

# **AASR Constitution 2014 (REVISED)**

## *Prolegomenon*

This revision was proposed, discussed, amended and approved during the AASR General Meeting at Cape Town, South Africa, on Friday 1st August 2014. It was decided to maintain the office of Vice President on condition that she/he be given a distinct task; and that Regional/National Representatives should preferably be elected.

## **1. NAME AND SCOPE**

The name of the association is the African Association for the Study of Religions (AASR). The AASR is an association for the study of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora. AASR is a regional member society of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR). The AASR Constitution is modelled after the Constitution of IAHR (which may be subject to modification under article 8 of the IAHR Constitution). Like the IAHR, AASR is an interdisciplinary, non-confessional association for the academic study of religions.

## **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the African Association for the Study of Religions is

- to promote the academic study of religions in Africa, and
- to promote the study of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora worldwide through the international collaboration of all scholars in Africa and elsewhere whose research has a bearing on the subject.

The AASR aims to stimulate the academic study of religions in Africa

1. by providing a forum for multilateral communications between scholars of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora;
2. by facilitating the exchange of resources and information between them;
3. by encouraging the development of linkages and research contacts between scholars and institutions in Africa, as well as between scholars in Africa and those elsewhere;
4. by developing publishing opportunities, particularly for scholars based in Africa;
5. by assisting African scholars to attend academic conferences both in Africa and elsewhere;
6. by organising conferences in Africa on the religions of Africa and its Diaspora, and panels on the religions of Africa and its Diaspora in conferences outside Africa;
7. by maintaining a bulletin, a website and an e-journal as major media of communication between AASR members and other scholars of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora around the world;
8. by creating and maintaining an AASR Register of Members;
9. by co-operating with, and enhancing the work of, other African IAHR affiliates, such as the Association for the Study of Religions in Southern Africa (ASRSA), the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion (NASR), etc. AASR members are encouraged to join also the IAHR-affiliated associations in their respective countries or regions where such associations exist.

## **3. MEMBERSHIP**

a. Membership is open to scholars of religions working in the fields of African indigenous religions, Islam in Africa and the African Diaspora, Christianity in Africa and its Diaspora, new religious movements, and other religions practised on the continent, such as Hinduism and Judaism, as well as in the religions of the African Diaspora. Scholars in the study of any other religion, who are appointed at an academic institution in Africa, may also apply for membership.

b. Applicants will be admitted after they have completed the AASR Membership Form at: <http://www.a-asr.org/membership/> and have paid the annual membership fee that has been set for their region. Their application should also show evidence of academic qualifications.

c. Membership is terminated by

1. failure to pay membership fees. Following the Treasurer's invitation to all members in January to pay the membership fee for the upcoming year, the Treasurer will send out a reminder in April to those who have not yet paid. Those who still have not paid by July 1st will receive a second and last reminder informing them that they will be deregistered on 1st August, if they have not paid by then.
2. a notice of termination of membership sent by an AASR member to the AASR General Secretary, AASR Representative, regional or national, and/or AASR Officer maintaining the AASR Register of

Members

3. death

4. a decision of the AASR Executive on grounds, made explicit in an electronic or written message, that the member has acted in gross ways against the aims or interests of the AASR or has failed to comply with statutory obligations.

#### **4. DUES**

Members are required to pay an annual membership fee. Its amount will be fixed at the general meetings of the AASR. There are reduced rates for students and the non-salaried such as emeriti. The proceeds will be used to cover the costs of the AASR Bulletin, the website and the e-journal, to support the travel of African scholars, and to assist AASR Officers to attend AASR conferences and AASR General Meetings.

#### **5. MEETINGS**

- a. General meetings will be held during the IAHR quinquennial World Congresses and at AASR conferences in Africa and elsewhere, such as at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meetings, whenever these bring together a sufficient number of AASR members.
- b. The AASR will organise at least two major regional conferences in Africa or the African Diaspora every five years. In Africa, these conferences should preferably be organised together with the other IAHR affiliates in Africa. Prospective participants in these conferences will be registered as participant only after they have joined AASR by paying the membership dues for that year.
- c. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once every two years. A quorum shall be formed when no less than a third of the members of the Executive Committee is present.
- d. The AASR International Committee meets at least once every two years. A quorum shall exist when at least a quarter of the members of the AASR-IC attends.
- e. The General Secretary shall draw up minutes of the General Meetings, the meetings of the Executive, and of the AASR-IC.
- f. The AASR Treasurer shall publish an annual survey of AASR finances in each May issue of the AASR Bulletin.
- g. The Executive Committee shall publish an account of its policies, and its administration of the AASR funds, in the AASR Bulletin well in advance of the AASR General Meeting during the IAHR quinquennial World Congress.

#### **6. OFFICERS**

- a. The officers of the Association who form the Executive Committee shall be:
  - President
  - Vice-President
  - General Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Other officers may be added as deemed necessary
- b. These Officers shall be elected for a five-year term. They shall be eligible for one more term in the same office. They shall serve as a rule no more than three consecutive terms in different offices.
- c. The AASR Executive Committee selects and appoints other Officers, such as
  - Webmaster(s)
  - Editor(s) of the AASR Bulletin
  - Editor(s) and Reviews' Editors of the AASR e-Journal
  - Publications Officer
  - Representatives, regional and national. They will preferably be elected by the AASR members of a region or nation. Elections made in the regional/national contexts are subject to the ratification of the Executive Committee.
- d. The AASR Officers, elected and appointed, together constitute the AASR International Committee (AASR-IC).

#### **7. PROTOCOL GOVERNING ELECTIONS**

- a. Both the AASR Executive and AASR members may propose candidates for office.
- b. The AASR Executive appoints a Nominations Committee of AASR members who do not seek office themselves. It may solicit nominations from AASR members. It shall submit nominations for the next

Executive no later than six months before the elections at the IAHR quinquennial World Congress.

c. AASR members may nominate counter-candidates for particular offices until one month before the elections. Counter-nominations must be sent electronically to the AASR General Secretary. Each counter-nomination must be supported by electronic mail by at least three AASR members. They must also have ascertained that their nominee is willing to serve in the office for which they nominate her or him.

d. The list of candidates proposed by the Nominations Committee must be made public in AASR Bulletin and on the AASR website at least three months before the elections are due. Counter-candidates must also be listed on the AASR website and be communicated to the AASR membership by other means of electronic communication at least one month before the elections are due.

e. The elections shall be held during the AASR General Meetings at the quinquennial IAHR World Congresses. They shall be supervised by the members of the Nominations Committee present.

f. The AASR members then present shall be deemed to represent the total body of the AASR members. However, members who cannot travel to the congress may exercise their voting right electronically by sending in their votes in an attachment to the chairperson of the AASR Nominations Committee. (These attachments will be opened and counted only after the members present have cast their votes). Or they may delegate, in writing, their votes to AASR members who attend. After their authorization(s) have been verified by the chairperson of the Nominations Committee, these members cast as many extra votes as they have been authorised to cast in addition to their own vote

## **8. CONSTITUTION CHANGES**

Changes can be made to this Constitution only by the AASR General Meeting at the recommendation of the AASR Executive and AASR-International Council.