments in the countries in which their organisations operate; and shall assist the Secretariat of IHCO in planning and arranging meetings, conferences and other activities.

Article 12. Finances

- a) The income of IHCO will be provided by the general budget of the ICA. There will be no annual subscription fee.
- b) To finance its activities and in case the redistribution from the ICA general budget is not sufficient to undertake all the activities, IHCO may offer specific products and services and charge for it. IHCO may also seek alternative sources of funding, namely public subventions.
- c) All expenses incurred as a result of attendance at meetings shall be borne by the member organisations.
- d) The funds to cover the expenditure of the secretariat shall be included in the annual budget to be approved by the Board

Article 13. Amendments to the rules

These rules may be changed or amended by a two-thirds majority of votes at the General Assembly.

Article 14. Dissolution

- a) The organization may be dissolved by a three-quarters majority of votes at the General Assembly.



International Health Co-operative Organisation
A Sector of the International Co-operative Alliance

Secretariat

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- b) If the ICA Board no longer recognises IHCO as a Sectoral Organisation, it should be dissolved.
- c) Any General Assembly which approves a proposal to dissolve the organization shall also determine how any outstanding debts are to be paid. Any remaining surplus shall be transferred to the ICA.