



### AFRICA CONTACT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND DEAFNESS

#### RULES APPLICABLE TO THE AFRICA CONTACT GROUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND DEAFNESS

1. PREAMBLE

The Africa Contact Group for Mental Health and Deafness (ACGMHD) convened on 1st October 2004 at the request of the National Institute for the Deaf [(NID) a Company incorporated in terms of Section 21 of the South African Companies Act No. 61/1973 (as amended)], and the Foundation Friends of Effatha (de Stichting Vrienden van Effatha (SVE)) at the first Africa Workshop on Mental Health and Deafness held at the Institute for the Deaf in Worcester, South Africa. At the 3rd Mental Health and Deafness World Congress, held from 24th to 30th October 2005 the ACGMHD convened with an increased attendance made possible through sponsorships of SVE and the NID.

2. NAME

Africa Contact Group for Mental Health and Deafness (hereafter ACGMHD).

3. FOUNDING PARTNERS

The founding partners of the ACGMHD are SVE and the NID. One of the founding principles was to develop the ACGMHD as an independent international African organization by 2020.

4. DEFINITION OF MENTAL HEALTH

*Mental health* is a condition of well-being in relation to self and others characterized by such qualities as (a) positive self-acceptance, (b) accurate perception of others and the world, (c) stability and appropriateness in mood, (d) balance and purposiveness in behavior, (e) dependable sense of identity and values, (f) adaptability to one's environment, (g) ability to engage in productive work and fulfilling love, and (h) commitment to a source of devotion beyond oneself. As such, mental health is an active process, not merely the absence of illness.

5. LEGAL PERSON

The ACGMHD is a group of such people who feel the need to further the purpose as envisaged in clause 9 hereof as may voluntarily attend meetings from time to time, arranged by the NID, and is not a juristic person.

6. LEGAL SEAT

The legal seat of the NID is located at its registered address, being 30 De la Bat Road, Worcester, 6850, South Africa.

7. DURATION

The duration of the activities of the ACGMHD is for an undefined period, and its activities may be dissolved in accordance with clause 20 hereof.

8. MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION

Sign Language, English and French will be used as visual / spoken communication at meetings of the ACGMHD. Documents and correspondence of the ACGMHD will be provided in both English and French.

9. PURPOSE

To unite efforts to improve the mental health and well-being of Deaf people and their families in countries on the African Continent.

10. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 10.1 To promote equal rights, accessibility and respect for Deaf persons, their culture and their language.
- 10.2 Cooperating and liaising with relevant international and continental organizations to further the purpose as referred to in clause 9 hereof.
- 10.3 To promote the exchange and dissemination of relevant and applicable knowledge, as well as building up the knowledge base through research activities.
- 10.4 To develop networks as a platform for interaction, knowledge exchange and debate to further the purpose as envisaged in clause 9 hereof.
- 10.5 To enhance participation of countries on the African continent and organizations relevant to mental health and deafness.
- 10.6 To develop and build leadership in African Deaf communities and service providers to the Deaf, in order to facilitate achievement of the purpose, aims and objectives of the ACGMHD.
- 10.7 To initiate and promote programmes to support and equip Deaf families to improve their quality of life and social integration.

11. ADMINISTRATION

- 11.1 The DeafNET NID Centre of Knowledge shall, on behalf of the NID, function as the Executive Secretariat and Head Office of the ACGMHD.
- 11.2 The Executive Secretariat may co-opt members who are experts, and appoint task teams for furthering the purpose, aims and objectives envisaged in clauses 9 & 10 hereof.
- 11.3 Co-opted members and task teams provide their services on a voluntary basis, and without compensation, except for reasonable refunding of costs incurred in their line of duty, as applicable for non-profitable organizations, as approved in advance by the Executive Secretariat.
- 11.4 For the purposes of administration, the African continent will be divided into six (6) regions namely:

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- 11.4.1 Southern Region, consisting of, but not limited to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Malawi.
- 11.4.2 Central Region, consisting of, but not limited to DR Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Chad, Gabon, Burundi.
- 11.4.3 Eastern Region, consisting of, but not limited to Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea.
- 11.4.4 Western Region, consisting of, but not limited to Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon.
- 11.4.5 Northern Region, consisting of, but not limited to Mauritania, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Mali.
- 11.4.6 Indian Ocean Islands Region, consisting of, but not limited to Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros, Seychelles, Reunion.
- 11.5 The Secretariat will function in accordance of terms of reference approved by the ACGMHD Governing Board.
- 11.6 Neither the profits nor the assets of the ACGMHD are distributable amongst its members or office-bearers, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered.
- 11.7 The members or office-bearers have no rights in respect to the property or other assets of the ACGMHD solely by virtue of their being members or office-bearers.
- 12. MEMBERSHIP
  - 12.1 All persons referred to in clause 5 (LEGAL PERSON) attending the Quadrennial Meeting of the Africa Workshop of the ACGMHD shall be entitled to become members of the ACGMHD for the duration of that meeting.
  - 12.2 Individuals and organizations may apply for membership to be considered by the Governing Board.
  - 12.3 The Governing Board may approach a person to become an honorary member of the ACGMHD.
- 13. ADVISORY COMMITTEE
  - 13.1 The Advisory Committee shall consist of the following members:
    - 13.1.1 Two members elected at the ACGMHD Quadrennial Meeting.
    - 13.1.2 An Executive Secretariat appointed by the NID.
    - 13.1.3 A representative from the NID.
    - 13.1.4 Three (3) representatives from SVE.
    - 13.1.5 Three (3) members co-opted from nominations made by delegates attending the Quadrennial Meeting. The term of office for co-opted members will be four years. Co-opted members may be co-opted for a second term.
    - 13.1.6 Such expert members as the Governing Board may, from time to time, unanimously co-opt.
  - 13.2 The Advisory Committee will elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson at its first meeting from its members.

#### 14 GOVERNING BOARD

14.1 The Governing Board shall consist of:

14.1.1 The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee. Their term of office shall be 4 years. Office bearers may be re-elected for a second term of office.

14.1.2 An Executive Secretariat appointed by the NID.

14.1.3 Three (3) representatives from SVE.

14.1.4 Two (2) representatives from the National Institute for the Deaf.

14.2 The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall be the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Board.

#### 15 TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACGMHD GOVERNING BOARD

15.1 The Governing Board shall meet at least once a year to conduct the business of the ACGMHD.

15.2 To find ways and means to promote/execute the purposes, aims and objectives as described in clause 9 and clause 10 hereof.

15.3 Organize the quadrennial meeting as envisaged in clause 18.1 and 18.2 hereof.

15.4 To specifically give attention to the development of leadership, in order to improve health and well-being in Deaf communities.

15.5 To initiate and approve the establishment of ACGMHD branches on the African Continent as envisaged in clause 21 hereof.

15.6 To approve rules for ACGMHD branches envisaged in clause 21 hereof.

15.7 To ensure compliance with the Rules of the ACGMHD.

15.8 To promote compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

15.9 To approve the terms of reference for the functioning of the Executive Secretariat.

15.10 To exercise sound and honest governance in compliance of the rules and regulations applicable to NGO's as stated in legislation.

15.11 To exercise sound and honest governance pertaining to compliance to financial procedures as laid down by the auditors of the National Institute for the Deaf, and prescriptions by the sponsors.

15.12 Fill vacancies on the Advisory Committee and the Governing Board for the remainder of the term of such position(s).

15.13 Report to the quadrennial meeting.

15.14 Report annually to the founding partners as referred to in clause 3 hereof.

#### 16. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16.1 The Advisory Committee shall meet at least once every two years to perform tasks referred to them by the Governing Board and Executive Secretariat.

16.2 Provide guidance and expert knowledge to ensure appropriateness and relevancy of the activities and projects of the ACGMHD.

16.3 Help identify needs to be addressed in African countries that are within the capacity of the ACGMHD to fulfill.

16.4 Act as a reference group.

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17. FINANCE

- 17.1 The Executive Secretariat has the responsibility to keep an account with the NID, as per agreement, approved and signed in 2006.
- 17.2 The Executive Secretariat shall manage financial transactions within the approved budget, in accordance with procedures approved by the official auditors of the NID, in consultation with the official auditors of the NID.
- 17.3 An audited financial report must be submitted yearly to the Governing Board and the Advisory Committee within three (3) months of year end. Auditing is to be done by the auditors of the NID.
- 17.4 All documents and cheques appertaining to the ACGHMD shall be signed by the Executive Secretary together with two (2) officials authorized by the NID to do so. The NID may appoint three (3) officials to qualify as signatories to cheques and financial documents.
- 17.5 A petty cash equal to the amount determined by the Governing Committee of DeafNET is allowed to be kept by the Executive Secretary.
- 17.6 The ACGMHD members may seek ways and means to find finance and sponsorships to execute its functions and projects, and submit such ways and means in advance to the NID for approval for execution thereof.

18. MEETINGS

- 18.1 The Governing Board shall organize a meeting of the ACGMHD every four years, which will be known as the ACGMHD Quadrennial Meeting.
- 18.2 The ACGMHD Quadrennial Meeting is a meeting, every four years, of the members referred to in clause 12 hereof.
- 18.3 Quadrennial meetings of the ACGHMD shall coincide with the ACGMHD Advisory Committee and the Governing Board meetings.
- 18.3 The ACGMHD Advisory Committee shall hold at least one (1) meeting every two years.
- 18.4 The Governing Board shall hold at least one (1) meeting per year.
- 18.5 A quadrennial symposium shall coincide with the quadrennial meeting.
- 18.6 Meetings of the Advisory Committee and Governing Board may also be by way of electronic communication and telephonic conference calls.

19. AMENDMENT TO RULES

- 19.1 The rules may only be repealed or amended by resolution, passed by a majority of two thirds of persons attending the meeting at a Quadrennial Meeting envisaged in clause 18.1 and 18.2 which resolution must be approved by the NID and SVE within three (3) months from the date of such meeting.

20. DISSOLUTION

- 20.1 The Contact Group shall cease functioning by decision of the majority of persons attending the meeting to that effect at a Quadrennial Meeting envisaged in clause 18.1 hereof, which resolution must be approved by the NID and SVE within three (3) months from the date of such meeting.
- 20.2 Any assets or money belonging to the ACGMHD at time of dissolution, shall be transferred to the NID, to be utilized in alignment with the purpose of clause 9 hereof.

21. ESTABLISHMENT OF ACGMHD BRANCHES

Should members referred to in clause 12 hereof wish to establish an ACGMHD Branch in their country or Region, such member shall first submit a business plan to the Governing Board for recommendation or rejection. Should the Governing Board recommend such plan, the plan shall, within three (3) months of submission to the Governing Board, be submitted to the NID and SVE for approval or rejection thereof.

The decision of the NID and/or SVE shall be final.

Approved at ..... on ..... 2010

Undersigned:

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