

# CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR HUMAN GENETICS

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## 1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 A **member** means an ordinary member of the Society whose membership fee is fully paid and who has not been excluded or suspended from the Society.
- 1.2 A **meeting** means a gathering of members and honorary members in the presence of the chair or his representative.
- 1.3 A **committee meeting** means a gathering or telephonic conference of office bearers.
- 1.4 Words importing the masculine gender include the feminine gender.
- 1.5 Where a notice period is referred to, the date stamp on the envelope will be considered the date of despatch.

## 2. NAME

The Society is called the "Southern African Society for Human Genetics" and is herein referred to as "the Society".

## 3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Society are:-

- 3.1 to advance the practice and science of human genetics in Southern Africa;
- 3.2 to facilitate contact between those persons engaged in clinical practice, investigative sciences and research in human genetics without discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or sex;
- 3.3 to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards in all its affairs and activities;
- 3.4 to arrange conferences and symposia on human genetics;
- 3.5 to initiate and maintain contact with similar organisations in other parts of the world; and
- 3.6 to manage its affairs on a non-profit making basis.

## 4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 **Ordinary member:** Any person engaged in the practice of clinical genetics, the investigative sciences related to human genetics, teaching, counselling and research in human genetics, is eligible for ordinary membership.

- 4.2 **Honorary member:** Any person of distinction in the field of human genetics of any nationality may be proposed for honorary membership. Election to honorary membership is subject to a majority vote of members present at a biennial general meeting.
- 4.2.1 The proposal that a person receive honorary membership shall be made in writing and included in the agenda for the biennial general meeting.
- 4.2.2 Honorary membership shall be conferred for a two year period.
- 4.2.3 An honorary member shall not be entitled to vote nor serve on the committee.
- 4.2.4 An honorary member shall not be required to pay membership fees.
- 4.3 **Honorary life member:** An ordinary member who has shown distinction in any aspect of human genetics or has given outstanding service to the Society may be proposed for election to honorary life membership. Election to honorary life membership is subject to a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a biennial general meeting. Clauses 4.2.1 and 4.2.4 shall be applicable to honorary life membership.
- 4.4 All persons by becoming members are bound in terms of the constitution.

## 5. MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Office bearers and Committee:
- 5.1.1 The business of the Society is conducted by a committee consisting of 9 (nine) members.
- 5.1.2 The committee is composed as follows: chair, secretary and 7 (seven) members, as far as possible representing the regions in South Africa and the disciplines in the field of human genetics.
- 5.1.3 A member may hold only 1 (one) position on the committee.
- 5.2 Nomination of members to serve on the committee shall be made in writing to the secretary to reach him within 21 (twenty one) days of date of notification. Nominations shall include the following: name and signature of nominee, position to which he is nominated as well as names and signatures of proposer and seconder. The secretary shall request nominations at least 60 (sixty) days prior to the biennial general meeting.
- 5.3 A list of nominees shall be circulated to all members in good standing (membership fees up to date) for postal or electronic ballot. A maximum of 5 (five) votes can be made on each ballot paper. No more than 1 (one) vote can be made against the position of chair and an additional four votes for the committee. A vote may only be cast once for each nominee per ballot paper. The closing date for the postal ballot shall be 14 (fourteen) days prior to the next biennial general meeting. Members of the new committee shall be announced at the biennial general meeting. If an insufficient number of nominations are received in the post, the vacancy (ies) will be filled at the following biennial general meeting by normal voting procedure.

- 5.4 The position of secretary shall be filled by a member appointed by the chair.
- 5.5 Additional committee members:
- 5.5.1 The convenor of the next congress, (as referred to in clause 11) will serve on the committee.
  - 5.5.2 If any independent Southern African state has more than 20 (twenty) members, they may appoint a representative to serve on the committee.
  - 5.5.3 The treasurer of the SASHG will be an ex officio member of the committee nominated by the chair.
  - 5.5.4 Additional committee members do not have voting powers during committee meetings.
- 5.6 In the event of a committee member vacating his position, for whatever reason, before the completion of the term of office, the committee may co-opt a replacement, who serves until the next biennial general meeting.
- 5.7 No member shall serve on the committee for longer than 6 (six) consecutive years (3 terms of office) and may not hold the same position for longer than 4 (four) consecutive years (2 terms of office). This excludes the position of treasurer.
- 5.8 Committee meetings are held at the discretion of the chair. The notice of an agenda for the meeting shall be sent to committee members at least 21 (twenty-one) days prior to the date of the meeting.
- 5.9 The term of office for committee members is from one biennial general meeting to the next.

## **6. MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY**

- 6.1 A general meeting of members is held during the biennial congress.
- 6.2 A special general meeting may be convened by the chair at his discretion or at the written request of 25 (twenty five) members.
- 6.3 Notice of and the proposed agenda for general meetings shall be despatched to all members at least 30 (thirty) days prior to the date of the meeting.
- 6.4 The business of the biennial general meeting is:
- 6.4.1 to confirm the minutes of the previous biennial general meeting and any special general meetings held in the interim;
  - 6.4.2 to receive the chair's report;
  - 6.4.3 to receive the financial statements and treasurer's report;
  - 6.4.4 to discuss and decide on matters on the agenda by a majority vote;

- 6.4.5 to confirm or finalise the election of a new committee; and
  - 6.4.6 to discuss general business. Matters not included in the agenda may not be put to the vote.
- 6.5 All matters for inclusion in the agenda should reach the secretary at least 14 (fourteen) days prior to the date of the meeting. Documentation concerning such items shall accompany the agenda.

## **7. QUORUM**

- 7.1 A quorum at a committee meeting consists of 5 (five) or more elected committee members.
- 7.2 A quorum present at a general meeting consists of at least one-third of members and honorary life members.
- 7.3 In the absence of a quorum, matters discussed may be decided by a postal vote within 30 (thirty) days of the meeting. For a postal vote to be valid, at least 50% of the members must return the voting paper to the secretary.

## **8. VOTING**

- 8.1 Each member is entitled to 1 (one) vote for each matter to be decided upon.
- 8.2 Voting at any meeting takes place by a show of hands unless stipulated otherwise by the chair.
- 8.3 Voting at meetings may take place by proxy, provided that the member unable to attend, places his ballot paper in a sealed envelope bearing his name. This envelope must reach the secretary before the start of the meeting.

## **9. THE CHAIR**

- 9.1 The chair of the Society presides at all meetings of the committee and Society. In his absence a chair is appointed from and by the attending members.
- 9.2 The chair shall submit a report on the Society's activities during the previous 2 (two) years to the biennial general meeting.
- 9.3 The chair shall affix his signature to any official document of the Society, minutes of meetings and amendments to the constitution.

## **10. THE SECRETARY AND TREASURER**

### 10.1 The secretary:

10.1.1 shall be appointed by the chair and should preferably be from the same institution as the chair. The secretary is responsible for all administrative duties of the Society;

10.1.2 shall give notice of and prepare the agenda for meetings as stipulated;

10.1.3 shall take and keep minutes of the proceedings of all meetings of the Society. In his absence a secretary is appointed from and by the attending members.

### 10.2 The treasurer:

10.2.1 is responsible for all financial duties of the Society;

10.2.2 shall submit a financial statement and report of the Society's financial affairs of the previous 2 (two) years to the biennial general meeting;

10.2.3 shall submit an annual independently audited financial statement of the Society's financial affairs to the Chair of the committee.

## **11. CONGRESSES, SEMINARS, ETC.**

11.1 The Society may decide to hold an annual congress, seminar or workshop in alternate sequence.

11.2 The committee shall appoint a subcommittee to convene and arrange such meetings for which separate accounts shall be kept and submitted to the treasurer for inclusion in the financial statements.

11.3 The venue of the next congress shall be decided upon during the biennial general meeting which precedes that congress.

11.4 Applications to present a seminar shall be directed to the committee at least 9 (nine) months prior to date of presentation. The committee may approach persons to present a seminar.

11.5 Notice of the date and venue of such meetings shall be circulated to members not less than 6 (six) months prior to the meeting, together with an invitation to submit original contributions.

11.6 Members may introduce visitors for such meetings. Contributions from visitors may be accepted for presentation.

## **12. FINANCES**

12.1 The Society is registered as a Public Benefit Organisation with the South African Revenue Service, and will conduct its business as stipulated in Section 30(B) of the Income Tax Act No 58 of 1962.

- 12.2 Donations made to or by the Society are exempt from Donations Tax in terms of Section 56(1)(h) of the Income Tax Act.
- 12.3 Each ordinary member shall pay an annual membership fee which shall be decided upon by the committee and confirmed at the biennial general meeting.
- 12.4 Membership fees shall become due on joining the Society as a member and on 1 January of each year thereafter.
- 12.5 A member whose fees are not paid up at the time of a meeting, may not vote at that meeting.
- 12.6 If a member is for more than 1 (one) year in arrears with the payment of his membership fees, his membership terminates immediately.
- 12.7 The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the committee have signing powers for the management of the Society's finances. Electronic transfers need to be approved by two committee members, of which the Chair has to be one.
- 12.8 The committee is empowered to invest in safe investments/trust securities such capital of the Society as they consider advisable.
- 12.9 Members of the committee are not personally liable for the debts of the Society.
- 12.10 No profits or gains will be distributed to any person or institution and the funds of the Society will be utilized solely for investment or the objectives for which the Society was established.
- 12.11 Funds available for investment may only be invested with registered financial institutions in South Africa.
- 12.12 The Society will not carry on any profit making activities; nor participate in any business, profession or occupation carried on by any of its members, nor provide any financial assistance, premises, continuous services or facilities to its members for the purpose of carrying on any business, profession or occupation by them.

### **13. CONSTITUTION**

- 13.1 The constitution may be approved by way of postal ballot provided that more than 50% of all members partake in the ballot and that at least two-thirds of all participating members are in favour of the approval.
- 13.2 A copy of the Society's approved constitution signed by the chair, shall be kept in the secretary's possession.
- 13.3 This copy of the constitution is considered as correct and takes precedence over all other copies in any dispute.

#### **14. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

- 14.1 Amendments to the constitution can only take place at a general meeting.
- 14.2 Any amendment to the constitution requires a two-third majority vote.
- 14.3 After amendments to the constitution have been approved they shall be entered in the copy of the constitution held by the secretary and signed by the chair.
- 14.4 Any amendments to the constitution shall be submitted to the Commissioner of the South African Revenue Service.

#### **15. LANGUAGE**

English shall be the language used in the proceedings of the Society and communications shall be in English.

#### **16. DISSOLUTION**

- 16.1 The Society may only be dissolved by the unanimous decision of all members.
- 16.2 After settling of all debts, the remaining assets at the dissolution of the Society may not be distributed amongst members, but shall be given or transferred to another organisation (as decided by members present at a special meeting held for this purpose) with objectives similar to those of the Society.



29 December 1993

Dr S JANSEN  
**CHAIR**

Dr BD HENDERSON  
**SECRETARY**

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Amended: March 1995

Dr S JANSEN  
**CHAIR**

Dr BD HENDERSON  
**SECRETARY**

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Amended: March 2007

PROF. L WARNICH  
**CHAIR**

DR. R HILLERMAN  
**SECRETARY**

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Amended: October 2013

Professor Michele Ramsay  
**CHAIR**

Dr Zané Lombard  
**SECRETARY**

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Amended: August 2014



Professor Amanda Krause  
**CHAIR**



Dr Zané Lombard  
**SECRETARY**