



# *Constitution*

*of The* ARAB TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION



الاتحاد العربي للتقايات  
ARAB TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION



*Constitution of The  
Arab Trade Union Confederation*

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## ***Declaration of Principles and Objectives***

The Arab Trade Union Confederation is a union organization based on the principles and objectives of the International Federation of Trade Unions. It includes all Arab union organizations that are members of the International Federation of Trade Unions, the International Federation of African Trade Unions, and the International Trade Union Confederation - Asia Pacific, as well as those that are part of the following Arab countries: Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Bahrain, Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia. The Confederation is based on the same principles and objectives of the International Federation of Trade Unions and maintains legal personality.

## ***The objectives of the Confederation are:***

a) Defending the right of all workers to union organization and exercising it freely, and promoting the building of independent and democratic trade unions working in a transparent manner.

b) Working to unify the Arab democratic trade union movement in order to meet the new challenges facing it and supporting the democratic transition processes in the Arab countries.

c) Promoting social and democratic justice, fair distribution of wealth, good governance, the pursuit of social advancement, as well as ensuring decent work and decent life for the various strata of society.

d) Developing labor relations to ensure basic rights at work and to promote the economic and social conditions of workers.

e) Defending human rights and promoting public and individual freedoms, foremost among which are trade union freedoms, including the right to organize, freedom of expression, peaceful demonstration, striking, and the promotion of these rights.

f) Achieving equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, color, religion, language, or social, cultural or geographical origin.

g) Defending the right to equality, the right of women to assume positions of responsibility in employment, in representative institutions, and in the leadership of trade union organizations as well as the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against them.

h) Defending the economic, social and cultural rights of all workers in the Arab region and adopting the principle of social dialogue and collective bargaining as the best ways to improve work relations.

i) Achieving Arab economic integration as a necessary condition for achieving economic and social growth throughout the Arab region.

j) Combating all forms of human trafficking and exploitation in all its forms; sexual, forced, compulsory, domestic and foreign.

k) Defending the rights of migrant workers and addressing all forms of discrimination and exploitation they may face.

l) Working on developing youth work, and expanding Arab efforts to combat unemployment, unstable employment, and social exclusion, in addition to defending the interests of young workers and protecting their rights.

m) Acting against poverty, hunger, exploitation, oppression, corruption, inequality and discrimination.

n) Working to combat child labor, and protecting the rights of workers, domestic workers, and vulnerable groups as well as defending girls and children who are exploited and forcibly displaced in various ways and methods.

o) Requesting to draft a comprehensive and sustainable participatory development policy in Arab countries for social democracy and a fair distribution of national wealth to preserve the dignity of all workers and social groups.

p) Taking all measures to promote and increase trade union memberships in the Arab area.

q) Strengthening Arab and international labor union solidarity, in addition to supporting and encouraging oppressed labor unions.

r) Strengthening the links of cooperation and solidarity with civil society organizations that have the same principles and values of the Arab Trade Union Confederation and various social movements against wild liberalism.

s) Defending the rights of people with special needs, working to strengthen them, supporting retirees and protecting their interests and organizing them in unions.

t) Rejecting all forms of colonialism and foreign intervention and supporting all peoples to regain their sovereignty and self-determination. Moreover, supporting the struggle of Arab and international liberation movements, and defending the right of the Palestinian people to liberate their land and establish their independent state.

# Chapter 1:

## Membership

# **Article 1:**

## **Membership Procedures,**

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

a) Arab trade union organizations may apply for membership in the International Trade Union Confederation, and the International Confederation of African Trade Unions, the International Trade Union Confederation - Asia Pacific, and the Arab Trade Union Confederation. Membership approval procedures are subject to the rules of the International Trade Union Confederation. The Arab Trade Union Confederation is consulted with regard to membership applications.

b) The member organizations shall maintain their full independence at the national level, are allowed to take their own decisions, develop their orientations and formulate their policies. The principles and objectives are set forth in the Constitution of the Interna-

tional Trade Union Confederation, and approved by the Arab Trade Union Confederation. The member organization shall keep the Union informed of its activities at the national level.

c) 4. Any organization may withdraw from the membership of the Confederation provided that written notice of the content is given three months in advance. For the withdrawal notification to be legal, the organization must not be late in paying its receivables. The withdrawal does not exempt the withdrawing organization from paying its arrears.

d) 5. In the event of any violation of the Constitution of the Confederation and the International Trade Union Constitution and in the event of damage to their interests, the Executive Office or the General Council of the Union may instruct the Internal Rules Committee to study the case. It shall then submit



a report to the Executive Office to be referred to the General Council session of the Union in order to take the appropriate decision.

e) In the event of the suspension of membership of a trade union organization, the power of delegation of its representatives in the constitutional bodies of the Confederation shall automatically expire.

f) Member organizations shall fulfill their financial obligations to the International Federation of Trade Unions, as well as the International Federation of African Trade Unions, and the International Trade Union Confederation - Asia Pacific

g) Members shall enjoy equal rights and duties and shall be entitled to participate in the activities of the Union and to be regularly informed in conformity with the provisions of this Constitution.

h) Member organizations shall receive the solidarity and assistance of the Union when needed. Each member organization must contribute to the solidarity campaigns launched by the Union with organizations facing difficult and exceptional situations.

i) Each member organization must defend the Union in all available ways if the Union is subjected to attacks or campaigns aimed at weakening or abusing it.

j) The same membership conditions as provided for in the provisions of this Constitution apply to partner organizations. Such organizations shall have the responsibilities provided for in the provisions of this Constitution except for the financial responsibilities of the Confederation. Moreover, these organizations have the same rights as the provisions of this Constitution except for the right to vote.

# Chapter 2:

## Internal structures

## Article 2:

### Confederation Bodies

*The Federation consists of the following bodies:*

#### **A. Decision bodies:**

- ◆ General Conference
- ◆ General Council
- ◆ Head Committee

#### **B. Executive bodies:**

- ◆ Executive Office
- ◆ Executive Secretary
- ◆ The Women's Committee
- ◆ The Youth Committee
- ◆ Musawah Forum for Women, Youth and Migrant Affairs
- ◆ Union of retired trade unionists
- ◆ Professional sectoral coordination units

#### **C. Supervisory bodies**

- ◆ Internal Rules Committee
- ◆ Financial Supervision Committee

## Article 3:

### Conference

a. The Conference is the supreme decision body of the Confederation and convenes every four years at the invitation of the General Council and exceptionally by the request of two thirds of the member organizations.

b. An attendance of (50% + 1) of member organizations is required for the legitimacy and convening the ordinary or extraordinary General Conference, and in the absence of a quorum, the call will be redirected within a month to have it convened with attendees.

c. An extraordinary conference shall be convened by the majority (50% + 1) of the members of the General Council.

d. At the opening of its session, the Conference shall elect the Conference office from among its members consisting of a Chairman, two Vice-Chairpersons and two rapporteurs.

e. In the absence of the Chairman, or at his request during the session or during a part thereof, the meeting shall be chaired by one of the Vice-Presidents.

## **Article 4:**

### **Conference Delegates**

**The representatives of the Conference are representatives of all trade union organizations members of the Confederation on the basis of proportional representation according to the following table:**

|                      |                    |                             |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>First Group 1</b> | 1 - 50000          | (2) Two representatives     |
| <b>Second Group</b>  | 50001 - 200000     | (4) Four representatives    |
| <b>Third Group</b>   | 200001 - 400000    | (6) Six representatives     |
| <b>Fourth Group</b>  | 400001 and above   | (8) Eight representatives   |
| <b>Fifth Group</b>   | 1000,000 and above | (12) Twelve representatives |

Controversial decisions have the votes cast based on the proportional representation rule as shown above, with the first group having one vote for each organization and the fourth group having four votes at maximum.

## Article 5:

### Conference Tasks

- a. Discussing and approving the financial and administrative reports of the Confederation.
- b. Evaluating the Confederation's activity since the last session of the Conference.
- c. Drawing general directions and developing a strategy to achieve the objectives of the Confederation in the period between the two conferences.
- d. Electing the members of the General Council, the Executive Secretary, the Women's Committee and the Youth Committee for a period of 4 Years.

## Article 6:

### General Council

- a. The General Council shall consist of two representatives from each member trade union organization in the Confederation provided that the representation of women is not be less than %30 .

b. The General Council of the Union renews the work program and annual policies, as approved by the Conference, and it endorses the annual activities and the financial report submitted by the Executive Office.

c. The General Council shall supervise the activities of the Confederation and, in the light thereof, shall transmit its recommendations to the Executive Office.

d. The General Council shall meet at least once a year and shall convene its meetings with the same provisions provided for in Article (3) of this Constitution.

e. The General Council meets twice during the year of holding the Conference in order to prepare for it.

f. The General Council elects at its closing meeting of the Conference the following constitutional bodies:

- ◆ Head of the Confederation.
- ◆ First Deputy of the Confederation.
- ◆ Second Deputy of the Confederation.
- ◆ The remaining members of the Presidency.

- ◆ Executive Office members
- ◆ Women's Committee.
- ◆ Youth Committee.

***Provided that this is taking into account the approved percentages of youth and women.***

e. The Chairman of the Internal Rules Committee and the Chairman of the Financial Supervision Committee are elected from members of the concerned Committee for 4 years.

f. The Board meets at least once every year, and the call to the meeting shall have the same conditions set forth in Article 3 of this Constitution.

g. The call to an extraordinary General Council meeting is instigated at the request of two thirds of its members.

## **Article 7:** ***Executive Office***

a. The General Council, in its closing meeting of the Conference,

approves the composition of the Executive Office, which is composed as follows:

- ◆ Head of the Confederation.
- ◆ Members of the Head Committee.
- ◆ A representative of each of the organizations that are not represented in the Head Committee.
- ◆ Members of the Women's Committee (5).
- ◆ Members of the Youth Committee (5).
- ◆ Executive Secretary.

b. If a member of the Executive Committee fails to attend, he/she will be replaced automatically by a deputy depending on the arrangement of the original members when elected by vote or by consensus.

c. The Executive Office convenes a normal session twice a year and, whenever necessary, at the call of the Executive Secretary, provided that a legal quorum is available ( 50 + 1% ) .

d. The First Deputy of the Confederation Head is the head of

the Executive Office, and the Second Deputy is responsible for the Solidarity Fund.

e. The Executive Office of the Confederation may invite representatives from some friendly trade union organizations, civil society organizations, specialists and experts to attend the meetings of the General Council or the Conference as an observer.

## **Article 8:**

### **Chairmanship**

a. The Confederation Head is the head of the Head Committee. Head Committee members shall have voting rights in Confederation committees.

b. The General Council, in its closing meeting of the Conference, approves the composition of the Head Committee as follows:

- ◆ Head of the Confederation.
- ◆ First Deputy
- ◆ Second Deputy
- ◆ Members of the Head Committee.
- ◆ Executive Secretary.

c. The Head of the Confederation chairs the meetings of the General Council, the First Deputy chairs the Executive Office meetings, and the Second Deputy oversees the management of the Solidarity Fund.

d. The Head Committee meets normally three times a year and exceptionally at the request of its majority. It reviews and approves the reports of the Executive Secretariat's activities and submits proposals regarding the Executive Secretariat's work program for the following stages.

e. The Head Committee works on the basis of collective management and in the light of the current procedures in the International Trade Union Confederation.

## **Article 9:**

### **Financial Supervision Committee**

a. The Conference shall elect a Financial Supervision Committee consisting of five auditors for four 4 years.

b. The auditors annually check the Confederation accounts

and report to the Council and General Conference. The members of the General Council shall not be among the auditors.

c. In case one of the auditors' positions becomes vacant between two Conferences, the General Council shall have the power to fill the vacancy.

## **Article 10:**

### ***Internal Rules Committee***

***The Conference shall elect an Internal Rules Committee composed of five members for a term of four (4) years entrusted with the following tasks:***

a. Approval of the membership size scale for each organization.

b. Controlling the number of delegates from each organization at the Conference.

c. Controlling proportions of contributions to the solidarity fund.

d. Carrying out any other tasks assigned by the General Con-

ference or the Executive Office of the Confederation.

## **Article 11:**

### ***The Executive Secretary***

a. The Conference shall elect an Executive Secretary nominated by two or more members. He /she shall be elected either by consensus or by secret ballot with a simple majority (50% + 1) if there is more than one candidate.

b. The Executive Secretary is responsible for observing the Confederation Constitution, the progress of its administration, and the implementation of the resolutions of the Conference and the General Council and the Executive Office. The Executive Secretary shall exercise his powers according to the International Trade Union Confederation.

## **Article 12:**

### ***Qualitative Networks***

a. During its first session after the Conference, the General Council undertakes:



- ◆ Establishing a «Musawah Forum» for women, youth and immigrants
- ◆ Establishing an Arab union for trade union retirees
- ◆ Establishment of Arab professional sectoral coordination
- ◆ Renewing the Network of Trade Union Lawyers
- ◆ Renewing the Trade Union Media Network

b. Non-union member enrollment in qualitative networks requires Executive Office approval. The General Council may establish other union networks, as necessary, in accordance with the strategic plan adopted by the Conference.

c. The Executive Bureau member oversees all established networks, which work in coordination with the Executive Secretary.

Quality networks consist of representatives of the Federation member organizations and representatives of civil society, experts and statisticians according to each network objectives and field of activity.

d. The Executive Office Network Coordination Committee is composed of representatives of four members who are elected as to represent the geographic regions. They in turn elect a Coordinator for four years.

e. In collaboration with the Executive Secretary, each network coordinator issues a report to the Executive Office.

## **Article 13:**

### ***Musawah Forum for Women, Youth and Immigrant Affairs***

a. The General Council, in its first session after the Conference, approves the composition of the «Musawah Forum» for women, youth and immigrant affairs.

b. This Forum consists of 4 members from each organization, on account of two women and two young people.

c. The Forum works in consultation with the Executive Secretariat and in coordination with the Youth and Women's Committees.

- d. The Forum meets once a year and exceptionally at the request of two-thirds of its members.
- e. The annual General Council approves the Forum's activity programme.
- f. This Forum can issue positions and statements and carry out campaigns and participate in them.
- g. This Forum can open a headquarters in one of the Arab capitals, according to the meaning of Article 19 of the Constitution of Arab Trade Union Confederation.

## Article 14:

### **The Arab Confederation of Retired Trade Unionists**

***The General Council, in its first session after the conference, approves the composition of the Arab Confederation of Retired Trade Unionists.***

- a. This Confederation consists of two members for each organization, a woman and a man.
- b. The work of this Confederation is carried out in consultation with the Executive Secretariat, and the General Council elects a coordinator from among its members.
- c. The annual General Council approves the activity program of the Arab Confederation of Retired Trade Unionists.
- d. The status of a member of the General Council is granted to the coordinator of the Arab Confederation of Retired Trade Unionists.
- e. The Arab Confederation of Retired Trade Unionists meets twice a year and exceptionally at the request of two-thirds of its members

# Chapter 3:

## **Relations with Other Organizations in the Confederation Structure**

## **Article 15:**

### ***The relation with the International Trade Union Confederation - Asia Pacific, and the Arab Trade Union Confederation***

a. Arab Trade Union organizations become members to both the Arab Trade Union Confederation, the International Trade Union Confederation, the International Trade Union Confederation - Asia Pacific, and International Trade Union Confederation - Africa by formal resolution of the Central Council of the International Trade Union Confederation.

b. Trade union organizations that are members of the Confederation maintain their membership in the African Union and the Asia-Pacific, and maintain all rights and obligations contained within this membership as outlined in their separate statutes.

c. By virtue of their positions, the active Confederation Trustees of the regional organizations (African Union and the Asian-Pacific)

call for constitutional structure meetings.

d. Coordination meeting will be held at least once a year between the Executive Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, Africa and Asia-Pacific, and the Arab Union to study the latest developments in the Arab region, and issues of common concern.

## **Article 16:**

### ***Relationships with Major Sector Unions***

a. The Confederation coordinates with global major unions, especially those with Arab regional organizations, for the implementation of program in the Arab region and when necessary, the General Council of the Arab Trade Union Confederation may establish professional sector professional sectoral coordination units.

b. Professional sectoral coordination units may be invited as observers, to the meetings of the General Council and Conference of the Arab Trade Union Confederation.

# Chapter 4:

## **General Provisions**

## **Article 17:**

### **Women**

Women representation should be no less than 30 % in all bodies and activities of the Arab Trade Union Confederation.

## **Article 18:**

### **Youth**

Youth representation depends on all the bodies and activities of the Arab Trade Union Confederation and should be at least 10%.

## **Article 19:**

### **Voting**

Decisions are made either by consensus or majority (50%+ 1), unless this Constitution states otherwise.

## **Article 20:**

### **Vacancy**

In the event of a vacancy in the General Council, due to the fact that a member is no longer a representative of the organization to which he / she was a member at

the time of election, or due to his /her death, resignation or dismissal from his / her organization, The General Council elects the successor in coordination with his/her organization, taking into account the principle of the approved participation rate of women and youth.

## **Article 21:**

### **Headquarters**

The Conference determines the country of the headquarters of the Arab Trade Union Confederation. The Executive Office may open branch offices through special cooperation program, or whenever the need arises.

## **Article 22:**

### **Assistant Executive Secretary**

- ◆ The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for respecting the Confederation's Constitution, the proper functioning of its administration, and the implementation of the decisions of the Conference, the General Council, and the Executive Office. The Executive Secretary shall perform his powers in accordance with the internal regulations of the Arab Trade Union Confederation.

♦ The Executive Secretary proposes to the General Council two candidates for the Assistant Executive Secretary plan, one man and one woman, for approval.

## **Article 23:**

### **Youth and women representation**

In the event that the prescribed percentage of women and youth in constitutional bodies is not met by consensus, secret balloting must be used to provide the necessary quorum.

## **Article 24:**

### **Parliamentary Term**

A single representative term extends for four years in all bodies of the Confederation.

## **Article 25:**

### **Finance**

a. The Confederation relies on a budget allocated by the International Trade Union Confederation to cover the costs of its administration (salaries, office rentals and other expenses).

b. The Confederation also relies, when financing the rest of its activities, on the mobilization of external resources from the Solidarity Fund of the International Confederation of Trade Unions, cooperation agreements with trade union organizations and friendly institutions, and on unconditional donations it may receive.

c. The Confederation shall, by decision of its Conference, establish an Arab Union Solidarity Fund financed by contributions made by its member organizations according to the number of its members and in accordance with the schedule mentioned in Article 4 of this Constitution. This Fund shall be under the supervision of a member of the Executive Office and shall be subject to the supervision of the Financial Control Committee.

## **Article 26:**

### **Dissolution of the Confederation**

a. The Confederation shall be dissolved only by a resolution of its General Conference at an extraordinary meeting. The resolution shall be submitted to the International Confederation of Trade

Unions, the International Confederation of Trade Unions - Africa, and the International Confederation of Trade Unions - Asia Pacific.

b. A resolution to dissolve the Confederation shall be taken by a two-third vote of the members of the Conference

## **Article 27:**

### ***Enforcing and Amending the Constitution***

a. This Constitution becomes effective after its presentation to the International Trade Union Confederation Conference and its adoption by the Arab Trade Union Confederation.

b. The proposals for amending the Constitution are submitted by the trade union organizations of the Arab Confederation of Trade Unions to the General Conference at least three months before the Conference and all the member trade union organizations shall be notified thereof.

## **Article 28:**

### ***Languages***

Arabic shall be the official language of Arab Trade Union Confederation. In case of any discrepancy among the translated versions of the text of this Constitution, the Arabic version shall prevail.

## **Article 29:**

### ***Legal Vacuum***

«In the event of a legal vacuum or a matter which the Confederation Constitution does not provide rules for to address, the legal reference shall be the Constitution of the International Trade Unions Confederation and the regulations that are in effect.»



## ***Transitional Provisions***

- a. With regard to member organizations invited to settle their legal status in view of the duties of membership or partner organizations in the Arab Trade Unions Confederation, these member organizations are entitled to apply for all constitutional bodies provided they do not assume their functions in these bodies until a resolution by the Central Council of the International Trade Unions Confederation is adopted to accept their membership or to settle their legal status.
  
- b. Organizations that have not declared the number of their members or that have declared their membership without proof are listed within the first group in accordance with the table of the Conference's representation provided for in Article 4 of the Constitution.
  
- c. The General Council may review the classification schedule whenever necessary.

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