

**World Conference of Associations of  
Theological Institutions  
(WOCATI)**

**Theological Education Network**

**CONSTITUTION  
AND  
BYLAWS**

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

## 1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. Theological education is a worldwide enterprise fundamental to the mission of the church. In its most immediate and concrete forms, theological education is shaped by the religious, educational, social, political, and historical traditions within which it exists. Theological education is carried out in a world which is increasingly aware of its interdependence and religious plurality. Its context is both local and global and therefore, it can function more effectively within a worldwide framework.
- 1.2. These characteristics of theological education have led theological institutions to commit themselves to closer cooperation at local, national, and regional levels. In the late 80s, due to initiatives in the Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of the WCC, it was seen as appropriate that a global network and organization be established to serve, support, and enhance theological education in its constituent parts. To this end, in 1989 the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) was established and held its inaugural meeting at Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1989. The members constituting WOCATI join themselves together for the purpose of advancing their shared vision, purpose, and common cause.
- 1.3. There is a special and historic relationship between WOCATI and the program on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of the WCC. Both the global network of accrediting institutions of theological education and the global programme on ecumenical theological education complement and need each other, though neither can do the job of the other.

## 2. NAME

- The name of this organization is: WORLD CONFERENCE OF ASSOCIATIONS OF THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS (hereafter WOCATI) - Theological Education Network. WOCATI is organized according to its own constitution and functions according to its self-defined purposes and authority.

## 3. ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

- 3.1. WOCATI includes in its membership
  - a) Regional associations of theological schools which are engaged in the graduate and postgraduate studies of theology and contribute to the quality assurance of higher theological education;
  - b) Associations of theological schools and colleges which are engaged in non-formal theological education and other levels of theological or Christian formation;
  - c) Individual institutions, programmes, or centres of theological research and education which are committed to ecumenical theological education;
  - d) Partner agencies which are committed to the enhancement of ecumenical theological education;
  - e) Associations of individual theological or religious educators from Christian background.
- 3.2. WOCATI is open for membership from different Christian denominational and confessional backgrounds.

## 4. PURPOSES

- WOCATI is organized according to the provisions contained herein for the following purposes:
- 4.1. To provide an established and continuing dialogue forum for the members to confer concerning matters of global cooperation related to ecumenical and contextual theological education;
- 4.2. To serve as a network to promote relations of members to one another, to other educational organizations throughout the world, to appropriate ecclesiastical agencies as they relate to theological education, and to other bodies as may be relevant;
- 4.3. To serve as a platform for dialogue on the quality standards of theological education and the excellency of theological research;

- 4.4.To serve as an international quality assurance agency with the purpose of qualifying the accreditation processes of theological educational institutions worldwide and to assure the establishment of procedures and criteria for equivalency of academic diplomas and degrees awarded by the institutions in the different regions and to secure proper ways for international recognition of theological degrees and dialogue with accreditation agencies on the UNESCO level;
- 4.5.To serve as a community of learning for exploring new models of intercontextual exchange and mutual enrichment between different contextual theologies around the world;
- 4.6.To serve as an advocate for exploring new ways of global resource sharing in the area of theological education and to identify new resources for the development of the global nature and contextual implications of theological education;

## **5. MEMBERSHIP**

- 5.1. Basis of Full Membership
  - WOCATI accepts into full membership duly established and organized national, regional, or international associations of theological institutions throughout the world, which are engaged in the graduate and postgraduate studies of theology and contribute to the quality assurance of higher theological education. [B3.1]
  - 5.1.1. WOCATI members are those accepted to full membership after review by the WOCATI Executive Committee (ExCom) on the basis of criteria as designed in the bylaws. [4.5; B2.1,2.3; B2.3.1]
    - Acceptance to full membership requires a consensus decision of WOCATI Executive members, which then will be presented to the WOCATI.
  - 5.1.2. Full Members have voting rights and are eligible for the Executive Committee. [B2.1.1, 2, 3, 4, 5; B2.3.1]
- 5.2. Responsibilities of Full Members
  - 5.2.1. Commitment to the purposes of WOCATI.
  - 5.2.2. Regular attendance at duly called meetings.
  - 5.2.3. Payment of annual fees and dues as prescribed by WOCATI. [B2.2.1]
  - 5.2.4. Submission of reports and information as when required by WOCATI.
  - 5.2.5. Provision of activity reports concerning efforts for quality assurance in theological education and support for ongoing programmes of WOCATI as requested by the ExCom.
- 5.3. Members according to the previous constitution
  - Those members of the WOCATI which were accepted as members of WOCATI before 2009 shall remain as full members.

## **6. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

- 6.1. The following organizations, consortia, or networks which have a substantial interest and involvement in theological education and global networking for theological education can apply for associated membership:
  - 6.1.1. Associations of theological schools and colleges, which are engaged in non-formal theological education and other levels of theological or Christian formation;
  - 6.1.2. Individual institutions, programmes, or centres of theological research and education, which are committed to global and ecumenical theological education;
  - 6.1.3. Partner agencies, which are committed to the enhancement of global theological education;
  - 6.1.4. Associations of individual theological or religious educators;
  - 6.1.5. Other networks and agencies related to ecumenical theological education.
- 6.2. Institutions and networks can be accepted to associate membership in WOCATI upon written or online application for membership which then can be endorsed by the Executive Committee.
- 6.3. Associate membership carries eligibility for participation in discussion at meetings, appointment to committees of WOCATI, but no right to vote in WOCATI meetings. Associate members shall pay annual fees and dues as prescribed by the WOCATI. [B2.2.1]

## **7. ASSEMBLY**

- 7.1. The Assembly of WOCATI

- WOCATI shall convene an Assembly at least once every four to six years at such time as the Executive Committee may determine with notice sent to member associations well in advance.
  - 7.2. Composition of the Assembly:
    - Each member association may designate two persons (one man, one woman) to represent it at the WOCATI Assembly. The presence of representatives from one third of the full member associations shall constitute a quorum. [B3.1.1, 2; B4.3.1, 2]
  - 7.3. Tasks of the Assembly [B3.1.1,2; B4.3.2, 3].
    - 7.3.1. To propose or confirm constitutional changes;
    - 7.3.2. To receive new members on recommendation of the ExCom;
    - 7.3.3. To receive from the ExCom reports concerning activities of the past period;
    - 7.3.4. To decide and project future programmatic guidelines for the WOCATI;
    - 7.3.5. To receive an external audited financial report of the ExCom and approve the projection for further funding;
    - 7.3.6. To elect the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer and other members of the ExCom from among the representatives of full members;
    - 7.3.7. To appeal to the President or Vice-President of WOCATI for an extraordinary Assembly in case of serious concerns about the ExCom fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities which then could remove any or all the members of the ExCom;
    - 7.3.8. Any other tasks attributed to the Assembly by this constitution/by-laws.

## **8. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WORKING GROUPS, AND STAFF**

- 8.1 Executive Committee: Composition
  - 8.1.1. WOCATI shall elect a seven-member Executive Committee from the representatives of the full membership, composed of
    - a) Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and
    - b) three members at large. The term of the Executive Committee runs from the end of the Assembly to the end of the following Assembly. [B4.1.2, 3, 4]
  - 8.1.2. The seven members of the ExCom shall be balanced in terms of regions and genders. [B4.1.2; B4.1.1; B4.2.1, 2]
- 8.2. Executive Committee: Responsibilities
  - 8.2.1. The Executive Committee shall act as needed on behalf of the WOCATI Assembly in designing and implementing ongoing programmes of WOCATI as proposed by the Assembly and other actions in keeping with the Constitution.
  - 8.2.2. The ExCom shall be responsible for formulation of budgets and for their presentation for adoption by the WOCATI Assembly; for budget control; for determining the membership fees and dues; and for acquiring resources as needed for the operating budget and special projects.
  - 8.2.3. The ExCom shall serve as a committee on Membership and Recognition. In this capacity, it shall review applications for membership and make appropriate recommendations to the WOCATI Assembly.
  - 8.2.4. The ExCom may propose quality standards for theological education to be considered by member associations and periodically review membership compliance with these standards.
  - 8.2.5. The ExCom shall appoint persons or committees as may be required to carry out programmes of WOCATI, including nominating committees for each WOCATI Assembly.
  - 8.2.6. The ExCom shall be responsible for initiating and fostering relationships with other organizations throughout the world involved in theological education or receiving proposals for such initiatives from its members.
  - 8.2.7. The ExCom may invite consultants for specific purposes as appropriate. [B4.3.1, 2, 3]
  - 8.2.8. The ExCom shall normally meet once a year.
- 8.3. Executive Committee: Responsibilities of Officers

- 8.3.1. The President shall preside at all meetings of WOCATI and the Executive Committee and shall be responsible, together with the Secretary, for setting the agendas of all meetings;
  - 8.3.2. The Vice-President shall preside at meetings in the absence of or as requested by the President, and at those sessions when the Executive Committee serves as the Committee on Membership and Recognition. It shall be his/her responsibility to prepare materials required for applications to membership and renewal of Recognitions to be sent by the Secretary to applicant associations or organizations.
  - 8.3.3. The Secretary shall conduct all official correspondence of WOCATI, including calls to meetings, administering the minutes of the ExCom, and maintaining all official documents and archives of WOCATI. [B.5.1]
  - 8.3.4. The Treasurer shall collect all dues and fees and settle and maintain all accounts; have oversight of all WOCATI funds, and establish and maintain such records and procedures to account for all funds, receipts, and disbursements in accordance with the policies and actions of WOCATI and the Executive Committee.
- 8.4. Programmes
  - The ExCom shall propose and promote programmes and projects according to the guidelines of the Assembly in order to fulfill the purposes of WOCATI. These programmes can be developed by WOCATI, by its members, or in cooperation with other organizations. The ExCom will be responsible for searching the funds for those programmes by itself or through other agencies and monitoring the appropriate use of those funds.
- 8.5. Working Groups
  - Working Groups shall consist of persons elected by the WOCATI Assembly or appointed by the ExCom to deal with particular business, the terms of which will be established by the ExCom. All Working Groups shall be accountable to the ExCom. [B4.2.1, 2; B4.3.2, 3; B4.4.1]
- 8.6. Staff
  - The ExCom shall appoint as appropriate such staff as are needed to conduct the business of WOCATI. [B4.2.1, 2]

## **9. FINANCES**

- WOCATI will be funded by the fees and dues of its members according to the by-laws, and by the grants and donations received for the specific purposes. [B2.2.1, 2; B5.1]

## **10. APPEALS**

- Any member association may appeal for reconsideration if it is felt that WOCATI may have taken actions adverse to its well-being. An appeal shall be conducted in accordance with procedures as specified in the bylaws. [B5.1]

## **11. BYLAWS**

- By-laws are established in order to guide the work and operating of WOCATI in accordance with the Constitution. [B6.1,2]

## **12. AMENDMENTS**

- 12.1. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of full WOCATI members. Each member has one vote. Votes can be given either by representatives present at an Assembly or by postal ballot. Any proposed amendments to the Constitution should be given to the full members with one year's notice.
- 12.2. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to include in the call for any meeting any amendment or review of membership standards proposed in writing by three member associations.

## **BYLAWS**

(The numbers in brackets [ ] refer to articles in the Constitution)

- B1. NAME

- B1.1. The name is intended to indicate that the membership consists of associations for theological education and associations of theological schools, institutions, and centres. [2]
  - B2. MEMBERSHIP
    - B2.1. Criteria for Full Membership
      - Full membership is given to institutions according to Par. 3.1. Constitution, which meet the following criteria. [5.1.1, 2]
        - B2.1.1. They are constituted at least in part by theological schools and programmes which award degrees and diplomas at the university first degree level (usually 12 years of schooling and 4 years of theological study); [5.1.2]
        - B2.1.2. They maintain an explicit, officially adopted statement of purpose to which the association is committed; [5.1.2]
        - B2.1.3. They have access to resources as needed to fulfill their purposes; [5.1.2]
        - B2.1.4. They give evidence of stability of organization; [5.1.2]
        - B2.1.5. They maintain an effective programme of planning, implementation, self-evaluation, and review in serving their member institutions. [5.1.2]
    - B2.2. Finances, Fees and Dues
      - B2.2.1. Membership and associate membership fees and dues shall be proposed by the ExCom according to the four different categories:
        - a) Full members from the Global North;
        - b) Full members from the Global South;
        - c) Associate members from the Global North;
        - d) Associate members from the Global South.
      - B2.2.2. The Executive Committee reserves the right to adjust the fees and dues in special cases. [5.2.3]
    - B2.3. Recognition Process
      - B2.3.1. The recognition of member associations shall be renewed periodically, at least once in 12 years. [5.1.2]
  - B3. MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY
    - B3.1. Representation at Meetings
      - B3.1.1. The Officers shall attend the meeting of the Assembly held at the end of their term of office. If an officer is not designated by his or her respective association as one of their representatives of the WOCATI Assembly, that association may send two other representatives to the WOCATI Assembly. The officers do not have voting rights unless they are designated by their association as representatives to the WOCATI Assembly. [7.3]
      - B3.1.2. Members-at-large of the Executive Committee, if not otherwise designated as representatives of their association, may attend the meeting of the WOCATI held at the end of their term of office. [7.3]
      - B3.1.3. Each member association is requested to either contribute to or fully cover the costs of the delegate(s) to be sent to the Assembly according to financial means available.
  - B4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND STAFF
    - B4.1. Election of Executive Committee
      - B4.1.1. According to the Constitution, the members of the ExCom shall represent a balanced composition according to the different regions, such as Africa, Asia, Australia-New Zealand, Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Pacific, USA-Canada, Western Europe. [8.1.2]
      - B4.1.2. Members of the ExCom once selected may serve their full term even though they may cease to be actively involved in specific programmes of theological education. [8.1.1]
      - B4.1.3. If a member of the ExCom fails to attend two meetings without providing adequate reason, that person's term as ExCom member lapses. [8.1.1]
      - B4.1.4. Vacancies that occur shall be filled by the Executive Committee for the remainder of the term, with due regards to a balanced representation. [8.1.1]

- B4.2. Decision Making and Voting Procedures
      - B4.2.1. The nominations for the ExCom shall be received at the Assembly at which voting is to take place.
      - B4.2.2. The ExCom or a nominations committee appointed by the ExCom currently in office will ensure that sufficient nominations are received, in accordance with item 8.1.2 of the Constitution.
      - B4.2.3. Election of the ExCom shall be by secret ballot. In other cases the Assembly shall determine the form of voting.
      - B4.2.4. Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the representatives of full members present and voting during an Assembly
      - B4.2.5. Decisions on programmes and policies will be made according to the consensus decision making principle.
    - B4.3. Advisory Board, Consultants, Observers and Guests
      - B4.3.1. The ExCom shall nominate an Advisory Board to provide expert advice to the ExCom. The ExCom can designate one member of the Advisory Board as Honorary President.
      - B4.3.2. Consultants, Observers and guests to the meetings of WOCATI and ExCom meeting shall be designated by the Executive Committee as deemed appropriate. [7.3]
      - B4.3.3. Consultants shall have a voice but no vote either in the Assembly or in the ExCom meeting or other instances of WOCATI. [7.3; 8.4.1]
    - B.4.4 Working Groups
      - B4.4.1. Working Groups may be elected by the WOCATI Assembly or appointed by the ExCom when needed. [8.4.1]
  - B5. APPEALS
    - B5.1 An adverse action by the WOCATI shall be defined as denial of membership, renewal of recognition, or revocation of recognition. In such instances, the association or organization may petition for review of such action on the grounds that the WOCATI Assembly or its ExCom acted in disregard of established provisions or procedures or that it failed to consider all the evidence and documentation in favor of the applicant. [8.3.3; 9]
  - B6. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS
    - B6.1. Proposals for amendments of the bylaws may be submitted to the Executive Committee, which decides on these amendments according to a consensus decision making process. Changes in the bylaws shall be notified to full members immediately, allowing a six month period for appeals. [10]
    - B6.2. The Executive Committee can modify the Bylaws, by consensus or majority vote. It should notify immediately the full members of WOCATI calling to ratify or appeal the amendments. If more than 20% of the members of WOCATI appeal within six months, the modifications are to be suspended until a majority vote by postal ballot is reached.

*Adopted by WOCATI (The World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions) at its Inaugural meeting at Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1989 , amended at the Nairobi Congress on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1996 and by the constitutional revision process after the WOCATI Congress in Greece by the WOCATI Executive Meeting in Princeton Theological Seminary 17-20 March 2009, approved by the members of WOCATI May 2010.*