



Fédération internationale de l'Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la Torture
International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture
Federación Internacional de la Acción de los Cristianos para la Abolición de la Tortura

International Council
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CHARTER OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Preamble:

The mission of FIACAT and the ACATs (hereafter referred to as « organisations ») is to abolish torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as the death penalty. In pursuit of these aims, they undertake to apply the principles, rules and spirit of this Charter of Good Governance within their associations.

The present Charter implies that the organisations shall not be the property of the members, nor of persons forming part of such bodies; they are separate entities from the individuals who compose them.

This Charter sets out the behaviour expected of everyone so that the organisations may be managed democratically and in a spirit of transparency and cooperation. Each organisation shall give an account of its actions to its constituent bodies in accordance with its statutes.

This will make organisations more efficient, maintain confidence within the network and in its relations with the outside world, promote cooperation and enhance the contributions made by each individual.

It is all the more important that this Charter be respected because it is aimed at organisations which are scattered geographically and culturally diverse.

The common rules set out in this Charter are valuable assets for dealing with institutional partners.

1. Transparency

1.1 FIACAT and the ACATs shall be open in their actions and use their abilities and experience in the service of the ACATs' mission. They shall comply with the principles and rules set out in this Charter.

1.2 Transparency in financial management is particularly important. The executive body of each organisation is responsible for presenting its accounts to the statutory General Meeting for approval.

1.3 Within FIACAT and the ACATs, decisions shall be made democratically and collectively, respecting the roles and responsibilities of each organisation and their own statutes.

1.4 It is vital for good governance that conflicts of interest be avoided, either between personal interests and those of the organisation, or between the interests of two organisations to which they belong. If such a situation occurs, the person concerned shall inform the relevant bodies and withdraw from discussions relating to the subject of conflict.

2. Relations between the ACATs and FIACAT

2.1 As the representative body internationally, FIACAT helps to give legitimacy and protection to the ACATs.

2.2 The ACATs shall cooperate with their federation to support its projects, publicise its activities and enhance its presence on the international stage.

2.3 The ACATs can apply to their federation for assistance from FIACAT's international partners.

2.4 FIACAT shall inform the ACATs of their activities and decisions made at international Bureau meetings. The ACATs shall keep FIACAT informed of their main projects and actions.

2.5 Given that FIACAT represents the ACATs to international institutions, (the UN, European Union, Council of Europe, African Union, International Organisation of La Francophonie...) it has responsibility for the Federation vis-à-vis those institutions.

Any ACAT wishing to intervene before one of these bodies shall first inform FIACAT which, in coordination with that ACAT, shall give its formal agreement wherever possible.

FIACAT shall conclude an agreement on specific operating arrangements with any ACAT that so requests.

Depending on the action which is being proposed, the interests of the other ACATs and/or those of the Federation itself, FIACAT shall decide whether such action shall be taken individually by the proposing ACAT, jointly with FIACAT or solely by FIACAT.

2.6 Each ACAT can act in countries other than its own. Such action shall be conducted in accordance with this Charter, in particular section 4 thereof.

3. ACAT Functions

3.1 Each ACAT shall implement the principles set out in this Charter.

3.2 Every ACAT may adopt procedures setting out rules of conduct deriving from its statutes, ensuring sound administration and safeguarding the rights of its members. These rules shall explain the structure of the organisation, list its governing bodies and provide details of how it works internally. It shall set out the powers within the organisation, state how decisions are taken and lay down the procedures to be followed to solve any problems.

3.3 Every ACAT shall promote internal communication, which plays a vital role in the life of associations. To this end, its various bodies shall regularly pass on to their members any

information relevant to the life of the association concerned and report on their decisions, their actions and the use of the funds entrusted to them.

3.4 Every ACAT shall attach great importance to external communication, which brings its action to the attention of the general public. This makes it more efficient, promotes cooperation with other associations, and informs and enlightens political and social decision-makers.

3.5 Every ACAT shall focus on discussion as the heart of the democratic process to ensure that every member is involved in decision-making. Such discussion provides a forum for negotiating decisions acceptable to all the organisation's members and bodies. For the sake of efficiency, the relevant information must be passed on to members to enable them to take part in the life of the organisation.

3.6 Every ACAT shall set out objectives and obtain the necessary means to achieve the expected results. It shall regularly review the quality of its democratic governance and report to its members on its actions, progress achieved and results obtained.

4. Cooperation among ACATs

4.1 The ACATs shall act together in a spirit of cooperation, openness and respect.

4.2 They are called to work all over the world, including in their own country, to denounce torture and the death penalty and to propose action to be taken. They work with, among others, political authorities, including their own governments, and national religious authorities.

4.3 Any kind of action (non-exhaustive list: speech, publication, official meeting, visit...) involving a country where an ACAT exists must show due respect for the said ACAT and is subject to its agreement. To promote cooperation and avoid any possible negative collateral effects, if an ACAT is present in a country targeted by a foreign ACAT, the latter must first ensure that the ACAT in the country concerned agrees, and inform FIACAT, which will verify that the ACAT in the country concerned has indeed agreed. The ACATs undertake to reply as promptly as possible to requests for proposed actions by other ACATs.

4.4 In order to increase efficiency and avoid lengthy delays, any ACAT may, if it considers it appropriate, grant a general authorisation to another ACAT to take action in its country provided the proposed action is based on sources considered to be reliable by both parties. They shall inform FIACAT.

4.5 This general authorisation may be withdrawn at any time.

4.6 It shall not override the obligation to notify FIACAT and the ACAT concerned of each action taken.

4.7 When this general authorisation has not been granted by the ACAT concerned, or if no reply is received or the proposed action is rejected, the ACAT which wished to take action must abandon the idea.

5. Failure to comply with the binding documents

5.1 Failure to comply with the Statutes, the Rules of Procedure or the Charter of Good Governance may justify the expulsion of an ACAT by the International Council on a proposal

from the International Bureau, under the terms of Article 6 of the Statutes¹ and Article 2 of the Rules of Procedure².

¹ Statutes : Article 6 - Termination of membership :

Notice of an affiliated association's voluntary resignation shall be given in writing by its chairman or duly appointed representative.

The decision to remove an association from the register of affiliated members shall be taken by the International Bureau which shall make known this decision in writing, either owing to non-payment of the membership contribution within the appointed time, except where a prior exemption has been granted by the Bureau on the basis of an explanatory statement, or because the association in question has been dissolved or has ceased to exist.

The decision to exclude an affiliated association shall be taken by the International Council, which shall state its reasons and make known its decision in writing after giving the association's chairman or duly appointed representative an opportunity to be heard.

Such a decision by the International Council shall be based on serious grounds, such as failure to comply with the conditions of affiliation referred to in Article 4, any act which has jeopardised or is jeopardising the existence or credibility of the Federation or its affiliate associations, or any other reason mentioned in the Rules of Procedure or by the International Council.

The International Council's decision shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of its affiliated associations. Any association which, for whatever reason, loses its affiliated-member status shall have no claim to the Federation's assets or paid-up membership contributions.

² Rules of Procedure : Article 2 : Termination of membership

a) Grounds for termination

Other than in the case of voluntary termination of membership expressed in writing, an affiliated association's membership may be terminated by the International Council in the following cases:

- where there are serious grounds for doing so, such as failure to comply with the conditions of affiliation or any act which has jeopardised or is jeopardising the existence or credibility of the Federation or its affiliated associations;
- where other reasons are stated by the International Council, such as failure to hold a General Meeting or unjustified failure to provide information on the association's activities.

In accordance with Article 6(2) of the Statutes, the International Bureau may decide to exclude an affiliated association, while awaiting a decision in writing from the International Council, following:

- non-payment of membership contributions;
- absence of activity on the part of the association;
- failure to report regularly to the International Bureau despite reminders;
- dissolution or cessation of existence of the association.

b) Procedure

The International Bureau shall take its decision on the matter, if possible at its next meeting, and will issue a reasoned opinion. The Bureau may decide to exclude an affiliated association with immediate effect if there are

serious grounds for doing so.

The International Secretariat shall inform the association of this decision and give it an opportunity to state its case.

After receiving the opinion of the International Bureau and a response from the association in question, the International Council shall take a vote in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Statutes. The vote shall be held either at its next session or by correspondence.