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Preamble

Aware of the enormous responsibilities imposed on those involved in, and connected with, the task of public information;

Cognizant of the ever-present threat to free press and free expression in the country and the need to eliminate this threat;

Mindful of our sacred professional responsibility to safeguard institutions of public information from malpractices and undesirable pressures;

Acknowledging the importance of an organization to seek the welfare and professional status of those engaged in keeping the public informed of local and world events and issues;

Realizing the imperative to advocate improved working condition and the professional integrity of those engaged in informing the public on local and international issues;

Determined to open the country to healthy socio-political dialogue and the free ventilation of ideas and information on all relevant national and international matters;

We, members of the Liberian media, have organized ourselves into a professional body and do hereby solemnly make, establish, proclaim and publish these CONSTITUTION and By-laws for the effective governance of our Union.

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this organization shall be THE PRESS UNION OF LIBERIA otherwise known as the PUL or the Union.

ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVES

The Union is established for the following objectives:

Section 1: To protect, defend and strengthen the rights of journalists and members.

Section 2: To protect and foster freedom of information, freedom of the media, and independent journalism.

Section 3: Support professionalism and social responsibility towards the development of greater democracy and freedom in Liberia.

Section 4: Establish and develop cordial relationships with journalists and journalist associations of other countries, Liberian civil society organizations, public and private institutions.

Section 5: To advocate improved working condition for all journalists in the country and in so doing consult, negotiate and reach agreement with media employers relative to the salaries and other working conditions of journalists and media workers.

ARTICLE 3: HEADQUARTERS AND SUB-CHAPTERS

The headquarters of the UNION shall be based in the capital City of the country, with Sub-chapters established in the various counties, subject to endorsement of Congress.

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

Section 1: Membership shall be open to all persons in the following categories:

a) Full Membership:

(i) Full Membership of the PUL shall be granted to Liberian journalists who hold degree (s) in journalism or mass communication from a recognized institution and have practiced for two years. (ii) Full membership shall also be granted journalist with degree (s) in any other discipline who have practiced for a minimum of three years.

(iii) Full Membership shall also be granted to journalists who have practiced for five years with recognized and accredited media institutions, employed by or freelancing with either electronic or print media institutions.

(iv) Public Relations Officers/Managers who were full members of the Union as of the coming into force of this constitution shall continue to remain full members of the Union. They shall vote, but shall not be voted.

(V) Journalists working with media development NGOs who meet full membership criteria as set forth in subsection (i), (ii) and (iii) supra shall be granted full membership of the Union.

b) Associate Membership: Associate Membership of the PUL shall be granted journalists who fall short of the criteria set for full membership as set forth in Article 4 Section 1. Foreign media personnel also qualify for Associate Membership.

c) Affiliate Membership: This category of membership of the PUL shall be granted to individuals who are in the employ of mass media institutions but are not media personnel;

d) Institutional Membership: Institutional Membership shall be granted to electronic and print media institutions and media-

related associations including, but not limited to, the Sports Writers Association of Liberia (SWAL), Reporters Association, Foreign Stringers Association of Liberia, media development NGOs, Photo Journalists Association, Editors Association, Female Journalists Association, Economic Journalists Association, Publishers Association, etc.

ARTICLE 5: OFFICERS

The Officers of the Press Union of Liberia shall be:

- (a) President
- (b) Vice President
- (c) Secretary-General
- (d) Assistant Secretary-General

Article 6: SUPPORT STAFF

The staff of the Union shall be:

- (a) Program Officer
- (b) Accountant
- (c) Administrative Assistant
- (d) Research Officer/Archivist
- (e) Regional/County Coordinators
- (F) Driver
- (g) Office assistant

Other posts of support staff may be created to match the expanding nature and responsibilities of the Union.

Article 7: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1: The President: It shall be the duty of the President to:

- a. Preside over all meetings of the Union;
- b. Enforce the observance of law and order among members;
- c. Appoint all committee chairpersons and

Regional/County coordinators in consultation with the leadership

- d. Propose measures for the promotion of the aims and objectives of the Union;
- e. Sign along with the Secretary-General all contracts or other written obligations of the Union which have been approved by the members and
- f. Be the official spokesperson of the Union

Section 2: The Vice President: The Vice President shall:

- a) Act as President whenever the President is absent from the country. He/she shall assume the presidency in case of resignation, incapacitation impeachment or death of the President, pending by-election.
- b) Assist the President in overseeing the effective, active and smooth functioning of constituent/affiliate associations such as the Editors Association, Reporters Association, Photo Journalists Association, Sports Writer Association of Liberia (SWAL), Media NGOs, Foreign Stringers Association, and other media-related organizations under the umbrella of the Union as shall from time to time be established, including media workers associations in the various media houses intended to give voice to workers and shall perform such other lawfully appropriate duties as may be assigned him by the President

Section 3: Secretary General. The Secretary-General of the Union shall:

- a) Take and keep clear and accurate records of the proceedings of the Union during all regular and specially called meetings.
- b) Be the custodian of all documentary properties of the Union.
- c) Act as President in the absence of both the President and the Vice President; write, direct and receive correspondence on behalf of the Union in consultation with the leadership and do all such other things as desired by the Union consistent with this Constitution.

Section 4: The Assistant Secretary-General. He/she shall:

- a) Assist the Secretary-General in the performance of his/her duties and shall assume the duties of the Secretary General in the absence of the Secretary General in case of death, impeachment, incapacitation or resignation, pending by-election.
- b) Undertake all such other tasks as may be assigned him/her by the officers of the leadership.

Section 5: Program Officer. The Program Officer shall:

- a) Be responsible to, in consultation with the PUL leadership, develop and manage projects and programs.
- b) Direct all projects as authorized by the Union's leadership.

Section 6: The authorized signatories of the bank accounts of the Union shall be the President, Accountant and the Secretary-General. Two of the signatories shall be required for a valid bank transaction provided however that the following categories shall be observed:

- a) the President and the Accountant (b) the Secretary-General and the Accountant and (c) President and Secretary-General.

ARTICLE 8: QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS

Section 1: President: A journalist or member of the Union aspiring for the position of President shall satisfy the following requirements:

- a) Be non-partisan and shall have attained the age of 30 years or above.
- b) Be a holder of at least a Bachelor degree in any field of study; served in the media for 10 years or above, and risen to the rank of editor, program director, senior programs producer and responsible.
- c) Be a duly accredited member of the Union, a regular due-paying member, in good moral standing and conversant with issues of press freedom and freedom of expression in general.
- d) Demonstrate a high commitment to the aims and objectives of the Union.

Section 2: Vice President: A journalist or member of the Union aspiring to be Vice President shall meet the same requirements for the position of President as stated in Section1 of this Article.

Section 3: Secretary-General: A journalist or member of the Union aspiring to the position of Secretary General shall satisfy the following requirements:

- a) Shall possess a good command of the English language, oral and written with at least Bachelor Degree, has practiced for five years and risen to the post of a news editor.
- b) Shall be 25 years of age and above;
- c) Shall meet the requirements stipulated in Section 1 (c)

Section 4: Assistant Secretary-General: A journalist or member of the Union aspiring to the position of Assistant Secretary General shall have obtained a minimum of an associate degree and must be a full member of the PUL

ARTICLE 9: TENURE OF OFFICE

Section 1: All elected officers of the Union shall serve for a period of three years after which they may seek re-election for an additional term.

Section 2: After the expiration of a second term in an office, no official shall run for re-election.

Section 3: Any elected official of the Union may be impeached by two-third (2/3) of the full membership of the Union for conflict of interests, failure to perform his/her constitutional duties and /or engaging in acts or conducts incompatible with the aims and objectives of the Union.

ARTICLE10: CONGRESS

Section 1: The Congress shall bring together the entire membership and be the supreme decision-making body of the UNION. It is a membership plenary and clearing house of policy decisions and operational management procedures, including constitutional amendments. Congress shall determine the next Congress venue.

Section 2: Congress shall meet in the second week of November every three years for not less than one day and not more than three days knowing full well that the last day of Congress shall be the second Saturday of November. The Union shall however meet at the end of every fiscal year in a one-day mini-congress at which time, the leadership shall make progress and financial reports.

Section 3: The President, in consultation with the leadership, shall appoint a Congress Committee and all its sub-committees save the Financial and Operational Review Committee (FORC) no later than 60 days to the next Congress and the full budget thereof be concomitantly approved and allotted. The FORC shall be appointed by the membership on the first day of Congress.

Section 4: The sub-Committees of every Congress shall include the following:

- a) Program and Publicity Committee (PPC): It shall be responsible to plan the program of Congress, extend invitations to partners and other non-PUL members, and publicize all activities before, during and after Congress.
- b) Accreditation and Logistics Committee (ALC): It shall be responsible to accredit members and determine, oversee and manage logistics and equipment meant for Congress in collaboration with the Membership Committee of the Union.
- c) Elections and Inauguration Committee (EIC). It shall accredit voters and screen candidates, conduct elections, declare winners and inaugurate officers-elect.
- d) Financial and Operational Review Committee (FORC): It shall assess, review and appraise the financial and operational prudence and efficiency of the incumbent (or outgoing) leadership, including all standing committees. It shall submit a comprehensive written report to Congress on the second day of Congress.

Section 5: All PUL members desirous of attending Congress must satisfy membership criteria provided for by this Constitution to include,

but not limited to, being a duly registered and certified due payer.

Section 6: The leadership shall prepare and circulate to institutional members, hard copies and individual members soft copies the following reports no later than seven working days prior to Congress:

- a) Financial statement of the last three years.
- b) Comprehensive narrative report of programs and projects implemented in the last three years.

Section 7: The Membership Committee, with the approval of the PUL leadership, shall publish in not less than two local dailies registered members of the Union not later than 30 days before Congress. Lists of all registered members of the Union shall be disaggregated into categories of membership; males and females; due paying and non-due paying (delinquent) members; editors, reporters, etc.

Section 8: The Congress shall proclaim a Resolution at the end of Congress; the resolution shall encapsulate Congress activities, including findings from the FORC, and a new policy agenda or mandate for incoming leadership.

Section 9: The leadership and the congress committees shall produce and distribute to members and member institutions two weeks after congress a comprehensive report of Congress. Said report shall include, but not limited to attendance, monetary and non-monetary contributions and expenditure of Congress.

ARTICLE 11: ELECTIONS

Section 1: Officers of the Press Union of Liberia shall be elected from among the full members through secret ballot on the Second Saturday in November every three years. Such election shall take place at the Union's Congress at the end of the term of the incumbent PUL leadership.

Section 2: Elections shall be organized and supervised by a five-member Elections Commission which shall be composed of former officials,

former Executive Committee members and active members who have attained the rank of an editor.

Section 3: All members of the Election Commission shall be in good standing with the Union; they shall be active in PUL activities and regular in their payment of dues.

Section 4: The Elections Commission shall be appointed by the incumbent leadership of the PUL one month before Congress.

Section 5: Only full members who are in good moral and financial standing as defined in Section 3 above and consistent with other provisions of this Constitution shall be eligible to vote or be voted.

ARTICLE 12: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

There shall be an Executive Committee of the Union comprising elected officers and the Chairpersons of standing committees. It shall be the second highest decision making body of the Union next to Congress. The Executive Committee shall meet quarterly.

ARTICLE 13: MEETINGS

Section 1: The leadership shall circulate citation for meetings seven days in advance to notify the membership. Following the issuance of the citation, members will sign acknowledging receipt of the citation - the number of members present in said meeting for which citations were issued shall constitute a quorum. Hence, decisions shall be binding regardless of the attendance.

Section 2: Registered members of the Union shall meet the first half of the year before the mini congress, on the third Friday of March each year. Citation/announcements of the meetings shall be published in the media for at least seven working days prior to the meeting. The announcements shall include the agenda of the meeting.

Section 3: The President shall preside over meetings of the Executive Committee.

Section 4: In addition to the meetings above, an extraordinary general membership shall be convened upon the request of 2/3 majority of all registered members of the Union should the leadership fail to convene regular and called meetings.

ARTICLE 14: PERMANENT COMMITTEES

Section 1: The Union shall have the following permanent committees:

- a) Grievance and Ethics Committee
- b) Membership Committee
- c) Intellectual Discourse Committee
- d) Welfare Committee
- e) Sports and Entertainment Committee

Section 2: The President of the Union shall appoint chairpersons and members of standing committees in consultation with the elected officers of the Union.

ARTICLE 15: DUTIES OF COMMITTEES

Section 1: Grievance & Ethics Committee:

- a) The duties of the Grievance and Ethics Committee shall be to enforce the code of ethics of the Union, which shall be approved by the membership at a regular meeting to govern the professional conduct of members.
- b) All complaints of professional misconduct and unethical practices by any member shall be referred to this Committee, which shall have the power to investigate and, where necessary, recommend disciplinary measures to the Executive Committee. Such disciplinary measures shall include fines, suspension and expulsion to be enforced by the Executive Committee.
- c) Any appeal against the decision of the Executive Committee shall be made to a general meeting of the Union in writing through the Secretary- General.

Section 2: Membership Committee: The duties of the Membership Committee shall be to receive and screen all applicants for membership to the Union consistent with this Constitution, and conduct membership drives when necessary. Members shall be made to sign a behavior bond.

Section 3: Intellectual Discourse Committee: The duties of The IDC shall be:

- a) To organize various activities that promote and cultivate goodwill and understanding among members and between the Union and the public.
- b) To organize lectures and talk shows for the benefit and improvement of relations with its members and the public, including the production of the PUL official newsletter and magazine.
- c) To organize social and educational activities in and out of the country.

Section 6: Welfare Committee: The duties of the Welfare Committee shall be as follows:

- a) Monitor the general working conditions of members of the Union and make recommendations on such things like salaries, retirement schemes, insurance and other benefits offered by the media employers as stipulated in a duly executed collective bargaining Agreement between the Union and such employers.
- b) Put in place an effective health and welfare scheme for members of the Union.

Section 7: Sports and Entertainment Committee: The Sports and Entertainment Committee shall be responsible to:

- a) Organize and execute all sporting activities within the Union and between the Union and other institutions.
- b) Organize entertainment and recreational activities for members of the Union as often as necessary to ensure social harmony and cohesion within the Union and with other professional and civic organizations.

ARTICLE 16: SEAL

The Union's Official symbol shall comprise a pen hitched to a broadcasting tower, denoting the Union of the newspaper, radio and television within the Press Union of Liberia, with the map of Liberia in the background.

ARTICLE 17: AMENDMENTS

Petition for amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any member of good standing in the Union. He/she must present the text of the amendment to the Secretary-General of the Union at least one month before the next Congress. Such amendments must be approved by two-thirds of the Congress.

ARTICLE 18: BY-LAWS OF THE UNION

Section 1: Application for membership to the Union shall be done in writing to the Secretary-General who shall present same to the Membership Committee for action.

Section 2: An approved applicant can enjoy membership rights based on the category of membership sought and granted.

Section 3: All full members shall pay an annual registration fee of US\$10 and a monthly membership due of US\$5 or their equivalent in Liberian dollars. Associate and affiliate members shall pay 50% of the abovementioned dues. Such registration and monthly dues shall be collected through salary deductions and remitted to the Union's coffers. Non salaried or freelance journalists shall pay their dues directly to the Union's finance office and obtain a receipt.

Section 4: Institutional members shall pay a registration fee of US\$100 and an annual due of \$200 or its equivalent.

Section 5: The PUL fiscal period shall be from October 1 to September 30. The annual registration of members shall be from November 1 to January 31 each year. The Union leadership shall publish latest first Monday of February full membership register for the fiscal period. Members who fail to pay or renew their annual membership shall forfeit their rights as provided by this Constitution.

Section 6: Vacancy. Vacancy occurring in the Union for whatever reason shall be filled through by-election within sixty days of the occurrence of that vacancy. Such by-election shall be overseen by a three-man

committee to be named by the Union leadership, within three(3) weeks of the vacancy and election shall be by secret ballot.

Section 7: The quorum for any Executive Committee meeting shall be five members, including the President or both the Vice President and the Secretary General

Section 8: The quorum for a mid-year meeting shall be of 2/3 of the registered members of the Union. Section 1 of Article 13 concerning meetings shall be an alternative in the absence of a 2/3 majority.

ARTICLE 19: TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Section 1: Administrative and financial policy

- a) As of the coming into force of this Constitution, the incumbent leadership of the Union shall develop and promulgate a comprehensive administrative and financial policy of the Union.
- b) The 2/3 majority required to adopt the Constitution and Bylaws shall be determined by voter registration roll of the immediate last elections of the Union.

Section 2: Adoption of Constitution & Bylaws

The adoption process shall be as follows:

- a) The Constitution Review Committee (CRC) shall hold consultations with all members and member institutions to pre-determine their input.
- b) The first draft of the revised Constitution and Bylaws shall be vetted by members and member institutions at a workshop session. The workshop shall be announced at least seven working days before convening.
- c) Draft emanating from the workshop session shall be adopted by at least 2/3 majority of current members described in Article 17 and Article 19b.
- d) The adopted Constitution shall take immediate effect at the end of the tenure of the administration during whose tenure the constitution was revised.

This constitution was first approved 19th September 1964, in the City of Monrovia; revised and approved on May 2, 1987; and then revised and approved October 2000.

Done in Committee Room and adopted by the general membership this 10th day of October 2009 at the Baptist Youth Camp in the City of Paynesville Liberia:

P. Alphonsus Zeon/Chairman

Sherman C. Seequeh/Secretary

Cheechiay Jablasone

Carolyn Myers

Festus Poquie

Weemon Jallah-Cole Boyce

Jarlawah Tonpo

Peter Quaqua Ex-Officio/President

ANNEX

PRESS UNION OF LIBERIA-PUL CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT FOR LIBERIAN JOURNALISTS

PREAMBLE

The Code of Ethics and Conduct for Liberian journalists has been drawn up as a ready reference guide and its application is binding on all members of the Press Union of Liberia.

The code is to ensure that members adhere to the highest ethical standards, professional competence and good behavior in performing their duties.

The public expects the media to perform with a high sense of responsibility without infringing on the rights of individuals and society.

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

Article 1.

The journalist shall defend freedom of speech, expression, and information.

Article 2.

The journalist should make sure of the truth of what he/she reports without distortions.

Article 3.

The journalist should refrain from plagiarism, deformation, obscenity, slander and unfounded accusations. Where there is need to use other other's material, it is proper to credit the source.

Article 4.

The journalist's freedom of opinion shall be exercised in respect of the right of the public to information. In all instances, the accuracy of the facts reported or commented on, shall not be misrepresented through the journalist's personal opinions.

Article 5.

The journalist should respect the private lives of persons when they have no consequence on public life. Journalists should ensure the respect of the rights or reputations of others. Enquiries and intrusions into an individual's life can only be justified when done in the public interest.

Article 6.

Malicious information liable to discredit a person or expose him/her to scorn or hate should not be published/broadcast.

Article 7.

The journalist should refuse and denounce all attempts at bribery and corruption. No journalist should receive or expect any benefit from the publication/broadcast or the suppression of any information or commentary. The journalist should avoid all affiliations with any individuals/groups whose company is likely to call his/her credibility into question. The journalist should put himself/herself above partisan, ideological cleavages in order to give greater prominence to the norms and professional practices.

Article 8.

The journalist should refrain from biased coverage of events that have tribal sectional and political implications.

Article 9.

The journalist should publish correction or rejoinder promptly and give it due prominence. An apology should be published whenever appropriate.

Article 10.

The journalist should not publish or broadcast incitement to violence, crime, revolt and war.

Article 11.

The journalist should not engage in negative journalism, misleading headlines and fabrications. The journalist should refrain from publication of sensational headlines. Newspaper headlines should be fully warranted

by the contents of the articles they accompany. Photographs should give an accurate picture of an event and not highlight an event out of context.

Article 12.

The journalist should ensure equal access to the media for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.

Article 13.

The journalist should not publish or broadcast false information or unproven allegations.

Article 14.

The journalist should, while in the performance of his/her duty, conduct him/her in an orderly manner, refrain from the use of profane language(s) and shall be properly attired.

Article 15.

The journalist should not publish or broadcast information or advocacy of religious or ethnic hatred, especially those that constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

Article 16.

Journalists should, in case of personal grief and distress, exercise tact and diplomacy in seeking information, publishing and broadcasting them.

Article 17.

Journalists should not abuse the use of pseudonyms.

Article 18.

No journalist should use his/her power for selfish or otherwise unworthy purpose. If this is done, it is faithless to a high trust.

Article 19.

The journalist should make adequate enquiries and cross-check the facts before publication/broadcast.

Article 20.

The journalist should be mindful of his/her responsibility to the public and the various interests in society.

Article 21.

Journalists are bound to protect confidential sources of information.

Article 22.

Journalists should ensure that under no circumstance, news or a publication or broadcast be suppressed unless it borders on national security or is in the public interest to do so.

Article 23.

Journalists should not publish or broadcast any report or write-up affecting the reputation of an individual or an organization without a chance to reply. That is unfair and should be avoided.

Article 24.

Journalists should draw a clear line between comment, conjecture and fact although free to take positions on any issue.

Article 25.

Journalists should respect embargoes on stories.

Article 26.

Journalists should avoid identifying victims of sexual assault.

Article 27.

Journalists shall obtain information, photographs and illustration only by straight-forward means.

Article 28.

The journalist should protect the rights of minors and criminal and other cases, secure the consent of parents or guardians before interviewing or photographing them.

Article 29.

This Code of Ethics and Conduct shall be binding on all journalists and media institutions in Liberia and punishment for violators shall range from warning, fine, suspension to expulsion. The Press union of Liberia Grievance and Ethics Committee shall investigate all matters and complaints arising out of the violation of this Code and recommend penalties to the Executive Committee, for action.

ADOPTED THIS NINTH DAY OF MAY 1997 AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF THE PRESS UNION OF LIBERIA, KING SAO BOSSO STREET, MONROVIA, LIBERIA

SIGNED: MR. TEPITAPIA K. SANNAH/Chairman
Code of Conduct and Ethics Committee

MR. SUAHA S. DEDDEH/Secretary General,
Ex officio to Committee

APPROVED BY: MR. G. ABRAHAM MASSALEY
President/PUL