

Statute of the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum(SLEJF)

Article 01: Name and Headquarters

The organization shall be known as the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF). Headquarters is located at PO Box 26, 434/3, Sri Jayawardenapura, Sri Lanka. The office may be transferred to any place decided by the General Body.

Article 02: Emblem



The emblem and/or the motto of the SLEJF shall be decided by the General Body. The General Body shall prescribe the manner in which, and by whom, the emblem and/or motto will be used.

Vision of SLEJF:

Promoting participatory management for environmental Sustainability.

Mission of SLEJF:

To promote participatory management to ensue sustainable human development through better communication & empowerment of communities.

Article 03: Aims & Objectives

- a. To make use of the media to give the people of Sri Lanka a broad understanding on environmental issues; to create an awareness and interest among the people about environmental activities, and to devise ways and means to facilitate people's participation in environmental activities.
- b. To upgrade and safeguard the professional rights of environmental journalists, and to safeguard the common rights of all journalists.
- c. To compile, store and disseminate environmental and Sustainable Human Development information.
- d. To make use of the mass media to promote peoples participation environmental and Public Interest activities and to further strengthen such processes.
- e. To inform and educate the people on the means and resources that can be used for environmental and Sustainable Human Development protection, and encouraging of NGOs CBOs and INGOs in this direction.
- f. Strengthening and training in socially relevant programming and development communication.
- g. Public awareness program on sexuality Reproductive health and supporting the rights of disadvantaged populations.
- h. Strengthen democratic values, peace and social justice.

- i. To participate in national, regional and international activities related to media and environment, and to promote such activities with GOSL,NGOs, UN Bodies, and private sector.
- j. To provide a SLEJF for the publication and discussion of ideas and creative works of members and non-members. Nationally and Internationally.
- k. To organize as well as to participate in, self-studies, research, seminars, workshops, conferences, Journalism/Environmental course discussions and educational tours relevant to the objectives of the SLEJF.
- l. To conduct assessments/examinations for those studying media and environmental issues, and to award certificates and recognition to those who are deemed by the SLEJF as having mastered environmental or/and Development journalism.
- m. To guide and advise environmental and Development journalists, to work for their benefit, and to draft a code of ethics for members.
- n. To promote mass media related activities in the country, safeguarding the rights of the mass media, and defending the freedom of expression.
- o. To work in close co-operation with other national and international organizations to promote environment and Public Interest media activities, and where necessary, to affiliate with them.
- p. To take whatever other measures and steps deemed necessary to achieving the objectives of the SLEJF.

Article 04: Advisory Board(AB)

The Advisory Board of the SLEJF shall be comprised of not less than nine (9) persons who are professionally engaged in the fields of environment / media. One of them shall be a full member of the SLEJF who is not a member of the EXCO, and he shall co-ordinate as Secretary of the EXCO, A member of the Advisory Committee will be elected as its Chairman. This Advisory Committee is an independent board which is not responsible for any of the actions of the SLEJF. It will provide necessary advice for the EXCO. The term of this advisory board will be two(2) years.

Article 05: Membership

- a. The membership of SLEJF shall comprise of Honorary Members, Full Members, and Institutional /Associate Members. The General Secretary shall maintain a Register of member's names. Prospective members should submit the prescribed Membership Application Form along with the recommendation of two EXCO members IT reserves the right to refuse membership to anyone without giving reasons for such a decision.
- b. The bi-annual membership fee shall be Rupees Two Hundred(200/=). Full members shall pay the Annual membership fee for two years, i.e Rs. 400/=, by a stipulated date prior to the bi-annual General Assembly. Failure to do so will automatically nullify membership. Any person who has been a Full Member for over one calendar year can pay a sum of Rupees One Thousand(1000/=) and become a Life member.

Associate Members have no right to represent the SLEJF or to enjoy any of the privileges of Honorary SLEJF Members.

- c. Any person who wishes to join the SLEJF as a Full Member needs to have a media experience of not less than 5 years, and should also have demonstrable environmental interest and past involvement / association in environment activities at a level acceptable to the EXCO. Those who are interested in environment/media matters (but do not have 5 years media experience) can become Associate Members.
- d. The SLEJF , from time to time , shall award Honorary Membership to Sri Lankans who have excelled in environment/media fields at national and /or international level. Not more than 4 such Honorary Members may be appointed every year with the full approval of the EXCO., and /or the majority approval of the Annual General Assembly.
- e. Institutional Membership is open to environmental NGOs/CBOs and other media organizations. No Fees shall be levied for such membership. These institutional Members, while not being responsible for the activities of the SLEJF, shall work together with the SLEJF to promote environment / media activities.

Article 06: Executive Council (EXCO)

- a. The EXCO shall comprise of:
 - 1. The President,
 - 2. Deputy President
 - 3. General Secretary,
 - 4. Treasurer,
 - 5. Editorial Director and
 - Six (6) committee members.

Any given person can hold the post of President, General Secretary, Treasurer, and Coordinating Secretary only for a consecutive period of two(2) years. In the event these periods lapse before bi-annual General Assembly, another member of the EXCO. may be appointed for that post on an interim basis, provided the member thus appointed has served on the EXCO for more than two(2) years.

Only a person who has been a member of the SLEJF in the previous year would be eligible to contest for a post in the EXCO.

- b. The EXCO, once elected, is entitled to steer the operations of the SLEJF until the next bi-annual election at a bi-annual General Assembly.
- c. The EXCO should meet at least six times a year, with the quorum for such meetings as six(6) members. If the EXCO is of the view that certain mass media sectors need to be represented on the EXCO, it can co-opt not more than four(4) alternate committee members from such sectors. Such co-opted committee members shall not have voting rights when decisions are put to vote, and they shall be invited to EXCO meetings when their presence is deemed necessary and beneficial. These co-opted members will not have the right to represent the EXCO.
- d. Any EXCO member who fails to attend three(3) meetings of the EXCO, without valid reason will be deemed to have vacated his/her post. The EXCO can also remove, through a majority vote, any EXCO member who does not carry out the responsibilities of the post.

For vacancies that occur in the EXCO, interim appointments may be made by the EXCO until the next Annual general Assembly.

- e. The EXCO shall administer the operations and activities of the SLEJF. It can also recruit and dismiss staff for such administration and determine emoluments for such staff.
- f. The EXCO shall submit a bi-annual Progress Report and a bi-annual Accounts Report to the bi-annual General Assembly.

Article 07: Powers and Duties of Executive Council (EXCO) Members

a. President:

- i. Shall chair EXCO Meetings and bi Annual General Assembly.
- ii. Shall have the right of casting a vote in addition to his vote in the event of a decisive vote.
- iii. Shall have the authority to advise any EXCO Member for the proper functioning of the organization.

b. Deputy President:

He shall act for the chairman in the president's absence of the president.

c. General Secretary:

- i. Shall call EXCO meetings, the Annual General Assembly, and the bi-annual elections; he shall also maintain reports of such meetings and other activities.
- ii. Shall call an EXCO meeting when more than seven(7) EXCO members request for such a meeting in writing. He should inform EXCO members of such a meeting at least 24 hours before it takes place. He has to call such a meeting within 14 days of the written request.
- iii. Shall be responsible to the Annual General Assembly for the reports, records and all documentation of the SLEJF.

d. Editorial Director:

He shall act for the CEO of the SLEJF secretariat on behalf of the SLEJF General membership and report to the EXCO once a month

e. Treasurer:

- i. Is responsible for all financial transactions of the SLEJF. He should maintain account books regularly and properly. Once a year, he shall get these accounts audited by a certified auditor and submit these to the EXCO. Every two years, he shall submit such audited accounts to the Annual General Assembly.
- ii. Is bound to make all payments approved by the EXCO for various program activities.
- iii. Is expected to invest the funds of the organization as determined by the EXCO or person/s authorized by the EXCO. He should also submit a gross report of expenses and current financial status to the EXCO every 4 months.

- 08.** Board of Editor/s to be appointed by the EXCO, shall have the power of preparing official statements and publishing the official Newsletter/s of the SLEJF.
- 09.** Every SLEJF member agrees to abide by the environment Journalists code of Ethics formulated by the International Federation of Environmental Journalists(IFEJ), Asia–Pacific SLEJF of Environmental Journalists(AFEJ) and Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists forum (SLEJF).

Article 10: Financial Procedures

- a. The Financial year of the SLEJF should be from January 1 to December 31.
- b. Any member of the EXCO has the authority to accept crossed cheques for any project /program activity of two members of the SLEJF, provided it is done with the concurrence of two EXCO. Members of which one should be the President or Editorial Director and Treasure or General Secretary.

Money for any program activity/project should be spent only after submitting an estimate of such expenses to the Editorial Director or the EXCO.

The use of the balance money for an administrative or other purpose can only be done with the specific approval of the EXCO, or Editorial Director.

- c. Within 60 days of the completion of a project, the Editorial Director shall submit to the Treasurer, in duplicate, a complete breakdown of expenses along with all the related receipts and other documentation.
- d. The SLEJF shall maintain a bank account, with the bank vested in the Treasurer or President or Editorial Director or General Secretary in the absence of he Treasurer. However, another person may, temporarily, be assigned to this responsibility with the full approval of the EXCO.

Article 11:

SLEJF recognize the fact that the SLEJF was constituted on the initiative of the Central Environmental Authority(CEA) of the Government of Sri Lanka(GOSL). GOSL had discussions with Sri Lankan environmental journalists on 04 October,1985 and January 27, August 12, and December 09 of 1986. After discussions which continued for nearly two years, SLEJF was formed on January 31, 1987 at CNAPT, Colombo 07 with the support from the Sri Lanka Government , UN-ESCAP, UNEP and Media related bodies.

Article 12: General Assembly

- a. Every bi-annual General Assembly of the SLEJF shall be held prior to March 30. The quorum for bi-annual General Assembly is 20 Full Members.
- b. Prior to every bi-annual General Assembly, the General Secretary shall inform the membership of the date and time for the Assembly at least 21 days ahead. However , the failure for any member to receive such notice is not sufficient grounds for cancellation of the Assembly.
- c. Members can submit written proposals to the Annual General Assembly, provided they reach the General Secretary seven(7) days prior to the announced date for the Assembly. If any such proposal received is not appropriate, it may be rejected with the consent of the member concerned.

- d. **Holding of the Annual General Assembly and / or the Elections should be brought to notice of then members in writing, or through an announcement published in a daily Sinhala or English newspaper.. Nominations for the election of office - bearers should be sent under registered cover addressed to the SLEJF or be handed over to the press Commissioner. All nominations should be proposed and seconded by a member of the SLEJF. Nomination papers handed over after the prescribed period, or those that have not fulfilled basic requirements would be automatically rejected. The rejection of nominations by those not eligible can be decided by a majority vote by the EXCO at its first meeting after the handing over of nominations.**
- e. **When there is more than one accepted nomination for a given post, an election should be held. The names of such contenders for the posts should be made known to the memberships before the date of the election.**

Article 13: Special General Assembly

Such meetings should be called at the request of more than two thirds of the Full Membership under special circumstances and for valid reasons.

The quorum for such a special General Assembly would be one sixth of the total number of Full Members.

The date of such a meeting should be announced 14 days in advance.

Article 14: Suspension Lapsing of Membership

- a. **Failure to pay membership fees by the due date will lead to automatic lapsing of the Membership.**
- b. **Disciplinary action can be taken against a member with the full approval of the EXCO.**

Article 15: Interim Amendments

when amendments are deemed necessary to this Constitution, notice of such intended amendments shall be given in the form of a proposal submitted 14 days prior to the Annual General Assembly signed by ten(10) Full Members. Amendments of Rules or of the Constitution Proposals for amending the constitution may not be forwarded to the general body by the EXCO unless they are passed by two –thirds majority of the council. These may not be altered or amended except by two third majority resolutions at an EXCO meeting.

Article 16: Outside Affiliations

The SLEJF shall maintain contact and connections with Government, National, International Media / Development organizations, seeking affiliations where necessary.

Article 17: Audit

- 1. **Two members , appointed by the EXCO, shall be Honorary Auditors. They shall hold office till the new auditors are appointed by the General Body. However , they shall not be re-appointed for the following term.**
- 2. **They Auditors shall be required to audit the accounts of the SLEJF from time to time.**

Article 18: Interpretations

Unless required by special circumstances, the definitions of terms used in this constitution shall be as follows:

- a. SLEJF means Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum.
- b. Executive Council(EXCO) means the office bearers and committee members of the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum.
- c. Non Governmental Organizations(NGOs) mean voluntary organizations and associations formed by the members of the public for achieving certain objectives, and to which the Government or Governmental bodies do not appoint/elect office bearers or members.
- d. Governmental organizations(GOs) mean institutions and organizations which are affiliated to the Government, set up for achieving objectives of the Government, and to which office bearers and /or members are appointed by the Government.

19. This Constitution was endorsed and enacted at the special General Assembly of the SLEJF held on March 20,1994. This is an English Translation of the original Sinhala appropriate copy of the Statute of the Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF).