

Constitution

VICARIATE OF ARABIA

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL CHURCH, RUWI, SULTANATE OF OMAN

GOAN COMMUNITY OF OMAN DRAFT CONSTITUTION

(Adopted at the first General Body Meeting held on 5th December 2008 at Al Maasa Hall, Ruwi)

PREAMBLE

The Goan Community of Oman (GCO) was launched in May 2008 under the patronage of Saints Peter & Paul Church, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman. It's membership is open to all Goans in Oman who belong to the Catholic Church parishes at Ruwi, Ghala, Sohar and Salalah. In keeping with the secular nature of Catholic organizations world over, the GCO welcomes non-Catholic Goans too to participate in its activities.

1.0 NAME AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Name: The Association shall be known as the Goan Community of Oman. Hereafter referred as GCO. The office of the center shall be located in the premises of Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Ruwi, Oman

1.2 Objectives: The GCO shall focus on the following;

- Assist the Catholic Churches in Oman in conducting their religious, cultural and social activities.

- Facilitate Goans in Oman to meet each other so as to foster fun, fellowship, support and companionship, and for better interaction and friendship within the community.
- Promote Goan culture amongst Goans and others.
- Render financial and social assistance to fellow Goans in times of need.
- Publicize Goa as a tourist destination.
- Strive for a direct Muscat-Goa flight.

2.0 MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Eligibility: Any person of Goan origin, Catholic or Non-Catholic, above the age of 21 years shall be eligible for regular membership of the GCO, unless the potential member has been previously removed from good standing by the Managing Committee. Goan children below the age of 21 years shall be considered as Associate Members.

2.2 Applications: Regular Membership is considered 'de facto' by virtue of the Goan filling up the paper-based or online GCO website registration form, and by attending the GCO programs.

2.3 Dues: The GCO Managing Committee has presently decided not to levy any annual membership fee as it wishes to encourage all Goans in Oman to join the organization. However, this does not preclude annual membership fee from being fixed (and revised) at a future date if such a decision is taken by majority vote at the Annual General Body Meeting, in which case such a fee will become binding on all regular members. If such a decision is taken, then regular membership will be defined as any Goan on the rolls of the GCO who has paid his/her dues as prescribed.

2.4 Rights of the Members

2.4.1 General: The members shall be notified of all activities and functions of GCO and may attend the same. Regular members are eligible to hold office in the GCO subject to fulfilling the requirements set by the GCO.

2.4.2 Resignation: Resignation shall be deemed to have occurred when the member leaves Oman on a permanent basis. A member may also resign from GCO at any time. Notice of this resignation shall be in writing, addressed to the President, and shall become effective when accepted by the President. The resigned member is responsible for returning all GCO property that may be in his/her possession. In case of the resignation of the President, the resignation shall be in writing and addressed to the Spiritual Advisor and to members of the Managing Committee.

2.4.3 Property Interest: No member shall have any right or interest to any asset, claim or property held or owned in the name of GCO. However, in the event of dissolution of GCO, all interest and share in the assets shall be surrendered to Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Ruwi.

2.4.4 Inspection of Books and Records: The books and records of the GCO may be inspected by any member upon explaining the reason and giving reasonable notice in writing to the President or Spiritual Advisor and arranging a time satisfactory to the Treasurer or Managing Committee member having charge of the books.

2.5 Duties of Members

2.5.1 General: It shall be the duty of all members to be familiar with and abide by the guidelines and rules of GCO at all times. A member guilty of conduct detrimental to the objectives of the GCO, or reflecting discredit upon it by any improper act or series of acts, shall be subject to disciplinary action (including expulsion from the GCO) by Managing Committee. Such a decision by the Managing Committee shall become effective on approval by the Spiritual Advisor.

2.5.2 Financial: The financial year of the GCO shall be from 1st January to 31st December. As stated above, presently there is no membership fee. If and when such a fee is fixed, every member will be expected to pay his/her dues on or before 31st March of each year, and the outgoing committee will carry forward at least 1/3 of its membership fee to the new incoming committee along with the members' list. All transactions/payments in excess of R.O. 300/- (Rial Omani Three Hundred) towards charitable or any deserving cases, should require the prior approval of the Managing Committee before the disbursement of the amount to the concerned parties.

3.0 MANAGING COMMITTEE

3.1 General: The Managing Committee shall be the controlling administrative body of the GCO. It shall have full authority to govern the GCO and to conduct its affairs pursuant to these guidelines.

The Parish Priest of Sts. Peter and Paul Church or his Assistant shall be the Spiritual Advisor of the GCO. He will be kept informed of all major decisions taken by the GCO Managing Committee. The Agenda and Minutes of all meetings of the Managing Committee will be copied to him, and he shall have the right to attend any Managing Committee meeting should he indicate his desire to do so.

The members of the Managing Committee shall consist of the following:

- President
- Vice-President, General
- Vice-President, Cultural and Sports
- General Secretary

- Treasurer
- Joint Secretary
- Coordinator, Spiritual Sub-committee
- Coordinator, Helpline
- Coordinator, Cultural Sub-committee
- Coordinator, Educational Sub-committee
- Coordinator, Sports Sub-committee
- 2 Non-Catholic Goans.

However, the Managing Committee, shall have the right to co-opt additional members if their presence on the Committee will enhance its effectiveness and efficiency.

The President, the two Vice-Presidents, General Secretary, Treasurer and Joint Secretary shall be elected at the annual general body meeting of the GCO, which shall be held in or before December of each year. These 6 elected members shall be considered as the Core Committee, and they will nominate the remaining members of the Managing Committee.

Meetings of the Managing Committee shall be held at least on a monthly basis, after adequate notice, through telephone or email, coordinated by the President and Secretary. The quorum for such meetings shall be at least 6 members. If a Managing Committee member, who is in station, abstains from 3 continuous meetings without intimation, he/she will be considered as having resigned from the GCO Managing Committee.

It is expected that all decisions of the Managing Committee will be unanimous in nature, after sufficient discussion. In the event of lack of consensus, the majority vote shall prevail. The Spiritual Advisor has the authority to veto any decision in the larger interests of the GCO and the Catholic Church.

3.2 Honoraria: There shall be no honoraria payable to members of the Managing Committee.

3.3 Spiritual Advisor: The Spiritual Advisor shall supervise the activities of the GCO, and provide his expert advice on the functioning of the GCO within the framework of the Catholic Church. He will receive the agenda and minutes of meetings of the Managing Committee, and will be kept informed of all major decisions and issues involving the GCO. He will have the right to veto any decision taken by the GCO, in the larger interests of the Church. If there is any controversial issue that comes to his attention that cannot be resolved by the Managing Committee, or if he is not satisfied with the manner of functioning or decisions taken by the present Managing Committee, he shall seek the advice of the Core Committee of the previous year, and that decision shall be binding on the current Managing Committee. Failure to implement such a decision, or to accede the Spiritual Advisor's directive in matters that concern the Church, will give the Parish Priest of Sts. Peter and Paul Church the right to dismiss the Managing Committee and suspend the GCO activities till fresh elections are held and the decisions of the Church complied with.

3.4 President: The President shall represent GCO in an official capacity to the best of his/her abilities. He/she shall chair meetings of the GCO Managing Committee and the General Body. He/she shall evaluate ideas put forward by the Managing Committee, ensuring that they are fully understood and executed to the betterment of the members and the GCO. He will be responsible for executing the decisions of the Managing Committee and General Body.

3.5 Vice-President, General:

The Vice-President, General will work closely with the President. He shall officiate as President in his absence. He shall be the co-signatory to all cheques issued by the GCO.

3.6 Vice-President, Cultural and Sports: He/she will be overall responsible for the Cultural and Sports activities of the GCO so as to make it a vibrant organization which caters to all sections of the Goan community in Oman.

3.7 General Secretary: The General Secretary will liaise with the President and other members of the Managing Committee with regard correspondence pertaining to the activities of the GCO and decisions to be followed up on. He/she shall keep the official records of GCO. He/she shall issue notice for all Managing Committee Meetings of GCO, and circulate minutes of all meetings of GCO to all Executive Committee Members. He/she shall prepare a report for the General Body on the activities held during the year. He/she shall maintain the GCO website. All communications circulated to the GCO members by email or post should be routed through the General Secretary. He/she shall also perform such other duties as requested by the President from time to time.

3.8 Joint Secretary: The Joint Secretary shall assist the General Secretary and officiate in his absence.

3.9 Treasurer: The Treasurer will liaise with the President with regard to Finance. The Treasurer shall pay all expenses of GCO in coordination with the President. He shall be the focal point to receive all cash, cheques and gifts donated in kind to the GCO. He, along with the Vice-President, shall sign cheques issued by the GCO. The Treasurer shall render an accounting to Managing Committee Members at each business meeting, of all monies disbursed and collected. The Treasurer shall perform any other duties deemed necessary to the office.

3.10 Coordinators of Helpline and Spiritual, Cultural, Educational and Sports Sub-committees: The Managing Committee, at its first meeting, shall nominate a Coordinator for each of the following activities: Spiritual, Cultural, Helpline, Educational and Sports. Each of these Coordinators will head a sub-committee for planning and organizing activities falling within its realm. The respective Coordinator will nominate the members of the Sub-Committee for approval by the Managing Committee. The Coordinators shall convene meetings of their concerned sub-committee as often as necessary. The Core Committee shall be invited to these meetings. The Coordinators will plan the calendar of events for the entire year, and on the approval of the Managing Committee, they will be responsible preparing the budget / anticipated cost, organizing the events, booking the venues, and conducting the events. The Coordinator of the Spiritual Sub-committee shall also mobilize GCO members to organize and participate in the general Church related activities. The Coordinator of the Helpline Sub-committee shall be the focal point for assisting GCO members and others in times of need and shall disburse GCO funds only after clearance by the President.

3.11 Impeachment: A member of the Managing Committee may be removed from office at the discretion of the Spiritual Advisor for misconduct or for an action that brings discredit to the GCO or the Church. Such an action may be initiated on the basis of a complaint received by the President, who after adhering to the principles of natural justice, is satisfied with regard to the merits of the complaint and the need for such action.

3.11 Line of Succession: In the event of a vacancy in the Managing Committee in the middle of a term, the remaining members of the Managing Committee, in consultation with the President, may fill the vacancy or may function for the remainder of the term by sharing the responsibilities.

4.0 AUDITS

4.1 General: Prior to and for acceptance at the business meeting, an audit shall be made of the books. This audit must be presented at the business meeting and included in the minutes. If the Treasurer is replaced before his/her term ends, the succeeding Treasurer must have an audit made at the time he/she takes up the office.

4.2 Special Audit: By means of a special motion passed at a business meeting by a two-thirds majority of the regular members voting a special audit shall be made at the discretion of the Spiritual Advisor. The maker of the motion shall automatically be included in the auditing committee.

5.0 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

5.1 Returning Officer: The Managing Committee shall suggest a Returning Officer to receive nominations and conduct the elections for the Core Committee posts. This person shall be a GCO member in good standing, non-controversial in nature and acceptable to the general body of members.

5.2 Elections: The Returning Officer shall invite nominations from GCO members for the posts of President, Vice-President (General), Vice-President (Cultural & Sports), General Secretary, Treasurer and Joint Secretary. Each nomination shall be proposed and seconded by GCO members present at the Annual General Body Meeting and confirmed by the person so nominated.

A person cannot be nominated for the same post for more than 2 consecutive terms in office.

A person can be nominated only to 1 post.

To ensure proper leadership for the GCO, it is desirable that those Goans nominated to the Core Committee posts be proposed after previous discussions, review of their past and potential contribution to the Goan community, and their ability to work closely with the Church authorities for the welfare of Goans in Oman.

To promote a mature and healthy atmosphere amongst GCO members, it is desirable that such nominated persons be elected by consensus of the House. However, if no consensus can be reached and there is more than 1 nomination for particular post/s, those specific posts will be subject to elections by secret ballot.

Both spouses of a family shall have voting rights as for individual members.

In case of a tie, the outgoing Core Committee (excluding the person/s involved in the tie) will decide on the merits of the member and declare the candidature.

5.3 Other Managing Committee Members: The Core Committee elected as above shall select other members on the Managing Committee. The Managing Committee so formed will be notified to the Spiritual Advisor and to the GCO members.

5.4 Beginning Term and Hand over: All successful candidates shall take office in the month of January or any other time considered appropriate for the start of the new term. All files relating to the portfolios shall be handed over at the end of the term to the incoming Executive Committee Members along with a copy of Guidelines.

5.5 Term of Office: The President, Vice-Presidents, General Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Coordinators of Sub-committees and other members of the Managing Committee shall hold the office for a term of one year, or until their successors have assumed office.

6.0 MEETINGS

6.1 Regular Meeting: Regular meetings shall be called by the President and held when deemed necessary. The Managing Committee shall determine the location and time of these meetings.

6.2 Managing Committee Meeting: The Managing Committee meetings shall be called by the President in coordination with the General Secretary and held when deemed necessary. The President shall determine the location and time of these meetings.

6.3 Annual General Body Meeting: The Annual General Body Meeting shall be held in or before December of each year.

6.4 Reports: The Sub-committee Coordinators shall report their activities and status on a timely basis. The President's address, the Secretary's/Sub-committee Coordinators' reports, the Treasurer's statement of accounts, and minutes of the last meeting will be presented during the annual general body meeting.

7.0 AMENDMENTS TO GUIDELINES

7.1 Amendments: A proposal to amend the Guidelines may be considered at any General Body Meeting by providing written notification to the President in advance of the General Body Meeting. Ratification of the proposed change requires approval by a majority of the regular members.

7.1 Interpretation: In the event of any dispute regarding the Guidelines, the decision of the Managing Committee shall prevail. If the party is dissatisfied with the decision, he/she may appeal to the Spiritual Advisor, who after discussing with the Core Committee of the previous year, can overrule the Managing Committee decision.

These Guidelines were proposed by the following Founding Members of the GCO, who formed the first ad-hoc Managing Committee.

Mr. Flynn de Lima, President

Mr. Celso Fernandes, Vice President

Dr. Mario de Souza, General Secretary

Mr. Alan D'Costa, Treasurer

Mr. Raul de Oliveira Fernandes, Helpline

Mr. Baltazar Fernandes, Cultural Sub-committee

Mr. Anthony Lourencio, Sports Sub-committee

Mrs. Catherine Dias, Educational Sub-committee

Mr. Sebastiao Bonny Vas, Member

Mrs. Leila de Souza, Member

Mrs. Angela Almeida, Member

Mr. Teonas Cardoso, Member

Mrs. Shaliny Henriques, Member

Mr. Luis Gomes, Member

Approved by:

Fr. Raul Ramos, Parish Priest, Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Ruwi

Fr. Albert D'Silva, Asst. Parish Priest, Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Ruwi.

Date: December 5, 2008