



Original

Document No. **GEN 06 rev**
English

FOR ACTION

Constitution and Rules

I. Amendments proposed shortly before the assembly (executive committee September 2005)

(a) Under Rule I, the last section (6) deals with resignation. There is, however, no mention of “suspension” of membership that does not entail severance of relationship. In the past there have been some churches that took the step of suspending their membership in the council.

Rule I

6. *Resignation / Suspension*

a) A church which desires to resign its membership in the fellowship of the Council can do so at any time. A church which has resigned but desires to rejoin the Council must again apply for membership.

***b) Add* When a church suspends its membership or the central committee places the membership of a church in abeyance, because the basis or the theological criteria for membership have not been respected, a progress report shall be presented to the executive committee until a solution is mutually agreed.**

(b) Rule I.3 refers to articles I and III of the Constitution and quotes Article I verbatim. Probably there is no reason to quote in full the exact wording of this article.

(c) Rule I – the last few years the central committee has developed a policy on “inactive members”. Neither the term nor the notion of “inactive members” exists in the current constitutional language of the WCC. Some further thought might be needed as to whether this policy should be gradually interpreted into the language of the rules.

Points a), b) and c) refer to Rule I – alterations to which can only come into effect once they have been confirmed by the assembly.

Suggested action: *The central committee to encourage and monitor a reflection process leading to the final drafting of the amendments as appropriate.*

(d) Under Rule VI (4 a), the programme committee and the finance committee have been referred to as standing committees. There is no definition of the term standing committee in the Rules. If the programme committee and the finance committee are distinguishable from other committees then it may be helpful to express this clearly.

Under the same Rule VI (4 a) reference committee or committees, the wording in brackets could read as “appointed as needed at each meeting to advise the central committee at that particular session on any issue and/or question that calls for special consideration or action of the central committee.”

Rule VI. 4 a)

In the conduct of its business, the central committee shall elect the following committees:

nominations committee;

executive committee;

permanent committee on consensus and collaboration;

programme committee (~~delete a standing committee~~);

finance committee (~~delete a standing committee~~);

reference committee or committees (appointed as needed at each meeting to advise the central committee *new wording* at that particular session on any issue and or question that calls for special consideration or action by the central committee).

(e) Rule IX (5) – if the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration is also considered a committee of the assembly, as stated in this Rule, then it should also appear under Rule IV where mention has been made of the nominations committee and the business committee. The second issue related to the permanent committee would be the need to describe how a vacancy in the permanent committee would be filled.

Rule IV. 6. a)

Add **The permanent committee shall be considered a committee of the assembly**

b) Any other committee of the assembly shall consist...

Rule IX. 4.

Add **Any vacancy in the permanent committee will be filled through the same process as the election of its members.**

Suggested action: *The Nominations' Committee recommends that the amendments proposed in points d) and e) be adopted by the central committee.*

II. Amendments based on the first central committee experience (September 2006)

Experiences during the first full meeting of the central committee were recorded by both members of the committee and consensus facilitators. Taking into consideration these experiences, proposals are being offered herewith for amendments to make certain rules clearer:

Rule IX. 4

Two co-moderators shall be elected by the membership of the permanent committee, one by the Orthodox members (~~delete of the central committee~~), and one by the other members (~~delete of the central committee~~).

Rule VI.2.

2. *Officers*

a) The central committee shall elect...

b) The general secretary of the World Council of Churches...

- c) *add* The officers of the central committee shall function as the business committee for meetings of the central and executive committees.

Rule VIII.

2. Functions

- a) The executive committee shall be accountable to the central committee...
- b) The executive committee shall be responsible for...
- c) ~~*add* The executive committee may take any other action which is normally under the mandate of the central committee if, in the opinion of the officers, timely action is urgently required. All such decisions of the executive committee are reported to and recorded by the central committee.~~
- d) The central committee may by specific action...
- e) The executive committee shall supervise...

Rule XX.

10. Decision-making by vote

- a) Some matters require decision by vote, rather than by consensus. These include:
- 1) constitutional changes (two-thirds majority);
 - 2) elections ...
 - 3) adoption of yearly accounts...
 - 4) *add* appointment of the auditors (simple majority).

Suggested action: *The Nominations' Committee recommends that the proposed amendments be adopted by the central committee.*

III. Amendments related to consultative bodies

Decisions taken by the central committee (September 2006) had an impact mainly on the way the consultative bodies are referred to in the Rules. Here are efforts to streamline the Rules with the decisions of the central committee:

Rule VI 1.d)

Moderators and vice-moderators of committees, commissions and ~~boards~~ *joint consultative bodies*...

Rule VI 4.d)

...shall ~~elect~~ *appoint* commissions and ~~boards~~ *joint consultative bodies*...

Rule VII 1.d)

...committees, commissions and ~~boards~~ *joint consultative bodies*...

Rule VII 1.

...committees, commissions and ~~boards~~ *joint consultative bodies*...

Rule X 1.c)

...commissions; ~~boards~~ and ~~advisory groups~~ *joint consultative bodies*

Rule X 3.f)

...size of ~~boards, in particular the board of the Ecumenical Institute;~~ *joint consultative bodies*...

Rule X 3.g)

~~appoint other advisory groups for specific areas or constituencies, as required. The size and periodicity of meetings of such advisory groups are to be determined in light of the tasks assigned and the resources available.~~

It should be noted that the above mentioned amendments should reflect in the constitution.

Constitution (to be confirmed by the assembly)

V 2. c) 3) to elect committees, commissions and ~~boards~~ **joint consultative bodies**.

V 4. ...of its committees, ~~boards, working groups~~ **joint consultative bodies** and commissions...

Suggested action: *The Nominations' Committee recommends that the proposed amendments be adopted by the central committee and referred to the assembly for confirmation.*

IV. Amendments as a consequence of the structural organization (central committee 2006 Doc. No GEN04)

The new structural organization, endorsed by the central committee in September 2006, will lead to the following amendments of Rule XII:

XII. Staff

1. *The central committee shall elect or appoint or provide for the election or appointment of persons of special competence to conduct the continuing operations of the World Council of Churches. These persons collectively constitute the staff.*
2. *The general secretary shall be elected by the central committee. He or she is the chief executive officer of the World Council. As such, he or she is the head of the staff. When the position of general secretary becomes vacant, the executive committee shall appoint an acting general secretary.*
3. *a) In addition to the general secretary, the central committee shall itself elect one or more deputy general secretaries, the associate general secretary for programme and the associate general secretary for finance, services and administration.*
b) The executive committee shall appoint all programme and executive directors and programme staff and shall report its actions to the central committee.

Specialized, administrative and house staff shall be appointed by the general secretary.

4. *The staff leadership group shall consist of the general secretary (moderator), the deputy general secretary or secretaries, the associate general secretary for programme and the associate general secretary for finance, services and administration, the director of communication, and the executive director for planning and integration. Other staff may be invited for specific items on the agenda.*

The staff leadership group is the chief internal management team. Its overall responsibility is to advise the general secretary in his/ her role as chief executive officer of the Council. It has the task of ensuring that all activities of the Council are carried out in an integrated and coherent manner. For this purpose it will:

- a) Implement policies and priorities established by the central and executive committees and facilitate proposals to be submitted to them.*
- b) Provide for overall coordination, decide on priorities and the direction of the Council's activities.*
- c) Manage and allocate human and financial resources, propose the budget to the finance committees of the executive and central committees and ensure that programme planning is integrated with anticipated resources available.*

- d) Assist the general secretary in the appointment of staff and special reference groups.*
5. *There shall be a staff executive group. Its membership shall include the members of the staff leadership group, the programme directors and the managers. It shall meet regularly (normally twice a month); it shall be moderated by the general secretary or his/ her representative.*
- The staff executive group shall advise the general secretary and the staff leadership group. Its purpose is to:*
- a) advise on matters of long-range planning, monitoring and evaluation of activities;*
 - b) consider the preparation of the budget;*
 - c) assure regular sharing of information and provide for discussion and interpretation of policies and issues affecting the Council as a whole;*
 - d) facilitate the coordination of the activities of the programmes and finance, services and administration teams;*
 - e) appoint ad-hoc or permanent functional staff groups to advise on specific areas of programmatic concerns;*
 - f) promote a spirit and style of work to strengthen and promote integration, cooperation and collegiality.*
6. *The normal terms of appointment for the general secretary and for the deputy general secretary or secretaries shall be five years. Unless some other period is stated in the resolution making the appointment, the first term of office for all other staff appointed by the executive or central committee shall normally be four years from the date of the appointment. All appointments shall be reviewed one year before their expiration.*
7. *Retirement shall normally be at sixty-five for both men and women and in no case shall it be later than the end of the year in which a staff member reaches the age of sixty-eight.*

Suggested action: *The Nominations' committee recommends that the proposed amendments be adopted by the central committee.*

V. By-laws

- (a) The commission on education and ecumenical formation mandated by the central committee (September 2006) has elaborated new by-laws (Doc 6.1)
- (b) The churches' commission on international affairs had also been mandated by the central committee (September 2006) to elaborate new by-laws. The matter is on the agenda of the commission, meeting in Geneva, 11-13 September 2007.
- (c) In its first meeting, the newly established youth body has made the proposal to be named "Echos – commission on youth in the ecumenical movement". In its next meeting, the youth body will further work on this proposal so as to explore whether by-laws might be needed for a consultative body now taking the character of a "commission" (the terms of reference for the youth body prepared and approved by the central committee in September 2006 could be easily translated into by-laws).

Suggested action: *The Nominations committee recommends that the by-laws of the commission on education and ecumenical formation be adopted by the central committee.*