



Identity

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1.3 Global Constitution

1.3.1 Mennonite World Conference Constitution

Article I — Purpose

Vision: Mennonite World Conference is called to be a communion of Anabaptist-related churches linked to one another in a worldwide community of faith for fellowship, worship, service, and witness.

Mission: Mennonite World Conference exists to (1) be a global community of faith in the Anabaptist tradition, (2) facilitate relationships between Anabaptist-related churches worldwide, and (3) relate to other Christian world communions and organizations.

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) achieves its mission as the community of member churches voluntarily commit to each other on the basis of **Shared Convictions** of theology and practice, as it nurtures solidarity through joint activities and communication among the members, as it promotes biblical and theological reflection by and among the members, as the members provide counsel for its life as a church, as it supports the member churches in ministry to the world and as it facilitates relationships with other international Christian communities.

Article II — Membership and Participation

1. Member (churches)
 - 1.1. Eligibility criteria
 - 1.1.1. Be organized as an autonomous national or transnational Mennonite, Brethren in Christ or other Anabaptist-related church for at least five years
 - 1.1.2. Have a minimum of 500 baptized members and at least two congregations¹
 - 1.1.3. Affirm MWC's Vision, Mission, and Shared Convictions
 - 1.2. Commitment to
 - 1.2.1. Participate in the whole life and work of MWC, including assemblies, the General Council, caucuses, commissions, events, programs. MWC and the member church may choose also to share activity, program, staff, office
 - 1.2.2. Make Fair Share contributions as approved by the General Council
 - 1.2.3. Share gifts within the MWC community and the wider body of Christ
 - 1.2.4. Record these and other agreements in a "Mutual Expectations" statement written with MWC and reviewed after six years
 - 1.3. Role in General Council: may speak and participate in decision-making
2. Associate Member
 - 2.1. Churches
 - 2.1.1. Eligibility criteria
 - 2.1.1.1. Be organized as autonomous national or transnational Mennonite, Brethren in Christ or other Anabaptist-related church for at least five years, with at least two congregations
 - 2.1.1.2. Desire identification with the MWC community but not full membership in it or does not have 500 baptized members
 - 2.1.1.3. Affirm MWC's Vision, Mission, and Shared Convictions
 - 2.1.2. Commitment to
 - 2.1.2.1. Participate in selected parts of MWC's life and work on the basis of mutual (written) agreements with MWC reviewed after six years



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- 2.1.2.2. Make Fair Share contributions for the portions of MWC life and work in which it participates; open to considering general contribution to MWC
 - 2.1.2.3. Share gifts within the MWC community and the wider body of Christ.
 - 2.1.3. Role in General Council: may speak but not otherwise participate in decision-making unless invited by the Council
- 2.2. International church associations
 - 2.2.1. Eligibility criteria
 - 2.2.1.1. Be organized as a continental association or conference of Anabaptist-related churches or globally as an Anabaptist-related denomination for at least five years
 - 2.2.1.2. Have a majority of members who are MWC member or associate churches
 - 2.2.1.3. Affirm MWC's Vision, Mission, and Shared Convictions
 - 2.2.2. Commitment to
 - 2.2.2.1. Participate in and cooperate with MWC on the basis of mutual (written) agreements reviewed after six years. MWC and the association may choose to share activity, program, staff, office, structure
 - 2.2.2.2. Make Fair Share contributions for the portions of MWC life and work in which it participates as well as for shared projects
 - 2.2.2.3. Share gifts within the MWC community and the wider body of Christ
 - 2.2.3. Role in General Council: may speak but not otherwise participate in decision-making unless invited by the General Council
- 3. Participant
 - 3.1. Church-related fellowships, networks, agencies, institutions
 - 3.1.1. Eligibility criteria
 - 3.1.1.1. Have a majority of its members from MWC member or associate churches.
 - 3.1.1.2. Affirm MWC's Vision, Mission, and Shared Convictions
 - 3.1.2. Commitment to
 - 3.1.2.1. Participate in and cooperate with MWC on the basis of mutual (written) agreements reviewed after six years. MWC and the organization may choose to share activity, program, staff, office, structure
 - 3.1.2.2. Make Fair Share contributions for the portions of MWC life and work in which it participates as well as for shared projects
 - 3.1.2.3. Share gifts within the MWC community and the wider body of Christ
 - 3.1.3. Role in General Council: observer unless invited by General Council to speak or otherwise participate in decision-making
 - 3.2. Local churches (congregations) and groups
 - 3.2.1. Eligibility criteria
 - 3.2.1.1. Be a member of an MWC member or associate church
 - 3.2.1.2. Affirm MWC's Vision, Mission, and Shared Convictions
 - 3.2.2. Commitment to
 - 3.2.2.1. Participate in MWC events and programs
 - 3.2.2.2. Receive MWC communications
 - 3.2.2.3. Advocate for MWC locally
 - 3.2.2.4. Make financial contributions to MWC
 - 3.2.2.5. Share gifts within the MWC community and the wider body of Christ
 - 3.2.3. Role in General Council: observer unless invited by General Council to speak or otherwise participate in decision-making



Article III — Organization

1. MWC members (as defined in Article II) will constitute a General Council to govern the life, work and organization required to achieve the purposes of MWC and to fulfil the mandates from the membership as approved by the General Council. The working organization of the Conference shall also include Regional (Continental) Caucuses, an Executive Committee and Commissions.
2. General Council
 - 2.1. Responsibilities and Authority

Elects the Executive Committee, the President, and the Vice-President; appoints the General Secretary; establishes policies; establishes commissions and approves commission members selected by the Executive Committee; considers for action resolutions or recommendations brought from any part of the MWC community; reviews decisions on new members, associate members, and participants; adopts the constitution; approves triennial program plans and financial projections; and reviews program implementation. Policy includes matters such as:

 - 2.1.1. Guidelines for membership and participation in MWC
 - 2.1.2. Guidelines for relationships with MWC members, associate members, participants
 - 2.1.3. MWC organizational structure
 - 2.1.4. Nomination procedures
 - 2.1.5. Program priorities
 - 2.1.6. Budget guidelines

The General Council at its mid-term session shall elect a President-elect who will be formally installed as President at the organizing session of the next General Council.
 - 2.2. Composition
 - 2.2.1. Delegates appointed by members
 - 2.2.1.1. 500-9,999 baptized members: 1 delegate
 - 2.2.1.2. 10,000 – 24,999 baptized members: 2 delegates
 - 2.2.1.3. 25,000 or more baptized members: 3 delegates
 - 2.2.2. Delegates appointed by associate members
 - 2.2.2.1. Churches: 1 delegate per church
 - 2.2.2.2. International denominations: 1 delegate per denomination
 - 2.2.2.3. Continental associations: 2 delegates per association
 - 2.2.3. Observers appointed by participant bodies: 1 observer per participant
 - 2.2.4. Terms: six years for delegates unless the General Council approves a different length of term. The length of term of an observer will be defined in the statement of mutual agreement between MWC and the participant body. Delegates and observers may serve multiple terms.
3. Regional Caucuses (Africa; Asia/Pacific; Europe; Caribbean, Central and South America; North America)
 - 3.1 Responsibilities and Authority
 - 3.1.1 Convene delegates from a continental region at the time of General Council sessions to give advice to the General Council from its continental perspective, to nominate continental representatives to the Executive Committee, and to discuss any matter related to the continental region as the caucus may choose.
 - 3.1.2 Elect a chair and vice chair to preside at all caucus sessions.
 - 3.1.3 Prepare minutes of all meetings to be submitted to the General Secretary of MWC
 - 3.1.4 If a continental caucus, as constituted by MWC or with expanded membership, serves also as the continental conference or association for its area, it may develop communication, program and resources for its own region. This will be done in continuing cooperation with the MWC Executive Office, in annual consultation with the Executive Committee and subject to the triennial approval



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of the General Council. A continental caucus functioning in this way may be mandated by MWC to serve as a primary representative of MWC in the continental region.

- 3.1.5 Executive Committee members representing the caucuses shall represent the interests of the respective continents; speak for the caucus by discussing issues with the caucus in preparation for the work of the Executive Committee; accept assignments when given by the Executive Committee to represent MWC or assist in facilitating the work of MWC in the regions; and consult with and be open to consultation by the General Secretary regarding the work of the churches in the respective regions.

4. Executive Committee

The General Council elects and delegates responsibility to an executive committee to carry out the work of MWC. The committee shall act in conformity with the policies, decisions and instructions of the General Council, shall manage the finances of the MWC in accordance with guidelines and budgets established by the General Council, shall otherwise administer MWC work subject to approval by the General Council and shall meet annually.

The Executive Committee is composed of two persons elected by the General Council from each continental region, two officers elected by the General Council (president, vice-president), the General Secretary appointed by the General Council, and a treasurer appointed by the Executive Committee. The continental representatives must be General Council members. An officer must be a member of an MWC member church, and must be approved by his/her member church, but need not be a General Council member at the time of election or appointment. If not members of the General Council when nominated, the President and Vice-President become members upon their election as officers. The Executive Committee may fill unexpired terms of Executive Committee members, including the President and Vice-President.

4.1. Responsibilities of the Executive Committee:

- 4.1.1. Provides for articulation of vision, mission and long-range planning
- 4.1.2. Authorizes programs and facilitation of networks and fellowships
- 4.1.3. Selects commission members for approval by the General Council
- 4.1.4. Appoints task forces and committees to facilitate its work and to provide counsel on special projects or needs
- 4.1.5. Approves membership applications and participation agreements
- 4.1.6. Approves annual budgets prepared by staff and based on the triennial financial projections approved by the General Council
- 4.1.7. Appoints the Treasurer
- 4.1.8. Represents MWC to the regional caucuses
- 4.1.9. Appoints a Nominating Committee from the members of the General Council to prepare the slate for elections. The Committee shall take counsel as widely as possible, including consultation with the regional caucuses in the preparation of the slate. This committee will be appointed one year in advance of elections.
 - 4.1.9.1. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees for Vice President and, for the mid-term General Council session, President-elect.
 - 4.1.9.2. The Nominating Committee shall receive in writing at least two nominees for membership on the Executive Committee from each of the five regional caucuses.
 - 4.1.9.3. The Nominating Committee shall prepare the slate of nominations for all the positions on the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee may not remove nominations from the caucuses for the ten representatives on the Executive Committee.
 - 4.1.9.4. The slate of nominees shall be recommended to the General Council by the Nominating Committee for acceptance by the Council.
 - 4.1.9.5. Election by General Council may be by consensus or secret ballot vote, with a majority of votes cast required for election.



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- 4.1.10. Nominates the General Secretary for appointment by the General Council.
- 4.2. Term: six years unless the General Council approves a different length of term; is renewable one time.

5. Commissions

5.1 Responsibilities and functions

The General Council establishes standing commissions on matters of vital concern to the MWC community of churches. Commissions may prepare issues or materials for consideration by the General Council. Commissions may give guidance and propose resources to MWC or member churches. Commissions may also facilitate MWC-related networks or fellowships working together on matters of common interest and focus.

5.2 Commission membership

- 5.2.1 A chair, selected by the Executive Committee.
- 5.2.2 Up to ten General Council members. Up to five of these may be selected for continental representation purposes.
- 5.2.3 Up to five members selected for their specialist competencies (experience, knowledge, elected leadership of an MWC-related fellowship or network)
- 5.2.4 Commission members may serve on only one commission and normally for six years
- 5.2.5 Commission members will be selected by the Executive Committee subject to the approval of the General Council

6. Officers

- 6.1. The Executive Committee delegates responsibility to the officers to provide oversight to the life and work of MWC between its annual meetings.

6.2. Officers

- 6.2.1. President: presides over Officers, Executive Committee, General Council meetings and Assembly; together with the General Secretary serves as the official representative of MWC; provides oversight and counsel to the General Secretary on behalf of the Executive Committee and Officers; serves six years unless General Council approves a different interval; is renewable one time.
- 6.2.2. Vice-President: presides over meetings in the President's absence or by request; more generally assists the President or serves in place of the President upon request of the Executive Committee; serves six years unless General Council approves a different interval; is renewable one time.
- 6.2.3. General Secretary: the primary executive officer for the life and work of MWC. As the chief executive officer, the General Secretary, together with the President, serves as the official representative of MWC, facilitates articulation of MWC's vision and mission, is responsible to oversee the activities of MWC under the supervision of the Executive Committee, the Officers and the President. The General Secretary is responsible to appoint staff as well as to negotiate collaborative relationships and written agreements with MWC members, participants, and other bodies. The General Secretary may appoint a recording secretary as appropriate. As staff, the General Secretary is not a voting member of the General Council or the Executive Committee. The term of the General Secretary is for six years; it is renewable by invitation of the Executive Committee.
- 6.2.4. Treasurer: oversees the financial operations of MWC; is a voting member of the Executive Committee; term length is at the discretion of the Executive Committee
- 6.2.5. The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for recording the minutes of General Council and Executive Committee sessions.
- 6.2.6. The President-elect, if not otherwise a member of the Executive Committee, shall participate in Executive Committee activities as a non-voting member. Term length is three years prior to assuming the role of president. The President-elect will be formally installed as President at the organizing session of the next General Council.



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7. Offices

The Executive Committee may establish offices in any locations it deems appropriate to facilitate communications and cooperation in the MWC-related community, to maximize access to MWC members, representatives, staff and services, and to provide effective administration of activities and operations.

8. Mode of Decision-making

8.1. Consensus, a method of arriving at decisions unanimously or carefully recording dissenting voices before moving ahead, builds community and therefore will be the normal mode of decision-making in all parts of MWC. Decisions will be made following guidelines for consensus decision-making approved by the General Council.

8.2. A quorum for General Council shall consist of a majority of the members.

8.3. A quorum for the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of the members.

Article IV — Meetings

1. Global Assembly: The MWC shall convene a global assembly in six year intervals unless otherwise decided by the General Council. The meeting place shall change from one continent or country to another as may be determined by the General Council. All persons in the worldwide Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and related Anabaptist constituency are welcome. MWC may issue invitations to other persons.
2. General Council shall meet at least triennially, including at the time of a global assembly. The newly elected General Council shall organize by electing officers and Executive Committee members.
3. The Executive Committee shall meet at least annually and shall report regularly to the General Council regarding its deliberations and activities.

Article V — Finances

1. The Executive Committee shall manage the finances of the MWC, subject to guidelines approved by the General Council, who shall receive regular reports, including an appropriate audit or review of the treasurer's accounts.
2. The finances for the work of the General Council and Executive Committee shall be covered as much as possible by fair-share contributions from the members, associate members and participants who are expected to contribute according to their financial ability. The MWC may also generate revenue through solicitation of donors, charging fees for conferences and services, sales of products, and other methods approved by the Executive Committee to cover its expenses.

Article VI — Incorporation

The MWC may be incorporated as a not-for-profit organization subject to the action of the Executive Committee, in any jurisdiction required to facilitate the work and financial operations of the MWC. The charters or bylaws (constitutions) of such incorporated entities shall stipulate that such entities have no powers except those authorized by the General Council, or the Executive Committee or the Constitution of MWC.

Article VII — Dissolution

In the event of dissolution of Mennonite World Conference, after the discharge of all debts and liabilities, all assets, both real and personal, shall be distributed to an organization or organizations which are qualified as tax-exempt, not-for-profit entities under the legal provisions of the nation or other legal jurisdiction where it may be registered or incorporated.



Article VIII — Amendments

Proposals for amendments to this constitution may be submitted as follows:

1. Proposals for revision submitted by official action of the Executive Committee may be adopted at the next General Council meeting, provided notice of the amendment proposal has been submitted to the General Council members and member conferences by mail postmarked not less than six months prior to the next General Council meeting. When this procedure is followed, the General Council action shall be considered final.
2. Proposals submitted less than six months in advance by the Executive Committee, a General Council member or a constituent member group may be considered and acted upon by the General Council in regular meeting. Such amendments approved by the General Council shall be reported to the members, associate members and participants. If no objection is registered by any member, they become effective one year after the action. If objection is officially submitted by a member body the General Council shall review and reconsider the matter and take appropriate action at its next meeting, which shall be final.
3. Amendments may be approved by consensus. If consensus is not achieved amendments will be decided by vote, with a two-thirds majority required for approval.

Date Adopted: 14 July 2009
Approved By: MWC General Council
Location Adopted: Asunción, Paraguay

Notes

¹ Current members at the time this constitution is adopted are exempt from this qualification.

(This constitution replaces the constitution adopted by the Presidium, Mennonite World Conference in Semarang, Indonesia, July 28, 1976, then revised in 1976, 1977, 1978, 1990, and 1997.)