

By-Laws of
The Committee of Religious Non-Governmental Organizations at the United Nations

Article i: Purpose of the Committee:

1. The Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN offers a platform for civil society organizations to discuss the religious/spiritual/moral/ethical dimensions of issues before the United Nations System. The objective of the committee is to highlight and articulate these matters and to contribute this perspective to the United Nations System community. This is all in furtherance of integral and global well-being and the promotion of the three pillars of the United Nations: human rights, peace and security, and development.
2. The Committee works to represent the community of religious NGOs at the United Nations, in collaboration with Member States, UN agencies, and civil society, as well as serving on various relevant commissions and fora as they arise.¹

Article ii: Composition of the Committee:

Membership in the Committee includes Full Members and Associate Members who commit to pursue the purposes of the Committee in the context of the United Nations and multilateral system. Full membership is accorded to NGOs associated with the UN (DPI, ECOSOC or other agencies of the UN system). Associate members are other groups or individuals which do not have formal association with the UN.

1. Full Membership: A member of the Committee is a representative of an NGO meeting the above qualifications whose dues are paid in full. Full members are entitled to vote – one vote per NGO – regarding issues facing the Committee as well as in the election of officers. A dues-paying organization must appoint one voting member, although non-voting members, whether from dues paying organizations or not, are also welcome at meetings.
2. Associate Membership: A group or individual which does not have formal association with the UN is permitted to attend all meetings, receive minutes from the meetings and offer their input to the meetings and other projects in which the CRNGO is engaged. However, they are not permitted to vote in the elections or serve on the Bureau.
3. Dues: All Members, both full and associate, may be assessed dues as established or adjusted by the Bureau. Dues shall be paid by fifteenth (15th) of June each year for the upcoming General Assembly year (September-August).

Article iii: The Bureau

1. Membership: The Bureau shall be composed of up to nine (9) members which include a president, vice president(s), secretary, treasurer, and up to 4 additional elected members. They shall be called the Bureau of the Committee of Religious NGOs. They shall represent as wide a spectrum of religious traditions as possible.

¹ For example, the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace.

2. Terms of office: Members elected to the Bureau shall serve a term of two years and shall be eligible for nomination to a single succeeding term of two years. Elected officers shall serve until their successors take their seats at the annual meeting of the Committee in June. A President may serve only one term on the Bureau in that role.
3. Re-nomination for election: After a member has served four consecutive years on the Bureau, a lapse of at least two years is required before that person can be re-nominated for election. This excludes the role of “Past President” which is granted to the immediate previous President for a term of 2 years regardless of how long that individual had been on the Bureau.
4. Absences from regular meetings: Any officer or member of the Bureau who is absent from three (3) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings without prior notification shall be deemed to have resigned.
5. Vacancies: An unexpected vacancy on the Bureau shall be filled by the nomination of a new member; the nomination shall reflect the committee’s commitment to diversity. The nomination shall be approved by a majority vote of the members of the Bureau. The new member shall serve the unexpired term of the past member. If the latter period is more than one year, it shall be deemed a full term.
6. Ex-officio members: In addition to the aforementioned members of the Bureau, the following shall serve as ex-officio non-voting members: the immediate past President and the Chaplain at the Church Center for the United Nations.

Article iv: Duties of officers:

1. President: The President shall preside over all meetings of the Bureau and shall perform the duties as pertain to this office. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees and ad hoc committees with the exception of the nominations committee. However, the nominations committee will consult with the President on procedural matters when appropriate. The President shall ensure that consensus is reached in the appointment of standing committee chairs, ensuring that equitable distribution of responsibilities.

The President shall call regular planning meetings of the Bureau. Agendas for meetings shall be prepared and distributed by the President. The President shall report to the entire Bureau the results of any meetings with the officers. At the annual meeting held in June of each year, the President shall provide to the members of the Committee a written report of the activities and achievements of the Committee during the past year.

2. Vice President(s): The responsibility of the Vice President is to assist the President and to chair any meetings when the President is absent. The Bureau will be charged with assigning further responsibilities to the Vice President(s) as necessary (e.g. Vice President for Membership, Vice President for Communication).

3. Secretary: The Secretary shall prepare and distribute accurate minutes of the meetings of the Bureau at least two weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Bureau. The Secretary is responsible for communications to the CRNGO membership on items such as upcoming meetings, co-sponsored events, and other information necessary for the membership to be aware of. Further, the Secretary shall maintain the CRNGO e-mail account. The Secretary shall provide direction and supervision of the establishment of permanent Bureau files. The secretary shall make sure that the Bureau files are current. Bureau files consist of the following:
 1. List of members in good standing with the Committee
 2. These By-Laws
 3. The minutes of meetings held
 4. Any written material produced by the Committee
 5. Documents related to past events/speakers/etc.
 6. Passwords and other items related to communications (e.g. e-mail, website, social media, etc.)
4. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall receive all dues collected and/or granted to the Committee. The Treasurer shall deposit all funds in a Bureau-established bank account. The signatures of the Treasurer or the President are required for disbursement of funds up to \$100.00. Both signatures shall be necessary for amounts over \$100.00. The Treasurer shall keep an itemized report of all receipts and expenditures in a permanent file and shall disseminate written reports of receipts and expenditures at regular meetings of the Bureau. An annual report shall be submitted each June to the Committee's membership meeting.

Article v: Meetings, elections and quorum:

1. Quorum shall be defined as those present at a duly announced meeting. A duly announced meeting requires 14 days advanced notice including the date, location and time of the meeting - however, every effort shall be made to ensure earlier notification.
2. The annual business meeting: The annual business meeting is held in June of each year and is open to all members of the Committee and other interested parties. One important element of this meeting is the announcement of the new Bureau (every two years).
3. Election of the new Bureau: A ballot for all nominees with appropriate biographic information will be distributed at least 45 days prior to the meeting in order for all members to vote. All RNGOs affiliated with the UN and current dues paying members shall be notified of the meeting in writing at least 30 days prior to the meeting date. The quorum for the annual business meeting is attendance by at least half of the dues-paying organizations (this is an exception to the aforementioned definition of quorum).
4. Voting process: Each organization is entitled to one vote. Eligible Committee Members may submit their votes by mail, email or fax to the Chair of the Nominations Committee (as directed by the Chair of the Nominations Committee); such votes shall be received at least five (5) days prior to the annual business meeting of the Bureau.

5. Scheduled meetings: Bureau meetings shall be scheduled each month – September through June. Bureau members shall endeavor to articulate a calendar with the date, time and location of meetings with as much advanced notice as possible.

With the approval of the other officers of the Bureau, the President may call a special meeting of the Bureau at any time. Such a meeting shall be conducted in person when possible or telephone, video-conference or e-mail (if necessary). The purpose of such meetings will be limited to consideration of issues that require immediate action prior to a regularly scheduled meeting of the Bureau. The call for such meeting shall be accompanied by an agenda item with as much information as needed to allow action by the Bureau members.

Meetings of the general membership of the Committee will occur no more frequently than on a monthly basis from September – June. Depending on the needs and aspirations of the Committee, the frequency of these meetings will be determined by the Bureau and announced with as much lead time as possible (no less than two weeks).

Article vi: Standing Committees:

1. Chairs of the standing committees: All chairs of standing committees shall be approved for appointment by the members of the Bureau. Chairs of standing committees shall provide an annual report of their activities. The annual report of the Bureau shall include the reports of the standing committees and shall be presented to the membership at the annual meeting of the committee held in June of each year.
2. Programming committee: In consultation with the Bureau members, the Programming Committee will plan the topic and the speakers for the programmatic element of Committee meetings. This Committee is responsible to reserve a room and send flyers to the Secretary and Communications Officer of the Committee of RNGOs announcing the details of the briefing (the Secretary and Communications Officers will then distribute this information to the individuals in their respective purviews).
3. Communications committee: This committee will strategize regarding communications of Committee activities to the wider world via: e-mail, website, social media (as necessary) and etc. This may include, but is not limited to, the CRNGO Webpage, a CRNGO Facebook Page, and a CRNGO Twitter feed. The Secretary shall be one member of this committee.
4. Nominations committee: The nominations committee shall have three members and be approved by the Bureau at least two months prior to elections. (One has traditionally been a past president. One can be a member of the Bureau who will not run for re-election. A third person can be nominated by the Bureau or selected at a membership meeting.) One individual will chair the nominations committee. No member of the nominations committee may be on the ballot. The nominations committee shall communicate nomination and election procedures by email to the RNGOs. A nomination form will be

developed and distributed to all RNGO's one month prior to the annual June business meeting. The election of the slate will take place during the annual business meeting. Installation of new officers will happen immediately following the election.

Article vii: Sub-committees/ad-hoc committees:

1. The Bureau may, by vote, establish additional sub-committees and ad hoc committees as it deems necessary. It may invite members of RNGOs or others to serve on such committees as appropriate. These may include, for example, a membership committee, finance committee, by-laws committee, etc.
2. The Bureau may approve, by vote, committees established to carry out the activities of the RNGO community upon application and presentation of a statement of purpose accompanied by documentation of three (3) Committee members.

Article viii: Amendments:

Proposed amendments to by-laws of the Committee of Religious NGOs shall be submitted in writing and circulated to the Committee Members thirty (30) days before a regular or business meeting of the Bureau. Any amendments must be approved by a majority of the members of the Committee at a regular meeting.