

Constitution of Disabled Peoples' International

Preamble

Whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice; and

Whereas conditions exist involving injustice, hardship, and privation to large numbers of people with physical, sensory, and mental impairments; and

Whereas such persons have a right to full participation and equality, meaning the right of every disabled person to share in the social life of the community in which he or she lives and enjoy living conditions equal to those of other citizens, including an equal share in the improvement in standard of living resulting from social and economic development; and

Whereas disability has too long been viewed as a problem of the individual and not the relationship between an individual and his/her environment, it is necessary to distinguish between:

a) Disability is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental, or sensory impairment, and

b) Handicap is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due physical or social barriers

Whereas rehabilitation is a process aimed at enabling a person to reach an optimum physical, mental, and/or social functioning level in order to provide that person with the tools to direct his/her own life, independent living and community services are not and should not be part of the process; and

Whereas all systems must be open to disabled people it is affirmed that

- There are many barriers to the full participation of disabled people
- Removing these barriers will require structural changes in our society
- There is an obligation to make the physical environment, housing, transportation, social and health services, education and work opportunities, cultural and social life (e.g. sports, recreational facilities) accessible to all

- Governments have a duty to ensure that the benefits of reform and development programs in every field also reach disabled citizens. Special measures to effect this should be incorporated into governments' planning process and administrative structures; and

Whereas the United Nations has recognized the rights of disabled people through the Resolutions: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The International Covenants on Human Rights, Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons, Declaration of the Rights of Disabled Persons; and

Whereas the social and economic conditions of disabled people in underdeveloped and developing countries are recognized as meriting special and urgent attention the parties to this document moved by sentiments of justice, humanity and peace and with a view to attaining the objectives set forth in this preamble, agree to the following constitution of Disabled Peoples' International

Article 1

1. Name

The name of this organization is Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)

2. Purpose

The purpose of DPI is to obtain justice through equalization of opportunities for all people with disabilities through the development and support of their organizations.

Guiding principles for DPI are set forth in the preamble of this constitution as well as the World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons adopted by the United Nations.

3. Seat

The principal seat of DPI is in Canada which can be changed through a decision of the World Council of DPI.

Article 2

Membership

Within DPI there shall be full members, provisional members, corporate members, and associate members.

1. Full Members

Membership in DPI can be granted to a National Assembly in any nation qualified under the provisions of this article. "Organization of disabled persons" means that a majority of the members as well as the governing body shall be persons with disabilities. For groups like the mentally handicapped and for disabled children other forms of representation may be considered by the National Assembly. The National Assembly shall seek the widest representation of groups of disabled persons of national population as well as regards sex, religion, race, language, geography, etc.

Full members exercise voting powers, send delegates to DPI organs, and nominate persons to DPI offices.

2. Provisional Members

Provisional membership may be extended to an organization of disabled people in any country which has not yet established a National Assembly provided that a National Assembly be convened before the next regional assembly or within twelve months whichever is later.

Provisional members have no voting rights, nor the right to be nominated or to nominate to office, but have speaking rights.

3. Corporate Members

Corporate membership may be granted to international uni-disability organizations which support DPI objectives and which are organizations where a majority of members as well as the governing bodies are persons with disabilities in accordance with definitions in article 2 paragraph 1.

A representative for each corporate member has speaking rights at the DPI World Assembly, world congress, and at regional assemblies. In accordance with article 11 a limited number of persons representing corporate members can be elected to the World Council with full voting rights.

4. Associate Members

Associate membership may be extended to local organizations of people with disabilities which support DPI objectives, but which do not fulfill the requirements of becoming full or provisional members. An associate member has no voting rights, nor the right to be nominated, or to nominate to office, but has speaking rights.

Article 3

Applications

Membership applications (full, provisional, and associate members) and application for re-admission as a member of DPI, shall be decided by the World Council after relevant study by the regional council or assembly. There shall be only one (1) member per nation. Applications to become a corporate member shall be decided by the World Council.

Article 4

Observer status

Observer status may be granted to international or regional organizations which work in the disability field and support the DPI objectives, upon application to and approval of the World Council as regards international organizations and regional councils as regards regional organizations

Observers have no voting rights and cannot nominate people to DPI offices. Observers are invited to participate in the activities of DPI in accordance with decisions of the World Council or the respective regional council.

Article 5

Membership Fees

The World Council has the power to levy membership and other fees. A member unable to pay prescribed membership fee can seek partial or complete exemption from the World Council.

Article 6

Termination of Membership

The World Council has the power to determine the continued compliance with membership requirements of the member

A member that wishes to withdraw its membership is to give notice to the chairperson. Such notice shall take effect six (6) months after it is received provided that the member has at that time fulfilled all its financial obligation to DPI.

A member may be expelled if in serious arrears in payment of financial contributions to DPI. A decision for expulsion by the World Council requires an opinion of the relevant regional council and needs to be passed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to become valid.

A member may be expelled due to a cause that is detrimental to the interests and purposes of DPI.

The World Council may, by resolution passed by not less than four-fifths (4/5) of those present and voting, determine the outcome of non-compliance with membership requirements.

The offending member shall be given due notice and an opportunity to respond and be granted an opportunity to appeal the decision to the World Assembly.

Article 7

Organization

DPI shall consist of National Assemblies , Regional Assemblies, Regional Councils, the World Council, the Executive Officers, the World Assembly, and the World Congress. In all organs of DPI the quorum for a meeting shall be one-half (1/2). In all elections of DPI, secret ballots shall be used.

Article 8

National Assemblies

The National Assembly shall be composed of representatives of organizations of disabled persons agreeing to abide by this constitution and supporting its objectives in accordance with article two.

Each National Assembly shall decide its own formation and modus operandi to suit its own local conditions.

Delegates to the Regional Assembly and the World Assembly shall be elected by the National Assembly. Each delegation to the Regional or World Assembly shall be representative of various groups of disabled people within the nation as far as practicable, and shall be fully representative of the national population as to religion race, language, geography, and other factors relevant to the specific nation and should have both sexes equally represented.

Article 9

Regional Assembly

There shall be a number of Regional Assemblies with the purpose to fulfill the objectives of DPI at the regional level and to coordinate the activities of the members in its region.

The Regional Assembly shall meet at least once in every two-year period. A majority of National Assemblies in a region may requisition an extra assembly meeting to be arranged by the Regional Council. Notification of an assembly shall be given to the National Assemblies and the World Council at least four (4) months in advance.

Representation to the Regional Assembly shall be a maximum of ten by each National Assembly, both sexes being equally represented in the delegation.

Each Regional Assembly shall decide its own modus operandi, and elect its executive body – the Regional Council. An official voters' register shall be adopted at the commencement of the Regional Assembly meeting.

Article 10

Regional Council

There shall be one regional council for each Regional assembly. The Regional Council shall meet at least once in every calendar year. It is the responsibility of the Regional Council to organize and conduct the business of the Regional Assembly.

The Regional Council shall be composed of such number of members as the Regional Assembly decides, subject to a maximum of one from any National Assembly.

In making their selections the Regional Assemblies shall seek a representative representation of the various groups of disabled persons as well as of both sexes.

The Regional Council shall determine its representation on DPI World Council and DPI committees, and shall resolve all matters for which rules are not set out in this constitution or in the by laws.

Article 11

World Council

The World Council shall meet at least once in every two-year period. The World Council is composed five members from every region, elected by the regions with a four year mandate starting from the end of the World Assembly. The five regional representatives may co-opt one additional from their respective regions.

In no case shall the World Council have more than one representative per nation among the councilors elected from the regions.

When conducting elections of representatives to meetings of the World Council the Regional Assemblies or Councils, as the case may be, shall attempt to ensure that all groups of disabled persons are fairly represented and that both sexes are equally represented in the World Council. Regions may also elect a maximum of six alternates to the World Council.

Corporate members shall each have the right to elect a maximum of four World Council members and alternates for them, with a four year mandate starting from the end of a World Assembly.

Observers who have been given that status by the World Council have the right to participate in meetings of the World Council at their own expense. Observers have a right to speak upon decisions of the meeting.

The World Council shall as a first priority, elect a chairperson, one or more deputy chairperson(s). treasurer, secretary, and other officers necessary, for a four year period, starting at the end of the World Assembly.

It is the responsibility of the World Council to:

1. Organize the business of the World Assembly and the World Congress and issue the date and venue at least a year in advance.
2. Act as highest authority in DPI between the World Assemblies.
3. Allocate the resources of the organization in accordance with decisions of the World Assembly and the guidance given by the World Congress, in a manner which the World Council decides is in the best interests and furtherance of the aims and objectives of DPI in carrying out the plan of action adopted by the World Assembly.
4. Control the finances of DPI.

5. Issue a report at least once in every calendar year on the business and finances of DPI and submit it to the auditors and to all the National Assemblies of DPI
6. Decide the number and boundaries of the regions.
7. Deal with membership and observer questions.
8. Ensure maximum participation possible by all categories of disabled persons in DPI activities.
9. Advise the United Nations, the International Labor Organizations, and other relevant bodies on matters relating to the activities of DPI.
10. Decide on rules of procedure for the World Council.
11. Assign all such committees and special officers as are deemed necessary to carry out the tasks of DPI.
12. Appoint an Executive Director, his/her remuneration, and terms of reference.
13. Decide the location of the DPI Secretariat.

Article 12

Executive Officers

In between meetings of the World Council the affairs of DPI are dealt with by the Executive Officers, which is a body composed of the chairperson, deputy chairperson(s), secretary, treasurer, as well as one World Council and his/her alternate, to represent each region.

It is the responsibility of the executive officers to bring matters to the World Council for decision and to carry out the tasks set by the World Council.

The World Council shall establish the rules of procedure for the Executive Officers.

Article 13

World Assembly

There shall be a World Assembly at least once every four years. Each National Assembly representing a full member has the right to send a delegation to the assembly with full voting and speaking rights. There is one vote for each National Assembly.

Members of the World Council cannot be appointed as delegates to the World Assembly by their National Assembly. World Council members participate in the

World Assembly with speaking rights, and the right to make proposals, but without voting rights.

National Assemblies representing provisional, associate, and corporate members can send delegations to the World Assembly in which they have speaking rights to be exercised under the Presidium of the assembly. Observers attending the World Assembly can be given the right to speak during the assembly meeting.

It is the responsibility of the World Assembly to:

1. Adopt long term plans of action for DPI.
2. Review reports of the World Council and auditors on the activities and finances of the organization during the fiscal years since the previous World Assembly.
3. Deal with proposals from the National Assemblies to be submitted at least eight months prior to the assembly meeting, together with a comment from the Executive Officers.
4. Deal with proposals from the World Council.
5. Elect the election committee with one representative per region and one representing the corporate members to a four year mandate, to prepare the election of the executive officers of the World Council such as the chairperson, deputy chairperson(s), secretary, and treasurer.
6. Deal with questions of constitutional amendments.
7. Serve as final court of appeal on all matters respecting the rights and obligations of members.

The World Assembly shall elect its Presiding Officer(s), Secretary, and appoint scrutinizers to count the ballots, and appoint two persons from amongst the delegates to approve the minutes in consultation with the Presiding Officers of the assembly. An official voters register shall be adopted by the assembly at the commencement of the meeting

Article 14

World Congress

A World Congress of DPI can be held to act as a consultative world forum for discussion of topics of vital interest to disabled people. The World Council decides on the date, venue, program, finances, and organization of the congress.

Article 15

Relations with other International Organizations

DPI may cooperate, within the terms of this constitution, with any international organization of interest to DPI.

Closer forms of cooperation can be established through corporate membership and observer status, in accordance with this constitution. Arrangements can be made, by the World Council, for the participation of international governmental and other non-governmental organizations in DPI meetings and activities, as well as for the participation of DPI in the activities of other organizations.

Article 16

Financial and Budgetary Arrangements

DPI may make such financial arrangements with the United Nations as may appear appropriate. Pending the conclusion of such arrangements or if at any time no such arrangements are in force, each of the National Assemblies will pay the traveling and subsistence expenses of its delegates and their advisors attending the meetings of the Regional Assembly, Regional Council, World Council, World Assembly, and World Congress.

Each National and Regional Assembly shall make its own financial and budgetary arrangements with respect to its own internal organization and obligations.

Each corporate member shall make its own financial arrangements in respect to its participation in the work of DPI.

It is the responsibility of the World Assembly to set the framework for a budget and a general plan of action and to review the annual reports of the World Council and the auditors on the finances and activities of the organization.

It is the responsibility of the World Council to carry out the decisions of the World Assembly, to set a detailed budget, to set and collect membership and other fees, to keep accounts of the money received and expended by DPI, to submit annual reports to the auditors and to the World Assembly.

The World Council may set up a special trust fund for money received for special purposes.

In which case, the World Council shall submit a report, certified by the auditors, on the functioning of the fund to the World Assembly.

The expenses of DPI shall be paid from the general funds of DPI by the persons thus authorized by the executive officers.

A National Assembly which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to DPI, shall have no vote in the Regional Assembly and shall not be eligible for election as a representative to the Regional Council, if the amount of the arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions for the period of the proceeding two years. An exception may be made in the case that a Regional Assembly by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting, if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the National Assembly.

Article 17

By Laws ([view by laws here](#))

There shall be a set of by laws with more detailed rules and regulations on the procedures to be followed in the organization. It is the responsibility of the World Council to adopt and amend the by laws.

Article 18

Amendments to the Constitution

Any proposal to change the constitution made by a national assembly, regional assembly, or corporate member, shall be forwarded to the World Council. The World Council is to organize a constitutional committee to study the proposal(s). The World Council is to request opinions from the regions and corporate members on the proposal(s) and make them available to the constitutional committee. The committee is to give its recommendation as to a decision and submit it to the World Council. It is the responsibility of the World Council to put the proposal(s) together with the recommendation of the committee and a recommendation from the World Council on the agenda of the next world assembly.

A decision to change the constitution requires a 2/3 majority of the world assembly to become valid.

Dissolution of the Organization

A decision to dissolve DPI shall be in response to the wish of not less than 2/3 of

the National Assemblies . On decision to dissolve DPI the World Council shall be charged with the process of liquidation. The residual funds shall be transferred to an international organization approved by a majority vote of the World Council for the benefit of disabled persons.

Article 20

Entering into force

This constitution will enter into force on April 1993, and will replace the constitution adopted in Singapore in 1981.