

**CONSTITUTION OF THE
URHOBO ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
Aka
URHOBO PROGRESS UNION OF MICHIGAN (UPUMI)**

PREAMBLE

In recognition of our ethnic origin and common cultural heritage, problems and aspirations;

In recognition of the need for all Urhobo people to unite for the common good of the Urhobo nations;

In response to the need to promote Urhobo culture;

In the belief that Urhobo people abroad and at home must contribute toward the development of the Urhobo nation;

We, Urhobo people resident in the State of Michigan in the United States of America, proclaim the following organization under the following guidelines:

**ARTICLE I
NAME AND STATUS**

1. The name of the organization shall be the Urhobo Association of Michigan.
2. The organization shall be a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Michigan.
3. The organization shall be affiliated with an Urhobo umbrella organization in North America as a chapter of such organization.
4. The organization may affiliate or cooperate with any other organization with common interests or for the purpose of a common cause.

**ARTICLE II
MISSION STATEMENT**

To unite people of Urhobo descent and others who identify with Urhobo for the purpose of promoting Urhobo culture, interests and development.

ARTICLE III

GOALS

In order to achieve the mission of the organization, the goals of the organization shall be:

1. To foster mutual understanding, good relationship and cooperation between people of Urhobo descent and others who identify with Urhobo by promoting their physical, psychological and social well being
2. To promote the cultural heritage of Urhobo people
3. To monitor developments in Urhoboland for the purpose of promoting the social, educational, economic and political development of Urhobo people.

ARTICLE IV ACTIVITIES

The organization shall:

1. Organize social, cultural, educational and other activities on an on-going basis in the interest of its members and to promote Urhobo culture to non-Urhobo
2. Organize activities specifically for children and younger members aimed at including in them Urhobo culture and values
3. Identify and assist Urhobo people who are new to the area
4. Provide assistance to a member in need and offer moral support to such member
5. Discuss and provide solutions to issues affecting Urhobo people
6. Organize fund-raisers and other economic activities on and on-going basis for specific projects
7. Participate actively in the activities of an Urhobo umbrella organization in North America
8. Carry out charitable activities in the local community in the U.S and at home
9. Participate actively in civic and voluntary activities, and the political process in the host U.S. community
10. Work with other organizations, schools and institutions in the U.S. in celebrating the cultural diversity of the local U.S. community
11. Perform ceremonies such as naming, marriage, festivals, etc. according to Urhobo customs and tradition for interested people and groups in the local U.S. community.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERSHIP, FEES and PRIVILEGES

1. Membership of the organization shall be under the following classification:
 - (a) A **Regular Member** shall be an Urhobo by birth, marriage or a person who has adopted Urhobo ethnicity, and is at least 18 years of age.
 - (b) A **Household** shall be a parent or couple and all children under the age of 18.
 - (c) A **Student Member** shall be any person at least 18 years of age and registered at a recognized educational institution as a full-time student.
 - (d) An **Associate Member** shall be any individual who is not Urhobo by birth, marriage or adoption but who identifies with the organization's goals and mission.
 - (e) The foregoing notwithstanding, the organization may reject membership to an individual, or suspend or expel a member if, in the opinion of a majority of the members, such an individual's behavior or actions constitute a nuisance or an embarrassment to the good name of the organization.

2. Annual Dues

Each category of membership shall pay annual dues upon admission according to the following schedule:

- (a) Individual Regular Member: \$60
- (b) Household: \$100
- (c) Student Member: \$20
- (d) Associate Member: \$60

3. Monthly Contributions

- (a) Each category of membership shall make a monthly contribution toward the running of the organization.
- (b) Such monthly contribution shall be determined and fixed for the fiscal year at the first membership meeting of the fiscal year.

- (c) Such monthly contribution may be paid in one lump-sum or by installment in advance or at the monthly membership meeting.
 - (d) Any member in default of his/her/its monthly contribution shall be cumulatively surcharged 20% (twenty percent) for each month of such default.
4. The above schedule notwithstanding, the organization shall seek creative ways of raising funds for the operation of the organization which may include levying members for specific projects or activities if the need arises.
5. A ***member in good standing*** shall be a member whose dues, contributions and levies are fully paid up, **AND** has attended at least 7 (seven) regular meetings within previous 12 months or all meetings since s/he became a member.
6. **Membership Benefits**
The benefits of a member in good standing shall include:
- (a) The right to a copy of the organization's constitution
 - (b) The right to be elected as President, and to belong to committees of the organization
 - (c) The right to suggest or nominate persons to the Executive Committee and other committees
 - (d) The right to attend meetings of the organization
 - (e) The right to move a motion at meetings and to vote on motion
 - (f) In the event of a birth, marriage, graduation, litigation, illness, accident, death, bereavement or any other significant event involving a member, the Executive Committee shall determine the appropriate response provided that such response shall be determined on a case by case basis.
7. (a) Article V(6)(b) notwithstanding, only a member who has been in good standing for at least 6 months shall be eligible for election as President.
- (b) For the avoidance of doubt only a member eighteen (18) years or older may move a motion, vote on a motion, nominate a person of an office, vote in an election, or be voted as President, or be a member of the Executive Committee.
- (c) For purpose of clarity, "General Membership" within the constitution means the collective of members of all categories who are eighteen (18) years or older.

ARTICLE VI

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. (a) The supreme authority of the organization shall be vested in the General Membership.
 - (b) For purposes of clarity, “General Membership” as used in this constitution means the collective of members of all categories who are eighteen (18) years or older.
2. (a) The day-to-day administration of the organization shall be delegated to an Executive Committee which shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and Assistant Secretary, a Treasurer, a Financial Secretary, a Speaker (Otota), and one (1) other Member-at-Large who shall all be the officers of the organization.
 - (b) The President of the Vice President, and the Secretary of Assistant Secretary, and the Treasurer or Financial Secretary or the Speaker, with or without the Member-at-Large shall constitute a quorum at an Executive Committee meeting.
 - (c) The Executive Committee shall meet in camera at least once every quarter.
2. (a) Members of the Executive Committee shall carry out the mandates of the members of the organization.
 - (b) Article VI (2)(a) notwithstanding, the Executive Committee may, from time to time, propose to the membership a course of action it deems fit under prevailing circumstances.
 - (c) The Executive Committee may take actions in the interest of the organization provided that such actions are communicated to members at monthly meetings.
 - (d) Article VI (2) (b) and (c) notwithstanding, no officer of the organization shall take any action binding upon the organization without specific prior authorization or subsequent ratification by the Executive Committee or by the General Membership.

3. **Election Procedure**

- (a) The President of the organization shall be elected by the General Membership at the Annual Meeting in an election year.
- (b) In an election year, the General Membership shall designate two (2) or three (3) of the members as an Electoral Committee at least two (2) monthly meetings before the Annual Meeting.
- (c) The duties of the Electoral Committee shall be:

- i) To plan elections to the Executive Committee and the inform all members of all rules
- ii) To receive nominations and to ensure that every nominee is in good standing and qualifies to run as provided for in this constitution
- iii) To conduct the elections in a free and fair manor.

(d)(i) Nominations for the position of President shall be signed by at least two (2) members in good standing provided that none of such signatories shall be the nominee.

(ii) The nomination shall be received by the Electoral Committee at least thirty (30) days prior to the election date.

(iii) The Electoral Committee shall circulate the names, positions, nominees and date of filing of the nomination to all members no later than seven (7) days before the election date.

(iv) Any objection and the grounds for objection for each nominee shall be heard by the General Membership on the day of the election and the General Membership shall decide the qualification or otherwise of the candidacy of the nominee.

(v) The Electoral Committee shall then conduct the election and the President shall be elected by a simple majority vote.

4. Subject to other provisos of this constitution, the term of office of the President and members of the Executive Committee shall be two (2) years provided that no member may serve as President for more than two consecutive terms.

5. Appointment and Removal of a Member of the Executive Committee

(a) Within twenty-one (21) days of her/his election, the President-elect shall provide to the General Membership nominees for the Executive committee.

(b) The General membership shall ratify each nomination at the next General Membership meeting.

(c) The term of office of an Executive Committee member shall normally be two (2) years provided that the President or the General Membership shall have the right to remove a member of the Executive Committee from office at any time for reasons including dereliction of duty, uncooperative attitude, mismanagement, or conduct deemed unacceptable by the General Membership.

- (d) A motion to remove a member of the Executive Committee shall be moved by any member and seconded by another member at a regular or emergency meeting, provided that the Executive Committee member shall be given the opportunity to defend himself or herself.
- (e) A motion to remove a member of the Executive Committee shall pass by a simple majority vote of members present.
- (f) Any vacancy in the executive Committee shall be filled by the President and presented to the General Membership for ratification.
- (g) In the event of the replacement of a member of the Executive Committee, the replacement shall serve the remaining portion of the replaced member's term.

ARTICLE VII

OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

1. The **President** shall:
 - (a) Be the chairperson at General Membership, Executive Committee and Annual Membership meetings.
 - (b) Be an ex-officio member of all committees of the organization and shall also act as liaison between the organization and other organizations with similar interests and goals.
 - (c) Be the Chief Executive Officer and chief spokesperson of the organization.
2. The **Vice President** shall:
 - (a) Assist the President in her/his duties and may be delegated to represent the President or the organization.
 - (b) In the event of the absence of the President at the meeting, shall act as President.
 - (c) In the event of a long-term absence or incapacitation of the President, act as President until an election is held.
 - (d) Chair such committees as the Executive Committee or the General Membership may assign and shall coordinate the activities of all committees of the organization.
3. The **Secretary** shall:

- (a) Be responsible for all records and correspondence of the organization and shall give advance notice of all General and Emergency Membership, Executive Committee and Annual Meetings
 - (b) Keep accurate records of all Executive Committee, General Membership, and Annual meetings
 - (c) Keep custody of the organization's constitution and all other records and documents of the organization
 - (d) Be an ex-officio member of all committees of the organization.
4. The **Assistant Secretary** shall:
- (a) Assist the Secretary in all her/his duties and shall work closely with him/her
 - (b) Deputize for the Secretary in the absence of the Secretary
 - (c) In the event of a long-term absence or incapacitation of the Secretary, act as Secretary until another appointment is made.
5. The **Treasurer** shall:
- (a) Be responsible for the organization's finances
 - (b) Keep records of all funds and financial transactions of the organization
 - (c) Receive all monies from the Financial Secretary and shall deposit them into the organization's bank account
 - (d) Make authorized disbursements of the organization's fund
 - (e) Make financial reports to the Executive Committee or to the General Membership every quarter or whenever requested to do so.
 - (f) Present a written statement of account of the Annual Membership Meeting.
6. The **Financial Secretary** shall:
- (a) Maintain the financial records of the organization
 - (b) Collect the dues, contributions, fees, fines, levies and other accounts receivable
 - (c) Present a statement of account to the Executive committee or to the General Membership on a quarterly basis or whenever requested to do so

- (d) Present a written statement of account to the Annual Membership Meeting.
- 7. Each and every officer shall hand over any documents, correspondence, files, monies, or other property of the organization in his/her possession to his/her successor within fourteen (14) days of leaving office for whatever reason.

ARTICLE VIII ADVISORY BOARD

- 1. (a) The organization shall have an Advisory Board whose duty shall be to counsel and assist the organization in the realization of its mission and goals.
- (b) A member of the Advisory Board may or may not be a person of Urhobo descent but an individual who shares the mission and goals of the organization and can assist in promoting the cause of the organization.
- (c) Any member of the organization may propose a person as a member of the Advisory Board at any meeting and, upon approval by the General Membership, the Executive Committee shall formally invite such an individual.
- (d) There shall be no limit as to the number of members of the Advisory Board or to their terms of office provided that the General Membership may remove a member of the Advisory Board for proven reasons that s/he does not serve the interests of the organization.
- (e) The Executive Committee shall maintain regular contact with individual members of the Advisory Board for advice and in connection with specific projects of the organization.

ARTICLE IX COMMITTEES

- 1. To achieve its mission and goals, the organization shall establish the following Standing Committees:
 - (a) An **Education & Culture Committee** whose duties shall include:
 - i) Developing and conducting programs to educate the local community on Urhobo culture
 - ii) Identifying, encouraging and organizing programs for individuals and groups in the local community in areas including Urhobo language, arts (including

music, dance and theatre), and customs (including naming, marriage, burial, etc.)

iii) Cooperative projects with other Nigerian, African, and American groups.

(b) A **Home Projects Committee** whose duties shall include:

i) Researching and planning educational, economic and other projects towards the development of Urhoboland

ii) Identifying parties in the U.S. interested in providing assistance or in joint projects in Urhoboland

iii) Working with other Urhobo organizations on projects intended for Urhoboland.

(c) An **Economic Development Committee** whose duties shall include:

i) Promoting economic cooperation between members of the organization and others

ii) Researching and identifying economic opportunities within the local U.S. community and encouraging members to be involved in such ventures.

2. (a) Membership of committees shall be voluntary and based on interest and expertise but the Executive Committee or the General Membership may co-opt any member into a committee.

(b) A member of the organization may volunteer for any of the committees but for reasons of efficiency, no committee shall consist of more than five (5) members.

(d) There shall be no term limit for a member of a committee provided that a majority of the members of a committee may petition the General Membership for the replacement of any of its members if such member(s) is/are inactive or uncooperative. Such request may be made at any meeting.

3. The foregoing notwithstanding, the organization may appoint committees for specific tasks as the needs arise.

ARTICLE X MEETINGS

1. (a) The Regular Meetings of the organization shall hold once every month on a day and time that members may determine from time to time.

- (b) To underscore the mission and goals of the organization, members shall be encouraged to host such meetings on a rotational and voluntary basis.
2. (a) An Emergency Meeting may be summoned by the Executive Committee if the need arises.
- (b) An Emergency Meeting may be summoned by the General Membership by a written request to the Secretary and signed by at least five (5) members in good standing.
- 3.(a) The Annual Meeting of the organization shall hold at the regularly scheduled meeting in October of each year.
- (b) The business of the Annual Meeting shall include:
- i) The presentation and review of annual reports by the President, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary
 - ii) The evaluation of the organization's activities in the past year and the proposition and discussion of directions for the next year(s)
 - iii) The nominations and election of members of the President in an election year
 - iv) Amendment of the Constitution when necessary.
4. (a) At least 5 members in good standing shall constitute a quorum at a Regular or Emergency of Annual Membership meeting.
- (b) Decisions at meetings and elections shall be by a simple majority, except as provided for elsewhere in this constitution.

ARTICLE XI

FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING

1. The fiscal year of the organization shall commence on January 1 and terminate on December 31.
2. The organization shall be funded through membership dues, contributions, grants, gifts, fund-raising, and other legitimate sources of revenue.
3. (a) All monies due the organization shall be paid to the Financial Secretary for record purposes.

(b) The Financial Secretary shall forward all monies received to the Treasurer within seven (7) days of receipt.

- (c) The Treasurer shall deposit such monies in the organization's bank account(s) within seven (7) days or receipt.
- (d) The Treasurer shall promptly, or upon request, notify the Financial Secretary of any disbursements from the organization's account(s).
4. The President of the Vice President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary shall be the co-signatories to the organization's account(s) provided that the Treasurer may be the single signatory for deposits.
5. (a) Upon request, the Treasurer shall provide an officer of the organization with an imprest account of the officer's duties requires expenditure on behalf of the organization.
- (b) Such imprest account shall retired with necessary receipts or other legitimate proof of expenditure of the Treasurer.
6. (a) The organization may, from time to time, or whenever requested by the General Membership, appoint internal or external auditors to examine the organization's finances.
- (b) The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall work cooperatively with such auditors.
7. The Treasurer shall furnish each member with a copy of the organization's financial statement before or at the Annual Meeting.
8. The financial records of the organization shall be made available for inspection by any member in good standing within a reasonable time of the member's request.

ARTICLE XII

AMENDMENTS AND AMENDMENT PROCESS

1. Any portion of this constitution may be amended at the Annual Meeting of the Organization.
2. Such amendment shall be proposed in a written petition signed by at least 5 members in good standing. Such petition shall include the proposed wording of the amendment.
3. Such petition shall be sent to the Secretary at least 30 days before the Annual Meeting.
4. The Secretary shall circulate such petition to all members at least seven (7) days before the Annual Meeting.

5. Such amendment shall pass by a simple majority vote of members present and voting.

ARTICLE XIII

DISSOLUTION

1. In the event of the dissolution of the organization, all real or personal assets remaining after the lawful discharge of any debts and obligations shall be donated to one or more organizations with similar goals and purposes as determined by the outgoing Executive Committee.
2. In the event that no such organization is designated upon dissolution, then such assets shall revert to the State of Michigan.