

# CHARTER FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAW SCHOOLS

## Preamble

The signatories to this Charter,

Recognizing the growing inter-relationship of norms from legal systems around the world;

Committing themselves to

- the continuous improvement of legal education and research through learning from diverse societies and cultures;
- principles of equality and non-discrimination in access to, and the provision of, legal education;
- the exchange of ideas and information for mutual benefit;

Hereby establish the International Association of Law Schools for the purposes of assisting its members and future generations to respond to the challenges of a fast-changing world.

## Section 1

### Mission

The mission of the Association is:

- (a) To foster mutual understanding of and respect for the world's varied and changing legal systems and cultures as a contribution to justice and a peaceful world;
- (b) To enhance and strengthen the role of law in the development of societies through legal education;
- (c) To serve as an open and independent forum for discussion of diverse ideas about legal education;
- (d) To contribute to the development and improvement of law schools and conditions of legal education throughout the world;
- (e) To contribute to the better preparation of lawyers as they increasingly engage in transnational or global legal practice, and when they pursue careers other than private practice, including governmental, non-governmental, academic, and corporate careers;
- (f) To share experience and practices regarding legal education;

## Section 2 Activities

In furtherance of this mission and as events suggest and resources permit, the following activities may be undertaken:

- (a) Helping to educate students about diverse legal systems and cultures;-
- (b) Preparing graduates for transnational practice by encouraging international scholarly exchange and faculty and student exchange;
- (c) Serving as a clearinghouse for exchange of information about perspectives on law and legal education, law schools, curriculum issues, and pedagogy;
- (d) Stimulating intercultural and interdisciplinary research regarding law and legal education, law schools, curriculum and pedagogy;
- (e) Working with relevant entities to develop guidelines to adapt legal education to the needs of changing societies, including suggested best practices regarding international, transnational, and comparative curricula and teaching methods;
- (f) Publishing a scholarly journal on global legal education, a newsletter, and other appropriate materials;
- (g) Organizing international meetings on topics of general interest to legal educators;
- (h) Providing opportunities for law teachers in the same field to meet to develop curriculum and pedagogy recommendations for that field;
- (i) Assisting less financially endowed law schools to augment their teaching and learning resources;
- (j) Seeking grant funding to advance the mission and activities of the association;
- (k) Maintaining a website to facilitate distribution of materials and exchange of information;
- (l) Other activities that may be deemed appropriate by the General Assembly or the Governing Board.

## Section 3 Eligibility for Membership

3.1 The Association will have voting and non-voting members.

3.2 The following types of educational institutions are eligible to become voting members:

- (a) Schools, faculties, and departments of law offering a law degree that is recognized for the purpose of admission to practice;
- (b) Educational institutions located in countries not requiring a law degree if such institutions offer a legal education of no less than three years in length as a condition for admission to the practice of law;
- (c) Educational institutions not included above but offering masters or doctoral degrees in law;

- (d) Educational institutions conferring awards following a course of study of at least one academic year which are a required element of a wider legal education program leading to professional qualification;
- (e) Other educational institutions approved by a Membership Committee upon demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Committee that such institution offers a program of instruction comparable in quality and scope to institutions eligible for membership under (a), (b), (c), or (d) above.

3.3 The following are eligible to become non-voting members:

- (a) Associations of law schools or law teachers;
- (b) Individual law teachers;
- (c) Other individuals or institutions that demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Membership Committee that such individual or institution plays a significant role in legal education.

#### Section 4

##### Requirements for Membership

Each member of the Association must:

- (a) Commit to the principles and mission of the Association;
- (b) Pay annual dues to the Association in the amount established by the Governing Board;
- (c) Meet such other requirements as may be adopted by the General Assembly.

#### Section 5

##### Membership Dues

5.1 All members of the Association are required to pay annual dues in an amount established by the Governing Board. The dues for voting members will be based, in part, on ability to pay. Unless otherwise determined by the Governing Board there will be three levels of dues for voting members:

- (a) The lowest level of dues for members located in countries on the list of “Least Developed Countries” of the United Nations;
- (b) The middle level of dues for members located in countries determined as “developing” with reference to a list that is a composite of lists of developing countries prepared by the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development;
- (c) The highest level of dues for all law schools located in other countries.

5.2 Any member that demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Finance Committee that the member does not have adequate resources to pay its assigned level of dues may be permitted to pay at the next lower level.

5.3 The amount of dues for nonvoting members will be determined by the Governing Board, which will first obtain a recommendation from the Finance Committee.

## Section 6

### General Assembly

- 6.1 Every voting member shall have one vote in the General Assembly, which shall be the ultimate authority of the Association, except as otherwise provided in this charter.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that the General Assembly will meet once a year. This meeting may be in person or electronic, pursuant to procedures adopted by the Governing Board. At least once every four years the meeting should be in person.
- 6.3 Regardless of the number of voting members from one country, no more than 10 per cent of the vote totals in the General Assembly may be from any one country. All voting member institutions may vote but those votes will be weighted to assure no more than 10 per cent of the vote totals are from that country. A 25 per cent cap will be applicable until there are at least 100 voting members from countries other than the country or countries to which a cap would be applicable.
- 6.4 Voting shall be by mail ballot or electronic ballot. In years in which there is a meeting in person of the General Assembly, the representatives present may cast their votes at the meeting in person. A voting member not present at such a meeting may vote by Proxy through a voting member present at the meeting. The Proxy must be designated by the absent voting member in writing to the General Secretary/Treasurer at least ten days in advance of the meeting.
- 6.5 The dean or other appropriate official of the voting member must provide the name of the member's authorized voting representative to the General Secretary/Treasurer at least thirty days prior to balloting.
- 6.6 After recommendation from the Nominating Committee, at the inaugural General Assembly, no more than six members of the interim Governing Board shall be elected to continue for a further year and no more than six for a further two years. Six new members will be elected for a full three year term.

## Section 7

### Governing Board

- 7.1 The General Assembly will elect eighteen members of a Governing Board. The Governing Board will generally consist of nineteen people (including the General Secretary/Treasurer who will be selected by the Governing Board), of whom four will be the officers of the Association. The officer members of the Governing Board will be selected in accordance with section 8.2. If an officer is selected who is not currently a Board member, the size of the Board may be increased to permit the selected officer to join the Board.

- 7.2 Consistent with the terms of this Charter, the Governing Board has authority to act on behalf of the Association as to all matters necessary and proper in carrying out the work of the Association.
- 7.3 The Governing Board will have the authority to administer the Association subject to the authority of the General Assembly
- 7.4 Members should give special attention to the need for equity and diversity, particularly gender, racial, geographic and legal system representation in the composition of the Governing Board and officers. In no event will there be more than one non-officer Board member from the same country, and every officer must be from a different country than other officers, except for the General Secretary/Treasurer.
- 7.5 The non-officer Board members will be selected by vote of the voting members based on procedures adopted by the Governing Board.
- 7.6 Non-officer members of the Governing Board will serve three year terms for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- 7.7 Five or six non-officer Board members will be selected every year. Terms will be staggered so that one-third of the Governing Board will generally be selected each year.
- 7.8 The Governing Board is empowered to meet electronically. Votes of the Governing Board may be conducted electronically, by mail, or at a meeting in person. The Board should meet at least three times a year with at least one meeting in person every two years.
- 7.9 Policy decisions of the Governing Board are subject to review by the General Assembly. The selection of officers pursuant to section 8.2 is not reviewable by the General Assembly.

## Section 8

### Officers

- 8.1. The officers of the Association will be the President, Vice President/President-elect, Immediate Past President, and General Secretary/Treasurer.
- 8.2. The officers of the Association will be selected by the Governing Board. A President may serve one three year term as President. The Vice President/President-elect may serve one three year term as Vice President/President-elect, one three year term as President and one three year term as Immediate Past President. The General Secretary/Treasurer is subject to renewable three year terms

## Section 9

### Officers: Resignation: Ineligibility to Serve: Death

If the President resigns, becomes ineligible to serve or dies, the Vice President/President-Elect shall immediately assume the presidency and shall serve in this capacity for the remainder of the unexpired term as well as during his or her own full term as President. If the Vice President/President-Elect or General Secretary/Treasurer resigns, becomes ineligible to serve or dies, a President as well as a President-Elect or General Secretary/Treasurer shall be elected at the next Governing Board Meeting. However, if the President-Elect resigns, becomes ineligible to serve or dies three or more months before the convening of the Governing Board, the President shall, within twenty days, appoint a person to serve as Vice President/President-Elect ad interim until the next governing board meeting; if the general secretary/treasurer resigns, becomes ineligible to serve or dies three or more months before the convening of the governing board, the president shall, within twenty days, appoint a person to serve as general secretary/treasurer ad interim, until the next governing board meeting. A Vice President/President-Elect ad interim or general secretary/treasurer ad interim shall be an officer of the association, a member of the Governing Board, and eligible to be elected president or President-Elect. A Vice President/President-Elect ad interim shall assume the Presidency if the President resigns, becomes ineligible to serve or dies, until the next Governing Board meeting.

## Section 10

### Withdrawal from Membership

A member may withdraw from membership at any time by providing a written notice of withdrawal to the General Secretary. Dues will not be refunded.

## Section 11

### Creation of Committees

The General Assembly, Governing Board, and President may create committees to assist in carrying out the work of the Association. Committees created by the President may be discontinued after one year by vote of the Governing Board or General Assembly.

Section 12  
Finance Committee

A Finance Committee will be appointed by the President. The Finance Committee will perform the duties indicated in this Charter and such other duties as assigned by the General Assembly, Governing Board, or the President.

Section 13  
Membership Committee

A Membership Committee will be appointed by the President. The Membership Committee will perform the duties indicated in this Charter and such other duties as assigned by the General Assembly, Governing Board, or the President.

Section 14  
Language

- 14.1 This Charter will be translated into the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).
- 14.2 The working language of the Association is English. Consistent with other priorities, and the financial ability of the Association, translation of documents and the proceedings of meetings into other languages will be given a high priority by the Governing Board.

Section 15  
The Seat of the Association

The initial seat of the Association will be in Washington, D.C., in the United States of America.

Section 16  
Effective Date

- 16.1 This Charter will take effect, and the International Association will commence operation, when 35 institutions as referred to in Section 3.2 have endorsed the Charter and indicated their intention to join the Association. At least one member must be from each of the following regions: Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe, North America, Latin America/Caribbean. All members joining by August 2006 or by the time of filing the Articles of Incorporation, whichever is later, will be considered Charter Members and will be listed as such in lists of members.
- 16.2 Any institution or individual who donates \$35, 000 to the Association by no later than August 2006 will be designated as a Founding Benefactor in this Charter and other relevant publications such as the website and newsletter. The Governing Board may create additional levels of support and recognition for that support.

Section 17  
Amendments

This Charter may be amended only by a two-thirds majority of votes cast at a General Assembly meeting, in accordance with voting procedures established in Bylaws. Vote may be by electronic means. Amendments must be circulated at least thirty days before any vote.

Section 18  
Transitory Provision for Interim Governance

Notwithstanding the above provisions, the initial President, who was selected by the working group at its Istanbul meeting of May 26–29, 2005, will also serve as General Secretary/Treasurer. The initial Governing Board will consist of 16 people, fifteen of whom who will be appointed by the 16<sup>th</sup> member, the initial President selected at the Istanbul meeting. The initial Governing Board will serve until a new Governing Board is selected at the first meeting of the General Assembly. This initial Governing Board will meet within 120 days of the commencement of operations by the Association. The only officer of the Association during this period will be the initial President, who will serve until a successor is chosen by the Governing Board, no later than the conclusion of the first General Assembly meeting. This person will continue to serve one additional three year term as General Secretary/Treasurer but will not be eligible for election to the Board in any other capacity. All other initial Board members are eligible for selection to additional terms consistent with the above provisions.

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August 18, 2005