

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL ACT

Act 27 of 1985 – 18 November 1985

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NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL ACT

1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the National Women's Council Act.

2. Interpretation

In this Act—

“Council” means the National Women's Council established under section 3;

“general organisation” means any organisation for the welfare of women;

“Minister” means the Minister to whom responsibility for the subject of women's rights is assigned;

“National Committee” means the Committee referred to in section 5;

“region” means a region determined by the Council in accordance with section 10;

“regional committee” means a committee referred to in section 10;

“specialised organisation” means any organisation working for the welfare of women in a specific field only.

[S. 2 amended by Act 43 of 1989.]

3. Establishment of Council

(1) There is established for the purposes of this Act the National Women's Council.

(2) The Council shall be a body corporate.

4. Objects of Council

The objects of the Council shall be to—

- (a) establish and maintain effective communication with women and organisations of women;

- (b) ensure coordination of activities of groups of women and organisations;
- (c) assist in the implementation and evaluation of Government policies as they relate to the needs of women;
- (d) at the request of the National Committee, co-operate and if necessary affiliate with other bodies whether in or outside Mauritius having similar aims; and
- (e) identify and recommend to the National Committee actions and projects that will promote the integration of women in development.

5. National Committee

(1) The Council shall be managed and administered by a National Committee which shall consist of—

- (a) the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for the subject of women's rights, who shall be the President of the Council;
- (b) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject for women's rights;
- (c) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of economic planning and development;
- (d) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of youth and sports;
- (e) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of education;
- (f) one representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of health;
- (g) a Secretary of the Council;
- (h) one representative of each of the 5 regional committees; and
- (i) 3 members appointed by the Minister.

(2) (a) Every regional committee shall, for the purpose of subsection (1) (h), on or before 31 July of every year, elect one of its members to be member of the National Committee.

(b) No person shall be elected under paragraph (a) for more than 2 consecutive terms.

(3) The Council may appoint, on such terms and conditions as the Minister thinks fit, such staff as it considers necessary for the purposes of this Act.

[S. 5 amended by Act 43 of 1989; Act 40 of 1991.]

6. Functions of National Committee

(1) The functions of the National Committee shall be to—

- (a) examine and evaluate the contribution of women to the various sectors of development in the light of national needs and priorities;
- (b) study specific areas where the participation of women should be invited or strengthened;
- (c) advise the Minister on the development and implementation of programmes to integrate women in all sectors of national development;
- (d) appoint such subcommittees as it thinks necessary and determine their terms of reference, duration and composition.

(2) The Minister may, in relation to the exercise of the National Committee of its functions, give such directions to the Committee as is considered necessary and the

Committee shall comply with those directions.

7. Meetings of Council

(1) The Council shall hold its annual general meeting at such time and place as the National Committee shall determine.

(2) An annual general meeting of the Council shall take place not later than 3 months after the closing date of its accounts.

(3) At least 21 clear days' notice of the meeting shall be given in writing by the Secretary of the member organisation or by publication in 3 daily newspapers.

(4) At the annual general meeting, the business shall include the consideration of the annual report and the consideration of the audited accounts.

(5) A special meeting of the Council shall be convened by the Secretary of the Council upon receipt of the written request of the National Committee or one fourth of the member organisations.

[S. 7 amended by Act 40 of 1991.]

8. Procedure at meetings

(1) The quorum at any general meeting of the Council shall be one-third of the total number of members in regional committees, and the quorum at any meeting of the National Committee shall be 8 members.

(2) The Chairperson, or, in his absence, any person elected by the members present and voting shall act as Chairperson.

(3) All decisions shall be taken by a majority of votes, the Chairperson having an original as well as a casting vote.

(4) The Secretary of the Council shall have the custody of all books, deeds and documents relating to the Council and shall keep minutes of all proceedings of the National Committee and shall perform such other duties as the National Committee may assign to him.

[S. 8 amended by Act 43 of 1989.]

9. Membership

(1) The membership of the Council shall be open to organisations which are registered under the Registration of Associations Act and which have as their principal objectives the promotion of the—

- (a) status of women in general;
- (b) interests of women in all sections of the economy;
- (c) cultural, educational and intellectual development of women; and
- (d) integration of women in the development of the country.

(2) Every organisation shall, on applying to become a member of the Council, submit a certified copy of its rules to the National Committee.

(3) Every member organisation shall, whenever any amendment is made to its rules, submit a certified copy of such amendment to the National Committee within 10 days of the amendment.

(4) Every organisation shall, on being admitted as member, pay such admission fee as the National Committee may determine.

[S. 9 amended by Act 43 of 1989.]

10. Regional Committees

(1) (a) The Island of Mauritius shall be divided into 4 regions in such manner as the Council may determine.

(b) Rodrigues shall form a separate region.

(2) Every region shall be managed and administered by a regional committee which shall be responsible to the Council for the activities of organisations of women of the region.

(3) (a) Every regional committee shall meet as often as necessary and at such place as may be prescribed.

(b) Every regional committee shall determine its activities and regulate its proceedings.

(4) Every organisation of women within a region shall each year elect one of its members to sit on the regional committee having jurisdiction over the region.

(5) Every regional committee shall recommend affiliation of its members to the National Council.

(6) Every regional committee shall be registered with the Registrar of Associations.

(7) Every regional committee shall keep a register of members in such form as it may determine.

(8) Every regional committee shall produce its books and documents for inspection whenever so requested by any person appointed by the National Committee.

(9) No person shall be appointed as treasurer or auditor of a regional committee without the prior approval of the National Committee.

(10) Every regional committee shall, by 30 September at the latest in each year, submit to the National Committee—

(a) a return in such form as it may determine;

(b) a certified report on its activities during the preceding year together with a statement of its accounts duly audited.

[S. 10 amended by Act 43 of 1989.]

11. Funds of Council

(1) The Council may raise money by means of membership fees and subscriptions.

(2) Every member organisation shall pay such fee as the Council may determine.

(3) Membership fees shall be payable in advance, at least 2 months before the annual general meeting.

(4) The income and property of the Council shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Council.

[S. 11 amended by Act 43 of 1989.]

12. Termination of membership

(1) The National Committee may cancel the membership of an organisation where it—

(a) has failed to pay any membership fee 3 months before the annual general meeting;

(b) acts in any way which is prejudicial to the interests of the Council;

(c) refuses to comply with any direction given to it or any decision taken by the Council; or

(d) is wound up.

(2) Any member organisation whose membership is cancelled under subsection (1) may appeal to the Minister within one month of the communication of the decision to it.

(3) The appeal shall be in such form as the Council may determine.

(4) The decision of the Minister on an appeal shall be final.

[S. 12 amended by Act 43 of 1989.]

13. Donations and legacies

Article 910 of the Code Civil Mauricien shall not apply to the Council.

[S. 13 amended by Act 43 of 1989.]

14. Regulations

The Minister may make such regulations as he thinks fit for the purposes of this Act.

[S. 14 amended by Act 43 of 1989.]

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