



المنظمة العربية لادارات الانتخابية



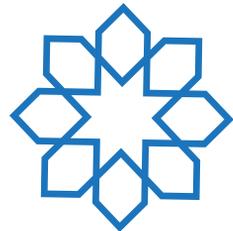
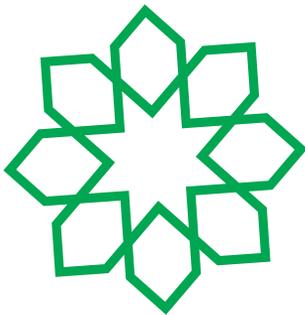
**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE  
ORGANISATION  
OF THE ARAB  
ELECTORAL  
MANAGEMENT  
BODIES  
(ArabEMBs)**

## Foreword

This is a welcoming brochure addressed to participants at the launch of the first regional network of electoral authorities in the Arab States, as well as to all of those who might be interested in getting information about the new organization.

The pages below document, in Arabic and English, the progress towards achieving the goal of establishing a regional network of EMBs in the Arab States. Background information is provided about the events leading to a consensus in 2014 on the need for a regional network, the drafting and finalization of the Charter, the development of by-laws and the launch of the Organization on the 8th of June 2015. A copy of the Charter of the new institution is included as an annex.

Through this brochure, the founding members of the new organization as well as its sponsor, the UNDP, will address an invitation to all relevant electoral stakeholders for joining, with the hope that the newborn professional organization will be used as a tool of networking and cooperation for the enhancement of the culture of democracy and quality of elections in the region.



## The Establishment of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs)



Many Arab states have recently witnessed developments in democracy with such efforts present in legislative, executive, and institutional branches. One of the most notable developments is perhaps the efforts of democratizing the electoral process in the region, which is reflective of the willingness and support for electoral rights and responsibilities displayed by the citizens of the Arab states.

In spite of the diversity and range of electoral expertise across the Arab region, and the differences between the various institutions that manage electoral processes, they all share a united goal to enhance the credibility of the electoral process in the region and reinstate the citizens' confidence in its outcomes. In addition to the numerous challenges facing all of the electoral bodies in their efforts towards achieving this goal, most notably the lack of citizens' trust in the electoral process, its outputs, and its management. In addition, there is the incompatibility of some aspects of the electoral legislation with accepted international standards. This led to a distinct need for the establishment of support for and cooperation between the different electoral bodies in the Arab region.

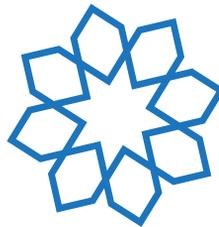
FIGURE 1  
ARAB ELECTORAL  
MANAGEMENT  
BODIES MEET  
TO FINALIZE THE  
ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE ORGANIZA-  
TION OF  
ARAB EMBS



The creation of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs) has been the product of intense detailed preparations along a roadmap that began in April 2014. The establishment of the organization underwent many steps that transformed it from theory to reality. The first was a regional session during the European Commission-United Nations Development Programme Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance global conference (EC-UNDP JTF) at the Dead Sea in April 2014. A consensus emerged at the conference among participants from the Arab world about the necessity of establishing such a network as a tool of regional cooperation. The second, step was a start-up meeting in Córdoba, Spain in June 2014 where a Preparatory Committee was created to conduct all the necessary preparations in view of bringing the idea of cooperation and networking between the different Arab EMBs into the shape of an organization. The Preparatory Committee consisted of representatives from each of the participating electoral commissions. The next step was a meeting of the Preparatory Committee in Beirut, Lebanon in January 2015 where a draft charter was produced for the creation of the network, which was titled Organization of Arab EMBs. Finally, the charter was finalized and by-laws on the functioning of the organization were drafted and approved in a meeting held in the Dead Sea, Jordan in March 2015. The final review of relevant documentation was made, a number of logistic issues were discussed and decisions were made regarding the launching of the Organization of Arab EMBs



With the creation of the Organization of the Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs), a new regional network of cooperating electoral authorities is born into the international community, this time in the Arab States. The establishment of similar bodies has been a long-standing phenomenon across other regions in the world for the past 30 years. Ideally, such an association is built on the premise of bringing together EMB's from across the region to network, share experiences, exchange technical expertise and provide mutual support within a region of similar cultural and linguistic tendencies.



## Existing associations and regional networks on elections

Inter-American Union of Electoral Institutions (UNIORE)

Association of European Electoral Officials (ACEEEO)

Electoral Commission Forum of the South African Development Community Countries (ECF of SADC)

Association of African Elections Authorities (AAEA)

Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA)

The Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies is the first of its kind in the Arab world, however other examples of regional organizations have existed elsewhere. Some of the main examples of regional networks from Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia are: The Inter-American Union of Electoral Institutions (UNIORE) established in 1991 by federating two existing sub-regional associations born in the early 1980's and the addition later of Mexico, USA and Canada -its Secretariat is located in San José, Costa Rica, within the Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL) of the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights (IHR); the Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO) founded in 1991 with a permanent Secretariat located in Budapest; the Election Commissions Forum (ECF) of the South African Development Community (SADC) established in 1996 with its Secretariat located in Gaborone, Botswana; the Association of African Electoral Authorities established in 1998 with its secretariat located in Accra, Ghana; and the Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSa) established in 2010 with an annual rotation of the Secretariat and the President.

The UNDP, through the Regional Electoral Support Project for the Middle East and North Africa financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), has supported this process from its inception phase including instigating the discussion on the need for regional cooperation among EMBs in the Arab States, and the technical and operational support to bring the organization into existence. More specifically, the UNDP, through the Regional Electoral Support Project, has provided the following assistance to bring this organization to existence: a) raising awareness on the need for regional cooperation on election matters; b) identifying a senior electoral expert to serve as a focal point for the initiative; c) creating opportunities for



discussion on the topic and network among potential founding members of the organization, d) providing advice and facilitation of discussions and meetings, e) outlining shared experiences of networks and associations on elections from other regions including exposing members from those networks to their Arab counterparts and providing documentation such as charters and by-laws; and lastly f) providing technical assistance in moving from discussion to the establishment and operationalization of the organization of Arab EMBs.

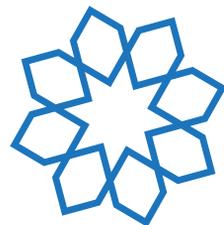
### **ROADMAP TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ArabEMBs**

A roadmap was designed for the launch of the cooperation mechanism for the organization. A number of activities were conducted during the second half of 2014 and the first half of 2015 following this roadmap with an estimated deadline for the launching of a regional network in June 2015. The main signposts along the roadmap included the following:

**Initial floating of the idea of an Arab regional network** at a EC-UNDP Joint Task Force (JTF) on Electoral Assistance annual Global Conference in the Dead Sea in Jordan in April 2014 where 100 participants from the different electoral commissions in the Middle East and North Africa participated. The conference agenda included a discussion allocated to the regional approach for networking and cooperation between and among electoral authorities. The participating electoral commissions attending the Arab regional meeting assured of the willingness to and need for the establishment of a regional network amongst Arab electoral bodies.



FIGURE 2 EC-UNDP  
JOINT TASK FORCE  
GLOBAL CONFERENCE IN THE DEAD  
SEA, JORDAN





**The formation of the Preparatory Committee for establishing co-operation between Arab election bodies:** In June 2014, a meeting was held in Cordoba, Spain at Casa Arabe to discuss the interest expressed at the Dead Sea conference on the formation of a regional network of EMBs for the Arab States. At the meeting, the interventions of the participants re-

FIGURE 3 FIRST MEETING OF ARAB EMBs ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL NETWORK OF EMBs, CORDOBA, SPAIN



flected their commitment to achieve a common understanding on the importance of having an Arab platform for cooperation. The discussions showed two main focuses: the first was the formation and the legal structure of the network, and the second, the areas of cooperation and practical steps towards achieving the best form of intra-regional cooperation. All of the participants agreed on the importance of

ensuring the sustainability of the platform, in order to achieve this purpose a clear road map had to be put in place, and enough time had to be invested in the preparation for the launch of this regional cooperation platform. The result of this meeting was the formation of a Preparatory Committee representative of electoral commissions from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, and Tunisia.



## MAIN DUTIES OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

- Reassess the Arab Electoral Management Bodies (nature, formation, legal framework, human resources, and available expertise...).
- Get acquainted with similar initiatives in other regions of the world.
- Coordinate with the UNDP Regional Electoral Support Project on necessary technical and logistical support to the committee during the founding period.
- Prepare for launch of the network within a period not exceeding one year from the formation of the committee.
- Work on fluent communication between EMBs during the founding period.
- Document the work of the committee through regular reports.

**Exposure to other forums:** Several members of the Preparatory Committee participated in the annual assembly of the ACEEEO in Bucharest, Romania in September 2014. The Assembly provided an opportunity for the Committee members to become acquainted with the way these kinds of organizations perform, the discussions they hold as well as the structure and functioning of the Secretariat of the ACEEEO. This provided a great opportunity for the members of the Preparatory Committee to witness firsthand the benefits and opportunities that regional forums can provide.



FIGURE 4 PREPARATORY COMMITTEE HEARING FROM ACEEEO ON DRAFTING OF A CHARTER

**Drafting of a Charter for an Arab Organization of EMBs:** The Preparatory Committee met for the second time in Beirut, Lebanon in January 2015 to discuss the way forward for the formation of a mechanism for regional cooperation between the Arab electoral bodies. Prior to the meeting, charters and reference material from the ACEEEO, ECF-SADC and UNIO-RE were shared with the committee. Throughout the meetings, there were numerous discussions on the basic charter for cooperation mechanisms. These discussions were based on proposed charters provided by the Supreme National Commission for Elections (Libya) and the Independent High Electoral Commission (Iraq) and on a comparison of the mechanisms offered in the different charters and the ones generally used, which was prepared by the Independent Election Commission (Jordan). The results of the above discussions were the following: a) the preparation of the first draft of the basic charter, b) the selection of the name for the organization, namely the “Organization of ArabEMBs”, and c) the selection of Jordan,





through a secret vote, as a host for the General Secretariat of the Organization headquarters. As in previous meetings, the level of participation by the members of the Preparatory Committee was high, the meeting was attended by thirteen participants representing electoral bodies in seven Arab countries, namely Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Tunisia and Yemen. In addition to a significant presence of women, where six women were participating (46%); two from Lebanon, two from Jordan, one from Tunisia and one from Yemen. At the end of the meeting the need for additional meetings of the Preparatory Committee to be held in March was agreed on. Future meetings would be held to finalize the internal regulations and to prepare for the launch of the organization.

**Finalization of the Charter and drafting of by-laws:** The Preparatory Committee met at the Dead Sea, Jordan in March 2015. Ahead of the meeting, the committee members obtained feedback and comments from their respective EMBs on the draft Charter. Jordan, as the convener of the Preparatory Committee, compiled the comments received and shared

them with the members prior to the meeting.



FIGURE 5 REPRESENTATIVES FROM IRAQ AND LIBYA LEAD DISCUSSIONS ON FINALIZING OF THE CHARTER AND BY-LAWS FOR THE NEW ORGNAIZATION OF ARAB EMBs

As at previous meetings of the Preparatory Committee, two representatives from each electoral management body were invited, including both the technical and policy-making levels (i.e. at least one of the two representatives in a policy-making capacity). Participants included Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, and Yemen. It is worth

mentioning that, again, over one third of all participants were women (7 out of 18), which is remarkable in a field like election administration where a large majority of senior positions are usually occupied by men. From UNDP, the Regional Electoral Advisor, a Senior Electoral Expert, and the Regional Electoral Policy Specialist were facilitating the activity. The main achievements of the meeting were: a) revision and finalization of the Charter following discussions on feedback received from the different country



electoral authorities; b) discussing and drafting of by-laws on the structure and functioning of the different organs of the organization: general assembly, executive board and secretariat; c) an interim three-member Executive Board was unanimously selected until the General Assembly is in operation d) an interim Secretariat was proposed and unanimously approved for the transitional period until the General Assembly selects a definite Secretariat in accordance with the charter and by-laws (the Convener's office at the Jordanian Electoral Commission will perform as interim Secretariat); e) draft logos for the ArabEMBs which were to be forwarded to the Convener by each participant's office in the two weeks that follow; f) Selecting the President of the ArabEMBs for the interim period; g) the launch of the organization was agreed for 8 - 9 June in Beirut, Lebanon. Holding of a further meeting for final preparations of the launch of the organization was decided for April 2015. UNDP was requested to continue facilitating and supporting this initiative including organizing the upcoming meeting and the launch of the ArabEMBs.



FIGURE 6 DR. EMAD OF LIBYA PROPOSING A POSSIBLE STURCTURE FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF ARAB EMBS



FIGURE 7 PARTICIPANTS CONGRATULATING THE SUCCESS OF THE INTENSIVE THREE DAY DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO FINALIZATION OF THE CHARTER

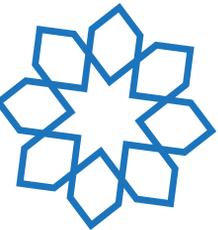


**Participation in the 12th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies:**

A number of members of the Preparatory Committee took part in the twelfth European Conference of EMBs, which was held in March 2015 in Belgium and supported by the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, where side meetings of the Arab electoral management bodies were held. The Arab EMBs discussed possible support needed of the Venice Commission for the Organization of Arab EMBs. benefits and opportunities that regional forums can provide.

**Final preparations for the launch the Organization of Arab EMBs:**

A fourth meeting of the Preparatory Committee took place in Amman, Jordan in April 2015 for the preparations of the launching of the Arab EMBs on 8-9 June 2015 in Beirut. This meeting's achievements were the following: a) the Charter was initialized by country representatives present in the Preparatory Committee; b) place and date were confirmed for the launch of the organization in Beirut on 8 - 9 June 2015; c) discussion was held and agreement achieved about the format and agenda of the launching ceremony and first General Assembly; d) specific proposals were presented and reviewed on a logo of the organization; e) an agreement was reached not to prolong the functioning of the interim Secretariat beyond six months



after the launching of the organization; and f) a final review was made of by-laws governing the interim period.

FIGURE 8 FINAL MEETING TO DISCUSS PREPARATIONS FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION

## WAY FORWARD

The Preparatory Committee ended its activities with the launching of the Organization of Arab EMBs, the emerging organization will be governed during an interim period of no longer than six months by interim authorities as follows: President, Dr. Emad Al Saiah, Chairman of the Supreme National Commission for Elections in Libya; three-member Executive Board chaired by Commissioner Safaa Jasim from the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq; and including board members Mr. Hesham Kuhail from the Central Elections Commission of Palestine, and Mr. Abd Al Hakeem Bel Khair from the Supreme National Commission for Elections in Libya. As well as a Secretariat headed by Ms. Badrieh Belbisi from the Independent Election Commission of Jordan as Interim Secretary General. The interim authorities will finish their mandate once authorities are elected by a regular General Assembly which is to take place in the months to follow.

UNDP is committed to continue its support to the Organization of Arab EMBs as it establishes itself as a relevant and active organization in the region. The Regional Electoral Support Project for the Middle East and North Africa expects to support the establishment and functions of the Secretariat for at least the first two years of its existence. The sustainability and self-sufficiency of the organization have been of great importance to the members of the Preparatory Committee, and they have identified ways to ensure that the organization, in the long-term, can sustain itself operationally which includes adding a provision for membership fees into the Charter. As it has been generally the case with other regional networks, strong support by the international community may be needed for the structuring and functioning of a permanent Secretariat as the dynamo of the organization. Support and advice would also be required for the planning and implementation of regional and broader international networking activities by the more active members of the organization. Last but not least, advocacy and ensuing recruitment of new membership will be required.

# ANNEX: Charter of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs)

## Introduction

Many Arab States have seen developments in the field of democracy, hence taking different forms including legislative, executive and institutional aspects. The development of the electoral process into a level that rises to people's aspirations and contributes in strengthening the protection of the relevant rights may be considered the most significant of these changes. Despite the diversity in the electoral expertise of the Arab countries and the differences and disparities in the forms of nature of their electoral management institutions, they all share one goal: seeking to enhance the credibility of the electoral process as well as the citizens' trust in its outputs, in addition to the similarity in the size and nature of the challenges facing the EMBs' efforts in achieving this goal. One of the most prominent challenges consists of the citizens' low level of confidence in the electoral process and its results and the parties that manage it, as well as to the incompatibility of some electoral legislation aspects with international standards.

In order to establish good governance and democracy, and to disseminate the elections' culture and increase its credibility through the Organization of free, fair, transparent and neutral non-discriminatory elections, and in order to support and develop the cooperation between Arab EMBs in the purpose of building their capacities, competencies and professionalism, we, signatories of this Charter, decided to establish the Arab Organization for Electoral Management Bodies.

## Section I: Preliminary texts (definition, objectives and methods)

### Article (1): Definitions

**The Arab Organization for Electoral Management Bodies:** A regional independent non-political Arab Organization holding a legal status. Its permanent headquarters are in Amman, Jordan. The Organization seeks to reinforce Arab EMBs' capacities and improve their performance. At the

national and international scale, it is legally represented by the chairman of the Organization's general assembly.

**Founding member:** The Arab EMB that participates in the preparations for the establishment of the Arab Organization for EMBs and have signed the Charter in the first meeting of the General Assembly.

**Member:** Any of the Organization's permanent or associate or partner members.

**Chairman:** The chairman of the General Assembly in accordance with this Charter's provisions. establish the Arab Organization for Electoral Management Bodies.

## Article 2: Objectives

1. Reinforcing the in-house capacities of Arab EMBs and improving their performance.
2. Strengthening joint cooperation and communication between Arab EMBs, as well as between them and regional and international counterparts in the areas of technical experience exchange, electoral training, and electoral management and monitoring.
3. Supporting member departments in implementing fair and transparent elections through exchanging experiences and information and developing the officials' professional capacities in Elections and Democracy.
4. Strengthening the principle of EMB's independence and impartiality.
5. Enabling members to access international experiences in the field of electoral processes management, to exchange experiences and technical information, to transfer those that can be applied in the Arab context, as well as to disseminate internationally successful Arab experiences.
6. Promoting the principle of participating in electoral processes through providing recommendations and technical expertise in the elections' field for those overseeing the electoral process and for their partners.
7. Preparing and exchanging election-specific scientific research and knowledge resources, and disseminating culture of democracy and Elections in Arab societies.
8. Taking positive measures to ensure effective participation of women in the various stages of the electoral process.
9. Taking the necessary measures to ensure all social groups participate actively in the various stages of the electoral process.

10. Providing specialized technical expertise in the electoral field for non-member Arab EMBs.
11. Facilitating vote for citizens abroad between Member EMB States.

### **Article 3: Methods**

The Organization seeks to achieve its goals through the following means:

1. Holding conferences, seminars, and training events on topics related to elections, democracy and good governance.
2. Exchanging books and publications issued by Arab EMBs.
3. Exchanging professional visits and organizing training programs between the Organization's members.
4. Issuing a magazine that publishes electoral research and studies.
5. Participating in electoral process follow-up based on an invitation from one of the member (or other) EMBs.
6. Cooperating with international, regional and local Organizations that have an interest in elections and approving the Organization's Charter.
7. The Organization can use any other means that the members consider appropriate to achieve the goals, in a way that does not conflict with the legislation in force in their countries.

## **Section II: Membership**

### **Article (4): Membership categories**

Membership categories are divided as follows:

#### **Permanent member:**

It is the EMB responsible for the general elections in any Arab country in accordance with local legislation and has the right to vote.

#### **Founding member:**

The EMB responsible for the general elections in any Arab country. It has no interest in a permanent membership, but would like to benefit from the Organization's programs.

B. The EMB responsible for holding general local elections in Arab States represented by a permanent member in the Organization.

#### **Partner member:**

This refers to a regional and international organization dealing with electoral issues and willing to cooperate with the Organization.

### **Article 5: Affiliation**

The general electoral administration and organizations are affiliated according to the internal legislation of each country and to the rules set out in the procedures and executive regulation.

### **Article 6: Membership withdrawal**

The Organization's EMB member can, upon its request, withdraw membership according to the procedures provided for by the executive regulation.

### **Article 7: Membership suspension**

Suspending the membership of any permanent member of the Organization requires the two-third majority of the Organization's General Assembly's members. For other members, the majority is required in any of the following cases:

1. Failure to participate in the Organization's activities for two consecutive years without a justification accepted by the General Assembly.
2. Non-payment of membership fees for two consecutive terms.
3. Non-compliance with the Charter, regulations, and resolutions of the General Assembly.
4. If a member loses its legal entity or its competence in the electoral process management is canceled.

### **Article 8: Rights**

**The Permanent Member** enjoys the following rights:

1. Participation in taking and voting decisions issued by the General Assembly.
2. The appointment of the General Assembly's chairman and his deputy and the election of the Executive Board chairman and members.
3. Participation in all activities carried out by the Organization.
4. Taking advantage of all the programs, benefits and services provided by the Organization.

**The Associate Member** shall be entitled to participate in the sessions of the General Assembly's meeting, with no right to vote. They may get support in accordance with the conditions and criteria determined by the

Executive Board and approved by the General Assembly.

**The Partner Member** shall be entitled to attend the General Assembly's meeting sessions, with no right to vote.

### **Article 9: Duties**

The Organization's members need to abide by the following:

1. Compliance with the Charter, regulations, and resolutions issued by the General Assembly.
2. Attendance and active participation in the General Assembly's meetings.
3. Payment of the membership fees determined yearly.

## **Section III: The Organization's Structure**

### **Article 10:**

The Organization is composed of the following organizational/supervisory, executive, and administrative units:

1. The General Assembly.
2. The Executive Board.
3. The Secretariat.

### **Article 11: General Assembly**

The General Assembly is the highest regulatory and supervisory authority in the Organization. It includes all the members who have been admitted in accordance with this Charter and the internal regulations of the Organization. The General Assembly undertakes the following tasks:

1. The proposal for the amendment and approval of the Organization's Charter.
2. The adoption of the necessary public policies, regulations and plans in order to achieve the Organization's goals.
3. Deciding on membership applications.
4. Appointing the Secretariat's Secretary General.
5. Discussing issues referred by the Executive Board and taking the necessary decisions in their regard.
6. Nominating the General Assembly's meeting host member.
7. Discussing financial and audit reports, and recommending appropriate procedures.
8. Discussing and adopting the Executive Board budget proposal for the fiscal year.

9. Ratifying the conventions concluded with regional and international counterpart EMBs.
10. Promoting participation and Organization affiliation.

### **Article 12: Executive Board**

It is composed of a Chairman and two of the permanent members elected by the General Assembly in their individual capacity for a period of two years in accordance with the provisions of the executive regulations, as well as the the Secretary General (who does not have the right to vote). The Executive Board undertakes the following tasks:

1. Implementation of the General Assembly's policies and decisions.
2. Proposal of plans and measures that would scale up the Organization's performance and help achieve its goals.
3. Technical and administrative preparation for the General Assembly's meetings and the Organization's events.
4. Study of the estimated budget proposal and final account and submitting them to the General Assembly.
5. Preparation of periodic reports including a summary of activities as well as recommendations proposed by the Secretariat, and submitting them to the General Assembly.
6. Proposal of regulatory and executive bylaws for the General Assembly.
7. Development of appropriate practical mechanisms to communicate with regional and international counterpart bodies, and participation in activities related to the Organization's work.
8. Taking decisions on urgent matters that arise between the two sessions of the General Assembly and, once taken, announcing them to the General Assembly's members as well as presenting them in the first meeting to take the appropriate decision in their regard.
9. Proposal to invite any party whose work is relevant to the Organization's goals to attend the General Assembly, with no right to vote.

### **Article 13: The Secretariat**

The Secretariat is the organization's administrative body. It is chaired by the Secretary-General who is appointed by the General Assembly for four years, renewable only once. It includes a number of qualified personnel that the nature of its work requires, in accordance with what is explained in

details in the executive regulation. The Secretariat undertakes the following tasks:

1. Secretariat of the General Assembly's and the Executive Board meeting sessions and writing their minutes as well as preparing a draft agenda for each meeting.
2. Conduct of the Organization's administrative and financial affairs.
3. Passing on invitations, decisions and recommendations issued by the Organization's units.
4. Preparing and printing studies, research, magazines, pamphlets, and periodicals issued by the organization, and monitoring their distribution.
5. Managing and updating the Organization's website.
6. Implementing directives and instructions issued by the Executive Board.
7. Ensuring the technical and administrative preparation of the Executive Board and the General Assembly's meetings.
8. Preparing drafts of activities and estimated budgets and presenting them to the Executive Board.
9. Documenting everything related to the Organization's activities and archiving all documentation that requires safekeeping.
10. Managing media coverage of the Organization's activities and making use of all the means that may reflect the Organization's media presence.

#### **Article 14: Decision-making mechanism within the General Assembly**

1. The General Assembly is held annually, and may call a special session at the request of one third of the members, as set out in the executive regulation. The General Assembly shall determine the venue and date of the next session at the end of each meeting.
2. The Assembly shall be held in the presence of a majority of the permanent members. In the absence of a quorum, a second meeting is convened, and it is considered legal with the attendance of the permanent members, no later than three months after the first invitation, as outlined in the executive regulation.
3. Every permanent member has one vote and the General Assembly's decisions are taken by consensus whenever possible. In the absence of a consensus, decisions are taken following the vote of the majority of the present permanent members.

### **Article 15: Decision-making mechanism within the Executive Board**

1. The Executive Board meets twice a year, in the organization's headquarters or in any of the Member States, at the invitation of its chair. It can hold special meetings upon a consensus reached by members, and it can use all available means of communication to achieve that.
2. The Executive Board is held in presence of the majority of its members, on the condition that the chairman is among them. Its decisions are taken by consensus, and in the absence of the latter, through voting.

## **Section IV: The Organization's Financial Resources**

### **Article 16:**

The Organization's financial resources consist of the following:

1. Annual membership fees from all members. These fees are proposed by the Executive Board and shall be approved by the General Assembly, provided an audit is made on the fees value for all members, every two years, based on a report from the Secretariat.
2. Cash and in-kind contributions from permanent members and associate members. Their acceptance is defined by the regulation.
3. Gifts, grants and other aids provided by Arab countries or regional and international organizations or bodies, in accordance with the Organization's purposes. The Executive Board accepts them after approval from the General Assembly.
4. Revenues of the Organization's non-profit activities that are related to the implementation of its functions and activities, as set forth in this Charter.

## **Section V: General Provisions**

### **Article 17: Charter's amendment**

1. A proposal to amend the Charter can be presented to the Executive Board by a minimum of three permanent members, at least six months before the General Assembly's meeting. The Executive Board shall refer it to the Secretariat that shall forward it to the members, at least three months before the General Assembly's meeting.
2. The amendment is approved by a decision of the General Assembly, with a majority of two-thirds of its permanent members.

### **Article 18: Commitments and conventions**

This Charter does not affect the members' rights and obligations that arose from the agreements they have made in the past, and no pre-signed or future agreement between any member and another organization is considered binding on the rest of the members. The Organization's members may conclude cooperation agreements with each other or with other organizations, as long as that does not prejudice this Charter.

### **Article 19:**

The EMB of the State in which the Secretariat's headquarters are located bears the rent, maintenance, and sustainability costs of the headquarters building.

### **Article 20: The Charter's Operation**

This Charter enters into force upon being signed by a two-third majority of the founding members in accordance with the legislation governing each State.

## **ANNEX: PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS**

### **Iraq:**

Mr. Safa'a Ibraheem Jasim, Commissioner and Head of Electoral Administration, Independent High Electoral Commission

Mr. Gatia Mukleef Gatia, Vice-President, Independent High Electoral Commission

### **Jordan:**

Ms. Badrieh Bilbisi, Assistant Secretary General, Independent Election Commission, Convener of the Preparatory Committee, Independent Election Commission

Ms. Samar Tarawneh, Head of Training Unit, Independent Election Commission

### **Lebanon:**

Ms. Faten Younes, Head of Political and Refugee Affairs, Ministry of Interior

Mr. Ahmed Al-Rawwas, Head of Electoral Affairs Department, Ministry of Interior

### **Yemen:**

Ms. Elham Abdulwahab Sarhan, Secretary General, Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum

Mr. Mohammed Al-Zawqari, , Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum

### **Palestine:**

Mr. Hesham Kuhail, Chief Electoral Officer, Central Election Commission

Ms. Suhair Abdeen, Director of Electoral Procedures Department, Central Election Commission

### **Libya:**

Mr. Emad Alsaiah, Chairman of the Supreme National Commission Elections

Mr. Abd Alhakeem Belkheir, Commissioner, Supreme National Commission for Elections

### **UNDP:**

Mr. Rafael Lopez Pintor, Senior Electoral Expert, UNDP, Arab States

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