

## **Operational Principles for the Saint Lucia Coalition of Civil Society Organisations (SLCCSO) for Sustainable Development**

### **1. Vision:**

Our vision is for civil society to be fully engaged as equal partners with the public and private sectors in the sustainable development of Saint Lucia.

### **2. Mission:**

The Coalition's mission is to strengthen and support the individual and collective efforts and capacities of its members to contribute consistently to the national development agenda and programmes in all stages of their evolution.

### **3. Mandate:** In pursuit of its vision and mission, the Coalition shall make every effort to:

- a) strengthen the capacity of its members and the Coalition as a whole in pursuit of a shared vision for a sustainable future;
- b) facilitate opportunities for members to develop their capacity in pursuit of their own mandates;
- c) provide a platform for discussion and debate among members and with the wider society on matters related to sustainable development and good governance;
- d) become a mechanism for civil society to influence national, regional and international policy;
- e) monitor progress towards, and achievement of sustainable development goals;
- f) participate in various fora that may be of benefit to its members;
- g) undertake research and evaluation to support the Coalition's mission;
- h) promote, advocate for, and where possible facilitate effective social accountability; and
- f) engage government and development partners in mobilizing resources to achieve its mandate.

### **4. Guiding Principles:** The following principles shall guide the Coalition in its relationship with its members, the wider public, government and development partners:

- a) **Individual and collective advancement:** Coalition members pledge to support each other in pursuit of their individual and collective mandates;
- b) **Empowerment:** The Coalition shall seek to enable its members to advance their own development and take ownership of such processes;
- c) **Advocacy:** The Coalition shall actively advocate for government to strengthen the enabling environment for, and to work towards achieving sustainable development;
- d) **Diversity of Opinion:** Recognising the diversity of skills, ideas and background of its members, the Coalition shall consider all views from its members in conducting its affairs;

- e) **Commonality of Purpose:** All members are expected to embrace sustainable development principles as the common purpose of the Coalition;
- f) **Transparency and accountability:**
  - i. The governance, decision-making and programming of the Coalition will be conducted in a transparent manner, and the organisation shall be accountable to its members, partners, donors and the country as a whole for all aspects of its operations; and
  - ii. Members of the Coalition will have an obligation to act in accordance with its vision, mission, mandate and the operational principles with respect to their interaction with the organisation.
- g) **Equity:** The Coalition and its members will be guided by principles of equity in the pursuit of their mandates.

**5. Objectives:** In pursuit of its mandate, the Coalition shall pursue the following objectives:

- a) Promote and facilitate improved cooperation and collaboration among Coalition members and between members, public and private sector agencies and development partners;
- b) Create inclusive, transparent and fully participatory processes to engage members and partners in pursuit of the Coalition's mission;
- c) Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on sustainable development issues of interest to Coalition members and the wider society;
- d) Facilitate capacity development of members to pursue their mandates and that of the Coalition;
- e) Identify and leverage resources to promote the work of the Coalition;
- f) Promote good governance within the Coalition and in the wider society;
- g) Represent the collective views of Coalition members;
- h) Monitor and influence government and donor policies, and development practices; and
- i) Conduct or facilitate public debates and forums dedicated to the advancement of sustainable development.

**6. Work Programme:**

The Coalition's Board established under Section 11 shall, in consultation with Coalition members, prepare annual work programmes for approval by the membership.

**7. Membership:**

- a) The Coalition members shall be non-governmental organisations either registered by a relevant agency of government, registered under the Companies Act or other law, or created by an Act of parliament;
- b) There shall be three (3) categories of members:
  - i. Full members, being those whose application for membership has been approved and membership dues paid;
  - ii. Non-financial members, as defined in Section 8 (c); and
  - iii. Associate members, who are individuals, youth groups or CSOs

interested in, and supportive of the Coalition's mission but not interested in becoming a full member.

- c) Notwithstanding sub-section (b) above, organisations with a political mandate or associated with a political organisation shall not be eligible for full membership to the Coalition;
- d) Membership shall be by application to the Board on a prescribed form and accompanied by the registration fee as determined by the Board;
- e) The Board shall determine the information to be included in membership applications;
- f) The Board shall consider membership applications as soon as is practicable and its decision shall be communicated to the applicant by the Secretary elected under clause 11 (d) ;
- g) The notification issued under sub-section (f) shall include an invoice for the prorated membership fee for the remainder of the year;
- h) Any applicant whose application for membership to the Coalition has been rejected by the Board shall have the right of appeal to the next meeting of members; and
- i) Any decision taken by Coalition members with regards to an appeal made under Section (g) above shall be final.

#### **8. Membership Dues:**

- a) The Board shall, subject to the ratification of members, determine the amount of the annual membership dues to be paid by members;
- b) A member whose membership is about to expire, shall be so informed;
- c) A member whose membership has expired shall be classified as a non-financial member and shall be given three (3) months to pay the outstanding dues;
- d) A member registered as a non-financial member under sub-section (c) above may be re-instated as a financial member upon payment of all outstanding dues,;
- e) A member who has not paid outstanding dues after three (3) months shall be moved to a register of non-financial members; and
- f) Any member who remains a non-financial member for more than two (2) years shall cease to be a member.

#### **9. Resignation of Members:**

- a) Any member may resign its membership in the Coalition by written notice addressed to the Secretary of the Board; and
- b) Resignation of a member shall take effect upon consideration and recording of the letter of resignation by the Board at its meeting following receipt of the notice.

#### **10. Suspension or Expulsion of Members:**

- a) If, in the opinion of not less than three (3) members of the Coalition, a member has acted in a manner not consistent with the Charter, Rules or other instruments to be developed from time to time, the matter shall be referred to the Board in a written referral signed by the members making the complaint,

- through the Secretary.
- b) The complaint referred to in sub-section (a) shall be forwarded by the Secretary to the Board for its consideration as soon as is practicable and the findings, along with appropriate recommendations will be presented to the next meeting of members for consideration;
  - c) The member whose membership is under review under item (b), shall be so informed and presented with the findings of the Board, and shall be given the opportunity to respond to the case in writing, and to be heard by the membership Meeting at which the matter is to be considered; and
  - d) The decision of members on the expulsion of a member, taken at a duly constituted meeting, shall be final.

## **11. Board:**

- a) A Board comprising no more than nine (9) persons from among the named representatives of full members in good financial standing shall be elected to direct the affairs of the Coalition;
- b) Persons elected to serve on the Board shall serve as the representative of the organisation they represent;
- c) The Board shall comprise a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and two (2) floor members;
- d) Members elected to serve on the Board shall, at their first meeting, elect from among its members, persons to serve as the Coalition's Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Public Relations Officer;
- e) If a vacancy arises on the Board it shall be filled by the alternate delegate of the organisation he or she represents;
- f) If a vacancy arises among the Officers of the Board, it shall elect a replacement from among its members;
- g) No member of the Coalition may have more than one member on the Board at any one time;
- h) Membership to the Board shall be for two (2) years, renewable by re-election;
- i) A member may serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms on the Board and will become eligible for re-election following an absence of two (2) years from the body;
- j) Notwithstanding clauses h) and (i) above, the five members elected to serve on the Board at the first Annual General Meeting of the Coalition with the lowest number of votes shall serve for a term of one (1) year, and the four (4) with the highest number of votes shall serve for a period of two (2) years;
- k) At the second Annual General Meeting of the Coalition, the five members on the Board whose term of office was for one year as defined in Clause (j) above, shall remit office and shall be replaced by election;
- l) Thereafter, members shall serve for two years following which their membership on the Board shall end and the vacancies filled by election;
- m) A simple majority shall constitute a quorum for meetings of the Board;
- n) The Board shall constitute technical committees which may include individuals who are not affiliated with the Coalition, as it sees fit to support its work and that of the secretariat and
- o) The Board shall make and periodically review the rules to govern its functioning and shall submit those rules for ratification by the Annual General Meeting.

## **12. Meetings of the Coalition:**

- a) Members of the Coalition shall meet at their Annual General Meeting to conduct the affairs of the organisation;
- b) No more than fourteen (14) months shall elapse between one Annual General Meeting and the next;
- c) In addition to the Annual General Meetings, members of the Coalition shall meet at such other times as may be necessary to conduct the affairs of the organisation;
- d) The Board shall determine the date and time for all meetings of members and shall set the Agendas for the meetings;
- e) The Agenda for an Annual General Meeting shall include:
  - i. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting;
  - ii. Chairman's report;
  - iii. The Treasurer's Report;
  - iv. The Auditor's Report;
  - v. Reappointment of Auditors; and
  - vi. Elections of Board members.
- f) Notice of all meetings shall be issued by the Secretary, who shall give at least twenty one (21) days' notice of such meetings unless circumstances prevent the issuance of such notice, as determined by the Board;
- g) Notwithstanding sub section (f) above, not less than twenty-five percent (25%) full members may, by notice delivered to the Secretary in writing, request a meeting of members;
- h) The notice issued in accordance with sub section (g) shall include the matters to be placed on the Agenda, and this information shall be communicated to the Board as soon as practicable;
- i) The Board shall convene the meeting requested subject to sub section (g) in accordance with the rules governing the convening of a meeting of members;
- j) Each member of the Coalition shall nominate one representative and an alternate to represent its interest at meetings of the Coalition in writing addressed to the Secretary;
- k) The nominee named under sub section (j) shall remain the representative of the Member until the nomination is rescinded by the Member, who may replace its representation at meetings of the Coalition; and
- l) Notwithstanding sub section (k) above, only the named representative of members in good financial standing shall have the right to vote on matters before meetings of the Coalition.

## **13. Secretariat:**

- a) The Coalition shall, as soon as is practicable, establish a Secretariat to execute its policies and programmes;
- b) The Secretariat shall be staffed by professionals, either paid or serving on a voluntary basis, to carry out the functions to be determined by the Board;
- c) The structure of the Secretariat shall be determined by the Coalition members on the recommendation of the Board; and
- d) Staff shall report to the head of the Secretariat who shall, in turn, report to the

Board.

**14. Finances:**

- a) The finances of the Coalition shall include membership dues, grants, project funds, subventions and gifts received to support its work;
- b) The Coalition shall invest its income in the furtherance of its objectives;
- c) The funds shall be managed by the Secretariat under the guidance of the Board, acting through the Treasurer, who shall report on the organisation's finances to members;
- d) The staff shall keep records of all income and expenditure and make those records available to the Board and the Coalition's auditors as necessary; and
- e) The finances of the Coalition shall be audited annually.

**15. Annual Reports:**

- a) The Secretariat shall prepare Annual Reports of the work of the Coalition, to include a report by the Chair and the audited financial statement covering the preceding financial year.
- b) Annual Reports shall be presented to members at the Annual General Meeting following the year covered by the Report; and
- c) Annual Reports of the Coalition shall be published.