



OBSERVATOIRE DU SAHARA ET DU SAHEL
SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY

STATUTES OF THE SAHARA
AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY
- OSS -

Adopted by the 5th session of the General Assembly
Rabat, 26&27 April 2016

ARTICLE 1 -NAME -MISSION -HEADQUARTERS

- 1.1 The Sahara and Sahel Observatory is an organisation of international character whose mission is:
- to serve as a tool for liaison and as an international framework for partnership and dialogue in the fight against desertification and the attenuation of the effects of drought; the adaptation to climate change and the protection of biodiversity.
 - to contribute to the mastery and exchange of information of use in the fight against desertification and the attenuation of the effects of drought;
- 1.2 The headquarter of the OSS is established in Tunis. The modalities of its establishment and functioning shall be defined in a Headquarters Agreement with the host country.

ARTICLE 2 –MEMBERS

- 2.1 The members shall be:
- African States members of United Nations which contribute and/or adhere to the present Statutes;
 - Non-African States members of United Nations which contribute and/or adhere to the present Statutes;
 - African sub-regional organisations responsible for the fight against desertification and the attenuation of the effects of drought which have adhered to the present Statutes;
 - United Nations organisations which have adhered to the present Statutes:
 - Intergovernmental organisations which contribute and/or adhere to the present Statutes.
 - International non-governmental organisations which have been admitted in accordance with the procedures defined by the present Statutes.

ADHERENCE --WITHDRAWAL

Adherence

- 2.2 States shall adhere to the present Statutes in accordance with their own internal procedures and through written notification addressed to the OSS Executive Secretariat.
- 2.3 The African sub-regional organisations responsible for the fight against desertification and the attenuation of the effects of drought, the United Nations organisations and intergovernmental organisations can adhere to the present Statutes through written notification addressed to the OSS Executive Secretariat.
- 2.4 Intergovernmental organisations may only adhere to the present Statutes if their activities are compatible with the objectives of OSS and if their request to adhere has been accepted by the OSS Executive Board.

Withdrawal

- 2.5 The status of member may be rescinded by written notification to the OSS Executive Secretariat. It shall become effective three months after the said notification. Any commitments of the member concerned shall continue to be governed by the relevant contractual provisions.

ARTICLE 3 -OBJECTIVES -ACTIVITIES

Objectives

The basic objectives of the OSS are:

- 3.1 to contribute to the fight against desertification and the attenuation of the effects of drought in Africa, and to the sustainable management of natural resources;
- 3.2 to strengthen exchanges and synergy between States, especially the North African States; the West and Central African States; the East African States in order to consolidate a genuine regional cooperation and further sustainable management of natural resources in the arid and semi-arid zones;
- 3.3 to develop North-South, North-North and South-South partnership.

Activities

The OSS activities shall be:

- 3.4 to contribute to better mastery of information among users;
- 3.5 to promote partnership and development activities among all its members in order to consolidate the implementation of the International Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and Agenda 21; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Conservation of Biological Diversity (CBD).
- 3.6 to contribute to the evaluation, optimisation and dissemination of knowledge on drought and desertification;
- 3.7 to make use of structures already existing in Africa and harmonise its actions with theirs and with the international development organisations acting along the same lines;
- 3.8 to strengthen African capacities in natural resource management (NRM), research and development related to drought and desertification;
- 3.9 to favour comprehensive approaches to the implementation of national, regional and sub-regional strategies designed to prevent and combat environmental degradation; at the request of member States and specialised organisations, to assist in the formulation of national and sub-regional priorities based on identified needs;
- 3.10 to foster the harmonisation of procedures for the collection and processing of data from diverse sources, and develop tools for evaluation, communication and information;
- 3.11 to support and encourage effective training activities at all levels and to foster the exchange of local know-how and the mastery of relevant technologies at the request of concerned States and specialised organisations;
- 3.12 to serve as a facilitator to guide stricken countries in their search for assistance, in particular, in the organisation of networks for information circulation, in the implementation of systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions and programmes underway and in capacity-building in the aforementioned fields.

ARTICLE 4 –RESOURCES

The resources of OSS shall consist of:

- voluntary contributions from its members;
- earmarked resources allocated to it for contractual activities;
- any resources of national or multinational origin;
- any other resources (donations, legacies, etc.) authorized by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE 5 – VERIFICATION OF ACCOUNTS

The OSS accounts shall be audited by a certified auditor appointed by the Executive Board on the basis of bids for tender which shall be open to external auditors registered in an OSS country. He shall carry out his functions in keeping with the conditions laid down in the Financial Regulations.

ARTICLE 6 -OSS BODIES

The OSS bodies are as follows:

- The General Assembly;
- The Executive Board;
- The Strategic Orientation Committee;
- The Executive Secretariat.

ARTICLE 7 – THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A -COMPOSITION

7.1 The General Assembly shall be composed of members. Each member shall be entitled to one vote (except in the case mentioned in Art. 2.6). No member may exercise more than two proxy votes.

B -ROLE

7.2 The General Assembly shall be the supreme body of OSS. It shall guide the actions of OSS. Its tasks shall include, in particular, defining the guidelines of OSS, approving the Statutes and amendments thereto, taking decisions on the transfer of the headquarters and the dissolution of OSS. It may delegate these tasks to the Executive Board by special mandate except as concerns headquarters transfer, dissolution and approving of the amendments to the Statutes.

C - OPERATION

7.3 The General Assembly shall, every four years, hold an ordinary session as convened by the Executive Board. Notice of meetings, including the agenda, shall be sent by the Chairman, or by the Executive Secretary mandated for that purpose, to all members at least two months prior to the date of the meeting.

7.4 For its deliberations to be valid, the General Assembly must attain a quorum of at least half of the total number of its members.

7.5 An extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly may be called at the request of the Executive Board or one-third of its members,

7.6 Subject to the provisions of Articles 11 and 12, decisions of the General Assembly shall be taken on the basis of a consensus. **However, in the absence** of a consensus, the Assembly shall take a vote and come to a decision through a simple majority vote of all members present.

7.7 The General Assembly shall elect the President of OSS; the three Vice Presidents, the rapporteur, the members of the Executive Board and the members of the Bureau from among the representatives of its members, for a renewable term of four years.

7.8 The functioning of the meetings of the General Assembly shall be defined in the internal regulations of the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 8 –THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A -COMPOSITION

- 8.1 The Executive Board shall be made up of members elected by the General Assembly from among its members for a renewable term of four years. The President of OSS is the Chairman of the Executive Board.
- 8.2 In order to reflect the objectives of OSS, the composition of the Executive Board shall respect the following distribution and modes of selection:
- African sub-regional member organizations;
 - 2 African member states members per African sub-regional organisation;
 - 1 State representative of African States and which does not belong to any sub-regional member organization;
 - The State of OSS headquarter as a member of the Bureau;
 - The States representing the non-African States;
 - The organisations of the United Nations system;
 - One international non-governmental organisation.

B-ROLES

- 8.3 The Executive Board shall implement the policies and resolutions of the General Assembly.
- 8.4 It shall adopt the annual OSS budget and programme and keep the General Assembly informed about the reports concerning its progress and financial situation. Moreover, it shall submit the accounts of the preceding fiscal year, the balance sheets, and the four-year action programme to the General Assembly.
- 8.5 It shall close the books and approve the accounts of the preceding OSS fiscal year.
- 8.6 On the proposal of the Executive Secretary, it shall approve the Staff Statutes, the Staff Rules, the Financial Regulations and the specific provisions relating to the functioning of OSS.
- 8.7 It shall appoint the auditor for a renewable term of 2 years.
- 8.8 It shall appoint the Executive Secretary and terminate his mandate.
- 8.9 It shall appoint the members of the Strategic Orientation Committee upon proposal by the Executive Secretary.
- 8.10 It shall approve the admission of new members.
- 8.11 It shall authorise the Executive Secretary, to open one or more bank accounts.
- 8.12 It can create ad-hoc groups.
- 8.13 If necessary it can convene an extraordinary General Assembly.

C- OPERATION

- 8.14 The Executive Board shall meet once a year when convened by its Chairman. It shall take its decisions on the basis of a consensus. However, if it proves impossible to reach a consensus, the Executive Board, at the request of one-third of its members, shall reach a decision through a simple majority vote of the members present. The Chairman of the Strategic Orientation Committee attends the Executive Board meeting in a consultative capacity.
- 8.15 The Bureau's composition, mode of functioning and role are defined in the internal regulations of the Executive Board.
- 8.16 The functioning of the meetings of the Executive Board shall be defined in the internal regulations of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE 9 -THE STRATEGIC ORIENTATION COMMITTEE

A -COMPOSITION

- 9.1 The Strategic Orientation Committee, replacing the Scientific and Technical Council as provided by the OSS Status attached to the Headquarters Agreement, is composed of eight to twelve members appointed by the Executive Board, upon a proposal by the Executive Secretary, for a four-year mandate, renewable once. They shall be selected among the scientists and practitioners in the field of sustainable development in arid and semi-arid zones among nationals of OSS member countries, taking into consideration the gender dimension.
- 9.2 The selection of the members of the Strategic Orientation Committee is based on the criteria of competence, independence and availability and in line with the evolution of the OSS activities programmes.

B- ROLES

- 9.3 The Strategic Orientation Committee is a consultative body. It carries out a think tank / anticipation mission and strategic analysis taking into account the OSS strategic dimension in the face of the evolutions of regional and international governance in terms of natural resources and environment.
- 9.4 It is consulted by the Executive Secretariat with regard to all orientations of a scientific and strategic character of the program. Its members contribute, according to their specific competences and under modalities set by the Executive Secretary, to the validation and valorization of the scientific content, the methodologies and the results of the programmes as well as to the formulation of the strategic orientations of the OSS action.
- 9.5 The Strategic Orientation Committee submits to the Executive Board, at the end of each year, an assessment report on the programmes and projects which appreciates the value added by OSS, the relevance of each programme to the strategy developed by OSS and its consistency with the other programmes and projects. The report shall be accompanied by any recommendations that the Committee wishes to present to the knowledge of the Executive Board.
- 9.6 The Strategic Orientation Committee may set up ad hoc working groups and call upon any competency deemed useful for the work concerned.

C- OPERATION

- 9.7 The Strategic Orientation Committee elects among its members a President, a Vice-President and a Rapporteur.
- 9.8 The Strategic Orientation Committee meets at least once a year in an ordinary session, and whenever deemed necessary, upon decision by the Executive Board or by the Executive Secretary, in an extraordinary session.
- 9.9 The Strategic Orientation Committee adopts an internal regulation, setting the modes of organisation of its meetings and the conditions of evolvment of its proceedings. The Executive Board approves these Committee regulations.
- 9.10 The Strategic Orientation Committee is allotted an operating budget, which shall be set and realised under the same conditions as for the OSS overall operating Budget.

ARTICLE 10 –THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

- 10.1 The Executive Secretariat shall implement the decisions of the Executive Board and take all necessary measures for the management of OSS, the execution of its programmes, the application of its policy and the fulfilment of its mission.
- 10.2 The Executive Secretariat shall prepare the OSS budgets and programmes every year and submit

them to the Executive Board for approval.

- 10.3 For each ordinary session of the General Assembly, the Executive Secretariat shall prepare an evaluation of OSS activities since the last General Assembly meeting and a policy statement covering the next four years. The evaluation and the policy statement shall be submitted to the Executive Board which shall present them to the General Assembly with whatever comments it deems necessary.
- 10.4 The Executive Secretariat shall apply the provisions of the Financial Regulations for the financial administration of OSS. It shall draw up an annual activities report and a balance sheet of the accounts for the past year, which shall be transmitted to all members after approval by the Executive Board.
- 10.5 The Executive Secretariat shall be headed by the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary shall be accountable to the Executive Board.
- 10.6 The Executive Secretary shall represent OSS in all its daily activities. In case of representation before a court of law, he may only be replaced by a proxy acting by virtue of special power of attorney.
- 10.7 The Executive Secretary shall participate in the meetings of the General Assembly, the Executive Board and of the Strategic Orientation Committee but shall not have right to vote. Whatever scientific, technical and administrative staff he deems necessary shall assist him.
- 10.8 The Executive Secretary shall recruit and dismiss the members of the Executive Secretariat in compliance with the provisions on the Staff Statutes and Staff Rules
- 10.9 The responsibilities of the Executive Secretary towards OSS shall be exclusively international. In the exercise of his functions, he shall not ask for or receive instructions from any government or any authority external to OSS.
- 10.10 The Executive Secretary shall have a four-year term of office, renewable once.
- 10.11 The wages and benefits of the Executive Secretary shall be determined by the Executive Board.
- 10.12 The Executive Secretary is authorized to open one or more bank accounts and shall report to the Executive Board under the conditions laid down in the Financial Regulations.
- 10.13 The Executive Secretary shall submit the Staff Statutes, the Staff Rules, the Financial Regulations and any related amendments to the Executive Board for approval.

ARTICLE 11 –AMENDMENT OF THE STATUTES

- 11.1 Draft amendments to the Statutes may be adopted by the Executive Board at the proposal of the Executive Secretary or of one-third of the Board members. These amendments shall be submitted by the Executive Board to the General Assembly for approval.
- 11.2 In either case, the proposed amendments shall be included in the agenda of the next Executive Board meeting, which must be sent to all members of the General Assembly at least three months before the meeting.
- 11.3 For deliberations of the Executive Board to be valid, at least one-third of all its members must be present. If this proportion is not attained, the proposed amendments to the Statutes shall be included in the agenda of the next Executive Board meeting, which shall be called within a period of three months.
- 11.4 The amended Statutes shall be approved on the basis of a consensus of all the members present or represented at the General Assembly. However, if a consensus cannot be reached, the General Assembly shall vote and take decisions by a two-thirds majority of all members present or represented. This approval shall be effective from the date of the vote.

ARTICLE 12 -DISSOLUTION

- 12.1 If the General Assembly is asked to take a decision on the dissolution of OSS and is convened especially for this purpose within the same period as that provided for in the preceding Article, at least two-thirds of all its members must be present for its decision to be valid.
- 12.2 Otherwise, the General Assembly shall be convened again within the same period as that provided for in the preceding Article; one-fourth of all its members must be present or represented for its deliberations to be valid.
- 12.3 In any case, dissolution may not be voted upon without a two-thirds majority of all the members present or represented at this Assembly.
- 12.4 A withdrawal from OSS by the HQ State or by UNESCO is equivalent to a denunciation of the HQ Agreement signed between them. In the event of a denunciation of the Agreement or withdrawal from OSS by either or both of the parties to the HQ Agreement, the Executive Board shall hold an emergency meeting and convenes, for the exclusive purpose of addressing the situation, an extraordinary General Assembly. Upon proposal by the Executive Board, the extraordinary General Assembly pronounces either on the transfer of HQ to another member State or any other solution that it deems appropriate to guarantee the optimal functioning of the organisation and its activity.
- 12.5 In case of dissolution, the General Assembly shall appoint one or more assets liquidators.

ARTICLE 13 –WORKING LANGUAGES

The working languages of OSS shall be French and English.

In witness whereof the undersigned duly authorised representatives have adopted the present Statutes, the French, English and Arabic versions of which are authentic. These original documents shall be deposited in the archives of the OSS Executive Secretariat and certified copies thereof shall be transmitted to the adhering parties through diplomatic channels.

Signature

Khatim KHERRAZ



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Khatim Kherraz", is written over the printed name.

OSS Executive Secretary