

Association of Caribbean Media Workers

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

CONSTITUTION

November 28, 2001

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Article 1 - Name

- A) The name of the organization shall be the **Association of Caribbean Media Workers** (hereinafter referred to as the **ACM or Association**).
- B) The registered office of the ACM shall be 55 Caiman Circle, Elizabeth Gardens, St Joseph, Trinidad, West Indies

Article 2 - Purpose

The purpose of the ACM shall be:

- A) To collaborate with national media associations and related organisations in promoting professional and ethical standards, safeguarding and promoting the rights and privileges of the media in all Caribbean countries;
- B) To respect and promote freedom of information, media freedom, and the independence of journalism;
- C) To encourage the formation and strengthening of national groupings and associations;
- D) To maintain and improve the professional status of its members and member associations;
- E) To protect and advance the interests of journalists and media workers at the national and regional levels;
- F) To facilitate the exchange of information about the media in the region;
- G) To undertake educational programmes for the furtherance of the professional skills of journalists and media workers in the Caribbean region;
- H) To promote greater understanding of media issues through research, seminars, and conferences;
- I) To promote co-operation and collaboration among members.

Article 3 - Membership

- A) The ACM is open to any functioning national associations of journalists in the Caribbean and/or journalists and media workers whose bona fides can be established to the satisfaction of the Executive of the ACM. Individual membership is encouraged where there are no functioning national organisations. For purposes of this Constitution the Caribbean shall be defined as the countries so described under the charter of Association of Caribbean States (Appendix 1).
- B) There are four categories of membership:
- 1) **Organisational:** Open to all Caribbean *bona fide* press groupings and associations. Each association is entitled to two votes. In the absence of a representative organisation, a national Focal Point may be designated by the Executive Committee and be entitled to one vote at Biennial Assemblies.
 - 2) **Individual:** Subject to Article 3A, Individual Membership is open to *bona fide* individual media workers employed in the media either on a fulltime or freelance basis for a minimum period of three consecutive years.
 - 3) **Associate.** Members of allied professions performing an editorial function, students and teachers of journalism and Mass Communication. Such Members may benefit from the Association whenever the opportunity arises and may take part in discussions but have no right to vote.
 - 4) **Honorary.** Honorary Membership may be conferred on any Caribbean national or outstanding individual outside the region, who, in the collective wisdom of the Executive Committee, is deserving of such membership. Honorary Members may take part in discussions but have no right to vote.
- C) All applications for membership shall be in writing and addressed to the General Secretary and sent, in writing, to the address stated in **Article 1**.
- D) Notwithstanding the above, the Executive Committee reserves the right to refuse membership to any applicant. The rejection of an application by the Executive Committee is final but may be reviewed at a later date on re-application.
- E) All members must abide by the rules of the Association set out in this Constitution and those set out by the Executive Committee, and the Code of Professional Ethics (see Appendix 2).
- F) Membership fees for each category of membership shall be prescribed by the Executive Committee from time to time to be ratified by the General Meeting.
- G) Membership fees shall be payable in advance and not later than August 31 for the financial year which runs September 1 to August 31.

Article 4 - Termination of Membership & Disciplinary Action

Termination of membership

Membership in the ACM shall cease on:

- A) Resignation;
- B) Failure to uphold the Code of Professional Ethics (Appendix 1);
- C) Non-currency of annual membership fees;

Disciplinary Action

- D) Any member breaking the rules of the Association may be liable to fine not exceeding the equivalent of five years' annual membership fees, temporary suspension of membership for a maximum of two years, or expulsion. Any member fined, suspended, or expelled shall have the right to appeal the decision as set in **Article 4F**.
- E) A member can be fined, suspended, or expelled by a two-thirds majority of the Members of the Executive Committee present and voting, subject.

Procedure for Appeal

- F) Within ten (10) working days of the decision, a member contesting the disciplinary action must set out in writing a comprehensive argument against the action taken by the Executive Committee and communicate this to the General Secretary of the Association. The General Secretary shall refer the matter for adjudication to a select three-member panel of reputable persons in good standing in the Association and who shall not comprise any sitting member of the Executive. Within ten (10) working days the decision of the panel will be communicated to the aggrieved party. If that person disagrees with the decision of the panel, a final appeal can be made to a General Meeting of members by requesting the General Secretary, in writing, to convene such a meeting within 90 days. If such a meeting of the members convenes and the aggrieved party loses the appeal, that member must pay full cost to the members and the Association for expenses incurred in convening the meeting. The aggrieved party must sign a legally binding document and provide a surety before the meeting can be convened. The decision of the General Meeting shall be final.

Article 5 - Use of Funds

The activities of the ACM shall be financed out of income derived from:-

- A) Regular membership fees, voluntary contributions, grants, fund-raising, and financial investments;
- B) A Select Committee shall be established to advise the Executive Committee on the nature and extent to which the Association should make financial investments.
- C) The Executive shall protect its funds against extravagance or misappropriation. It shall give instructions as to the investment of the funds of the Association subject to **Article 5B**.

Article 6 - Executive Committee

- A)** The government of the Association in the periods between General Meetings and the conduct of its business shall be vested in an Executive Committee (herein after called the Executive) of seven Officers. These Officers are the President; First Vice-President (responsible for Finance); Second Vice-President; General Secretary; Assistant General Secretary; and two Executive Members. These are to be elected every two years by secret ballot to be opened at the General Meeting of the election year. Chairpersons of Select Committees will be ex-officio members of the Executive Committee;
- B)** A quorum of the Executive shall be four members;
- C)** The Executive shall have power to take such disciplinary action as it considers fit against any officer failing to carry out his/her duties.
- D)** In the event of the death, resignation, absence, or dismissal of the President, the First Vice-President shall take his/her place. If there is no Vice-President or if he/she is unwilling to replace the President, the Executive shall have the power to elect a President from among the members of the Executive. In the event of the death, resignation, or dismissal of the Vice-President or other member of the Executive, the Executive shall be empowered to elect a successor from among the members of the Executive.
- E)** The Executive may appoint Select Committees to assist in efficiently pursuing the business of the Association;
- F)** The Executive shall hold meetings at least six times per year;
- G)** Functions of the Executive:
- 1. President:**
 - i.** The President shall preside at all Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings and Executive Meetings and shall be responsible for the proper conduct of business.
 - ii.** He/she shall have a casting vote in the event of a deadlock;
 - iii.** Where for any reason the President is unable to carry out functions outlined in the Constitution, the First Vice-President may preside at meetings of the Executive.
 - 2. First and Second Vice-Presidents:**
 - i.** The First Vice-President shall be responsible for all financial matters;
 - ii.** He/she shall be responsible for the safety of all monies and the safeguarding of all investments belonging to the Association and shall prepare a financial statement for each meeting of the Executive and an annual statement of accounts for audit and for presentation to the General Meeting.
 - 3. General Secretary:**
 - i.** He/she shall keep a register of all Members;

- ii. He/she shall be responsible for recording the minutes of each Meeting of the Executive or Association;

4. Assistant General Secretary:

- i. He/she shall assist the General Secretary as directed;
- ii. In absence of the General Secretary, he/she shall perform all the duties of the General Secretary.

Article 7 – General Meetings & Extraordinary General Meetings

- A) The General Meeting of the Association shall be held once every two years on the last Saturday before November 30 of the second year and to be hosted by a national grouping or association as may be decided by the Executive;
- B) Audited financial statements for the preceding two years must be laid at the General Meeting;
- C) Notice of a General or Extraordinary General Meeting must be circulated to all members at least 30 days in advance;
- D) The General Secretary shall prepare an agenda of the General or Extraordinary Meeting and shall circulate it to Member no less than 21 days before the date of the Meeting;
- E) In regards to the election of an Executive, nominations for the posts should be submitted to the General Secretary no later than 21 days before the date of the Meeting and these must be circulated to all Member no later than 14 days before the date of the Meeting;
- F) The quorum for all Meetings shall be 40 per cent of the qualified members. With the exception of decisions regarding change of name or dissolution of the Association, all decisions taken at an General or Extraordinary General Meeting will be valid if passed by a majority vote of all qualified Members present;
- G) The General Meeting shall consider all matters pertaining to the functioning of the association, its work and its Members and in particular, the election of the Executive Committee and the presentation of reports;
- H) Extraordinary meetings may be called at anytime by the direction of the Executive or on the request of at least three National Associations or 10 Individual Members;
- I) All voting at meetings of the Association shall be by a show of hands except when otherwise decided by the meeting.

Article 8 - Auditor

- A) One or more auditors shall be appointed or elected at the General Meeting;
- B) The auditor shall audit all the accounts of the Association, as soon as possible after the close of each financial year. A report by the auditor will be made to the Members at each General Meeting.
- C) A copy of any auditor's report shall be made available to any member of the Association on request.

Article 9 - Inspection of Books

- A) Any qualified member or his/her authorised agent will be allowed to inspect the account books and the register of members. Applications must be made in advance to the Secretary or Treasurer who will be allowed reasonable time to make the necessary documents available.

Article 10 - Constitutional Changes

- A) This Constitution may be amended only at a General or Extraordinary General Meeting of the ACM.
- B) This Constitution may be amended only by a resolution carried by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

Article 11 - Dissolution

- A) The Association shall not be dissolved except with the consent of 5/6ths of the qualified membership of the Association obtained by means of a secret ballot;
- B) In the event of the Association being dissolved all debts and liabilities legally incurred on behalf of the Association shall be fully discharged and the remaining funds donated to a similar *bona fide* Caribbean organisation.

Appendix 1

Association of Caribbean States

Member Countries:

1. Antigua and Barbuda
2. Bahamas
3. Barbados
4. Belize
5. Colombia
6. Costa Rica
7. Cuba
8. Dominica
9. Dominican Republic
10. El Salvador
11. Grenada
12. Guatemala
13. Guyana
14. Haiti
15. Honduras
16. Jamaica
17. Mexico
18. Nicaragua
19. Panama
20. St. Kitts and Nevis
21. Saint Lucia
22. Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
23. Suriname
24. Trinidad and Tobago
25. Venezuela

Associate Member Country

1. France in respect of French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique

Appendix 1

Code of Ethics

Ethics, Conduct, & Department

Members of any affiliate of the ACM are hereby enjoined to refrain from:

1. Writing, publishing or broadcasting news, information or comments not based on facts, or designed to misinform;
2. Fabricating and / or plagiarizing news;
3. Engaging in the practice of self-censorship to suppress essential information;
4. Revealing or betraying the secrecy of sources of information. (A source of information, confidentially shared with the journalist, **may** be disclosed to one's editor / general manager at one's discretion and based on the degree of employer-employee confidence);
5. Falling victim to bribery by acceptance of gifts of any kind in order to cause the publication or broadcast of news, press statements, comments or photographs;
6. Making offensive and unnecessary references to and discriminating against an individual on the basis of race, colour, sex, nationality, religion or ideology;
7. Writing, publishing or broadcasting materials inimical to the region's cultural and political sovereignty.

In the discharge of their professional duties, the ACM's members are further encouraged to:

- (8) Dress and conduct themselves on any assignment in a manner that can only enhance respect for the journalism profession;
- (9) Resist, at all cost, being drunk on the job; using illegal drugs; or from behaving in a manner that's likely to bring disrespect to the profession;
- (10) Display due courtesy to leaders and institutions and in the general exercise of professional functions;
- (11) Resort only to principled methods in obtaining and disseminating news and photographs;
- (12) Refrain from any behaviour that could result in undermining the work of professional colleagues;
- (13) Resist interference by governments, private organizations and others in the gathering and dissemination of news, information and views;
- (14) Demonstrate keen interest in training and research to competently serve the profession and the Caribbean people.