



# International Disability Alliance

## Guidelines on seeking a Membership

March 2022

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. International Disability Alliance<sup>1</sup>

The **International Disability Alliance** (IDA), established in 1999, is a network of eight global and six regional organisations of persons with disabilities<sup>2</sup> (OPDs). IDA members, and their members, **represent over 1,100 OPDs from across 182 countries** and the estimated **one billion persons with disabilities worldwide**.

IDA is a standing **co-chair of the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network**, a donor coordination mechanism tasked to promote disability inclusive development; a **co-host of the Global Disability Summit**, which took place in London in 2018 and in Oslo in 2022; and a **co-chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Disability Reference Group**.

IDA also builds the capacity of OPDs to support governments and all stakeholders in implementing the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda's inclusion of persons with disabilities.

As a global network of organizations of persons with disabilities, **IDA has a unique identity as a representative body and its decisions and expertise originate from persons with disabilities themselves**. IDA's unique composition allows it to act as an authoritative and representative voice of persons with disabilities at the global level. In the past few years, IDA has developed to be recognized as the key global interlocutor representing persons with disabilities with the United Nations (UN) system, key donor agencies and beyond.

Consolidating its global recognition and leadership by 2019, with landmark milestones such as the 968 commitments secured through the first Global Disability Summit, the first UN Security Council resolution on inclusion of persons with disabilities in response

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<sup>1</sup> Check document: "General Presentation of IDA, Governance, Membership and Management".

<sup>2</sup> The 14 members of IDA are: the African Disability Forum (ADF); the ASEAN Disability Forum (AsDF); the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD); Down Syndrome International (DSI); the European Disability Forum (EDF); Inclusion International (II); the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH); the International Federation of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IFSBH); the Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS); the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF); the World Blind Union (WBU); the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD); the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB); and the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP).

to armed conflict or the adoption of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, IDA has **established its profile as the main global interlocutor representing persons with disabilities.**

## 1.2. IDA Membership categories

International Disability Alliance has four types of membership categories<sup>3</sup>:

1. **Full members** can be global or regional organizations of persons with disabilities. Their representatives in the IDA Board have the right and responsibility to vote and to be elected by Board members to serve as Executive Committee Members, or to become members on other Committees. Please see in Annex more criteria about becoming a full member of IDA.
2. **Observer members** are global or regional organizations without rights and responsibilities to vote or participate in the governance of IDA. These are global or regional organizations which are meeting some but not all of the membership criteria – please refer to Annex for the full list of criteria.
3. **Associate members** are national umbrella organizations of persons with disabilities representing the diversity of constituencies of persons with disabilities, whose mission and objectives are in line with the purposes and principles of IDA. Please read the details in Annex as particular criteria applies for Associate Members, namely demonstration of openness of organizations seeking membership under this category for inclusion of all organizations of persons with disabilities at national level, respecting diversity of persons with disabilities.
4. **Emeritus members** are individuals that receive this membership type in recognition of their role and contribution to the development of IDA or to the disability rights movement. These are members without voting rights or any responsibilities in the governance of IDA.

## 2. Application Process

### 2.1. Application Form<sup>4</sup>

An organization seeking any type of membership to the Association as introduced above and detailed in annexes need to submit the **application form** as well as the following documents:

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<sup>3</sup> See [Article 6 AoA](#).

<sup>4</sup> See [Article 10.1. IR](#).

- a. letter of interest to become a member of IDA, as well as of agreement to the purpose and principles of IDA;
- b. constitution of the association and its bylaws;
- c. proof of legal establishment;
- d. list of its members, including members address, country of registration, and members' representative contact detail,
- e. list of members of its governing body;
- f. financial statements and/or last financial audit of the organization if available
- g. bank account details
- h. policies related to safeguarding and management of malpractice and misconduct and
- i. such additional documents that may be requested by the Association.

The application form with all supported documents should be submitted in **electronic format** – by email.

## 2.2. Process of review of applications

### 2.2.1. Detailed process<sup>5</sup>

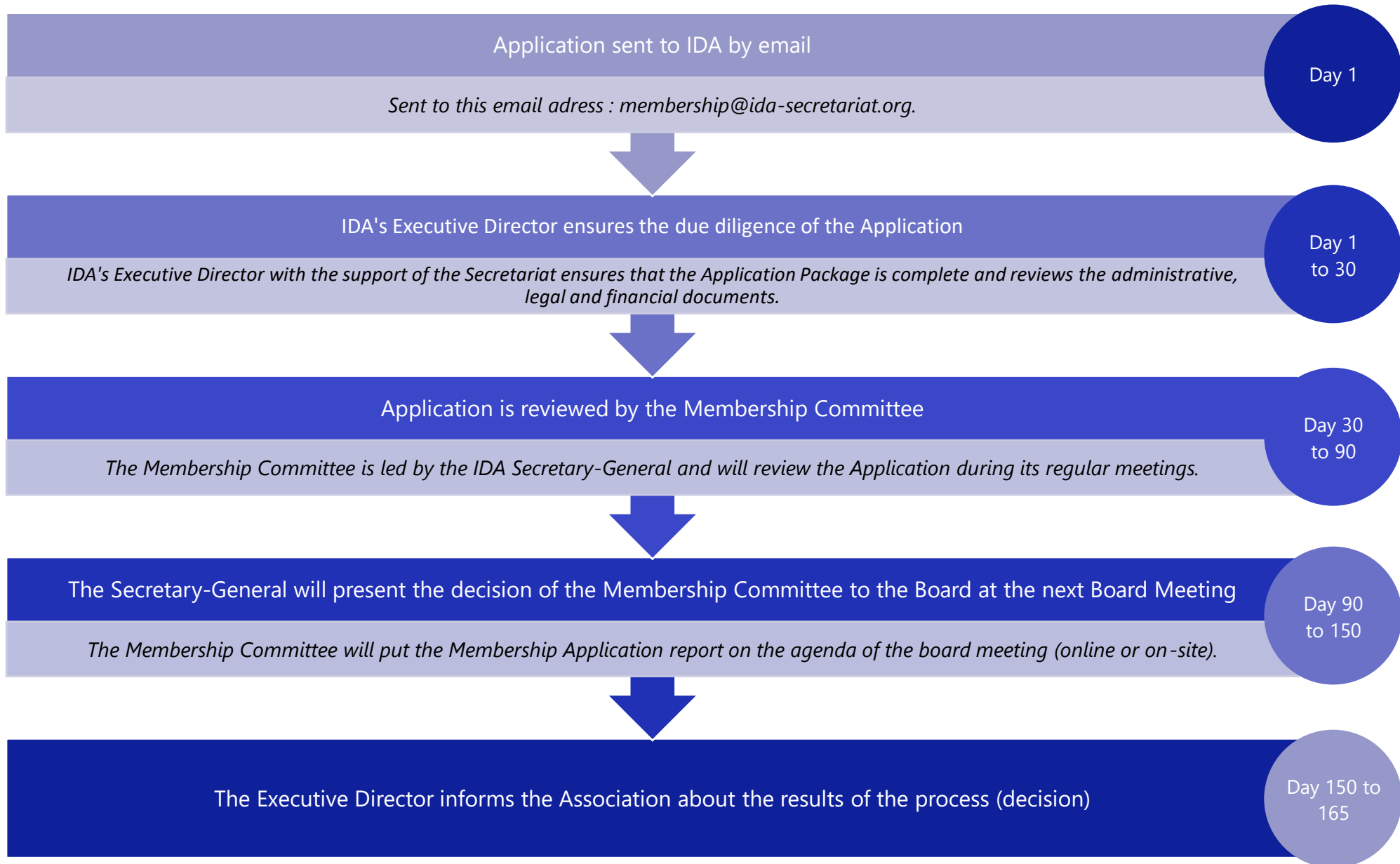
1. The Application is sent to the Association by email: [membership@ida-secretariat.org](mailto:membership@ida-secretariat.org)
2. The Application is transferred to the Membership Committee led by the Secretary-General of IDA. It will be reviewed by the Committee at its next regular meeting, usually connected to the Board Meetings of the Alliance.
3. The Secretary-General will present the decision of the Membership Committee to the Board at the next regular meeting of the Board.
4. Decision-making process for an Association or individual to become a member of IDA:
  - a. **to become a Full Member of IDA**, a global or regional member with the voting rights, an Association seeking membership needs to receive a recommendation from the Membership Committee and a unanimous decision of the Board Members.
  - b. **to become an Observer Member of IDA**, a recommendation of the Membership Committee and a decision made by simple majority of the board members are needed.

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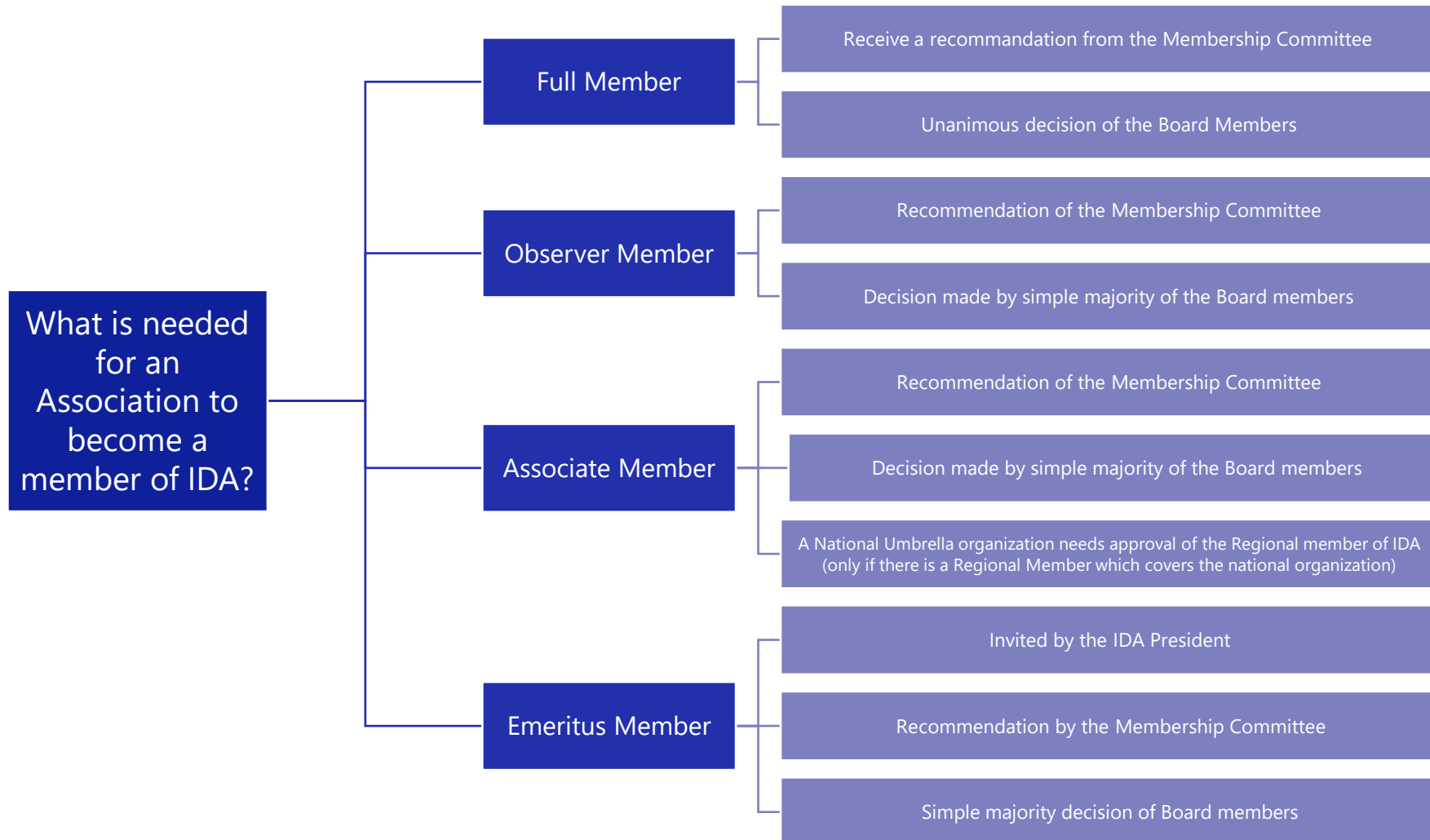
<sup>5</sup> Also look at the diagram below for the process.

- c. **To become an Associate Member of IDA**, a recommendation of the Membership Committee and a decision made by simple majority of the Board members are needed. In addition, national umbrella organizations need the approval of the regional member of IDA from the region of the world in which the national organization is applying for associate membership. In the event that IDA does not have a regional member which covers the national organization applying for Associate Membership, this requirement does not apply.
  - d. **Emeritus members** become members by being invited by the IDA President, on recommendation made by the Membership Committee and through a simple majority decision of Board members.
5. When the decision is made, the Executive Director will inform the Association seeking membership about the results of the process.

Throughout the process, the Secretary-General and the Membership Committee can seek additional clarification, documentation, or information from the Applicant Association. The Membership Committee can engage in a dialogue with the Applicant Association to reach satisfactory level of information provided or to clarify any further points.



## 2.2.2. The decision-making process for an Association or individual to become a Member of IDA



The decision process is stipulated in [Article 16.1.b\) AoA](#).

## 2.3. Appeal

In the case of a negative decision by the Membership Committee and the Board, the Applicant Association can make an appeal. This appeal will be directed to the IDA's General Assembly, in accordance with Art. 9 para. 2(g) of the IDA's Articles of Association. It is the non – transferable right of the IDA's General Assembly to deal with appeals to the IDA Board's decision to not admit a particular new member organisation. The IDA's General Assembly may either:

- a) decide on the appeal directly, or
- b) request the IDA's Membership Committee to repeat the examination of the application based on the arguments delivered by the Applicant Association and the membership criteria described in Art. 6 of IDA's Articles of Association. The Membership Committee will then provide the IDA's General Assembly with a recommendation for a final decision on the appeal.

Once this decision has been taken by IDA's General Assembly there will be no space for a second appeal.

## 3. Annex

### 3.1. Excerpt from the Articles of Association

#### Article 3 Purpose and principles

1. The purpose of the Association shall be the advancing of the human rights of persons with disabilities as a united voice of organizations of persons with disabilities. The Association shall in particular focus its advocacy on the utilisation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ("CRPD") and ensure that the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations, and other human rights and development instruments are in line with the CRPD.
2. The Association, with its unique composition as a network of the foremost international and regional organizations of persons with disabilities, is the most authoritative representation of persons with disabilities at global level.
3. The Association aims to represent the whole global disability movement by encouraging organizations of persons with disabilities at national level to become members of the Associations' full global and regional members and by inviting national representative umbrella organizations of persons with disabilities who share the purposes and principles of the Association to become associate members of the Association.
4. The vision of the Association is to achieve a society which values diversity, respects equality and realises the full potential of persons with disabilities in order to build a better world for all.
5. The Association is based on the following principles:
  - a) to acknowledge, recognize and use the expertise of its Member organizations on issues affecting their own constituency;



- b) to promote the capacity of its member organizations in the interest of their disability constituencies and in the interest of the entire disability rights movement;
- c) to follow democratic governance ensuring transparency, accountability and full consultation with its member organizations;
- d) to promote solidarity among and equal treatment of all disability constituencies in all regions of the world;
- e) to fully respect in all of its work non-discrimination on any grounds including disability, race, gender, religion, age language, ethnic origin, and sexual orientation; and,
- f) to ensure the leadership of persons with disabilities or in the case of persons with intellectual disabilities the leadership of persons with intellectual disabilities and their family members through their representative organizations in all decisions affecting their lives.

## Article 6 Membership

1. Founding members are the member organizations that established the Association (the "**Founding Members**"). The Founding Members will be duly registered as such and their contribution to the establishment of the Association will be acknowledged in the different Association documents.
2. Member organizations across all types of membership shall be organizations of persons with disabilities and, in the case of persons with intellectual disabilities, organizations as defined under Article 6.3.1.b whose mission and objectives are in line with the mission and principles of the Association.
3. The Association comprises the following types of membership: (I) Full Members with voting rights and (II) Observer Members; (III) Associate Members and (IV) Emeritus Members without voting rights as described below.
  - I. "**Full Members**" are global or regional organizations. Their representatives in the Association's Board have the right and responsibility to vote and to be elected by Board members to serve as Executive Committee Members, or to become members on other Committees.

### Global organization:

- a. Global organization shall be a legally established organization that has a global mandate and comprises member organizations from at least forty (40) individual countries, with members in at least three (3) continents or from at least thirty (30) individual countries with members in five (5) continents. A legally established organization with a global mandate might be accepted by unanimous decision of the existing members of the Board as a Full Member of the Association even if it has member organizations in less than forty (40) individual countries, but in more than twenty-five (25) individual countries, in three (3) continents, if it can prove that it is the only

existing global organization representing a particular group of persons with disabilities. Founding Members that do not meet these requirements are exempted from the aforementioned criteria but will endeavour to meet such requirements.

- b. The majority of its member organizations shall be organizations composed and governed by persons with disabilities or, in the case of persons with intellectual disabilities, composed and governed by persons with intellectual disabilities and family members.
- c. It shall have a majority of persons with disabilities in the governing bodies of the organization, or in the case of persons with an intellectual disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities and family members are in the majority of the governing bodies of the organization.
- d. Its leadership shall be elected democratically by its members.

Regional organization:

- a. Regional organization shall be a legally established regional organization with national members in at least half of the countries of the region and open to the membership of all constituencies of persons with disabilities.
- b. It is left to the discretion of the Board to define and recommend a region to the General Assembly. If not otherwise decided by the General Assembly, the regions are defined as follows:
  - Africa
  - Asia
  - The Arab countries
  - Europe
  - North America
  - Latin America and Caribbean
  - Pacific.
- c. The Board may recommend to the General Assembly a change in the number of regions or in the geographical boundaries of the region. The General Assembly may approve or reject such recommendation by simple majority vote. If the recommendation is accepted the recommended change shall take effect at the end of the General Assembly. In the event of a recommendation made to the General Assembly it shall be accompanied, if appropriate, by a recommendation for a change of name, which recommendation shall be dealt with by the General Assembly. The number and the composition of the regions shall be kept constantly under review by the Board.

- d. Regional organizations serve as bridges between their members and the Association and promote the work of the Association at regional level. Regional members shall have constitutions consistent with the Association's articles of association and with the policies adopted under them. They shall have autonomy at regional level and on regional issues.
  - e. The majority of its member organizations shall be organizations composed and governed by persons with disabilities or, in the case of persons with intellectual disabilities, composed and governed by persons with intellectual disabilities and family members.
  - f. It shall have a majority of persons with disabilities in the governing bodies of the organization, or in the case of persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities and family members are in the majority of the governing bodies of the organization.
  - g. Its leadership shall be elected democratically by members.
  - h. A regional organization that is member of a global organization which is admitted as Full Member of the Association cannot become itself a Full Member of the Association.
- II. **"Observer Members"** are global or regional organizations without voting rights and without the right and responsibility that its representatives in the Association's Board serve in any committee of the Association.
- a. A global or regional organization applying for full membership in the Association who meets some, but not all of the membership criteria mentioned under Article 6.3.I, may be admitted as Observer Member upon unanimous approval by Board members present with the condition that the new organization works towards meeting the Association's articles of association and internal rules in a specified and agreed period of time by the Board.
  - b. An Observer Member may be invited, through a decision by simple majority of the Board members present, to attend the General Assembly at its own costs. Unless otherwise decided by the Board with simple majority of the Board Members present, an Observer Member can take part in the Board meetings, but at its own costs.
  - c. The Board will constantly examine whether the Observer Member is on its way to meet the requirements of membership in accordance with Article 6. It is left to the discretion of the Board to terminate or to prolong by unanimous decision of the present Board members the observer status after the period of time agreed with the Observer Member has come to an end.
- III. **"Associate Members"** are national umbrella organisations of persons with disabilities representing the diversity of constituencies of persons with disabilities. They are coalitions of representative organisations of persons with disabilities at national level whose mission and objectives are in line with the purposes and principles of the Association.

- a. They can apply for membership in the Association as an Associate Member without voting rights and their representatives in the Associations' Board do not have the right nor the responsibility to serve in any committee of the Association. They may be admitted as an Associate Member upon approval by simple majority of the Board Members present.
  - b. The umbrella organizations shall only include organizations which are composed and governed by persons with disabilities or, in the case of persons with intellectual disabilities, composed and governed by persons with intellectual disabilities and their family members.
  - c. Associate Members will actively contribute to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Association. They will be connected to the communication channels of the Association, and they will be invited to attend events of the Association upon decisions of the Board.
  - d. National umbrella organizations wanting to become Associate Members need the approval of the regional member of the Association from the region of the world in which the national organization is applying for Associate membership. In the event that the Association does not have a regional member which covers the national organization applying for Associate membership, this provision does not apply, and it is left to the recommendation of the Membership Committee, and to the decision of the Board by simple majority of Board members present to accept the national organization as an Associate Member.
  - e. National members of global organizations which are Full Members or Observer Members of the Association cannot be admitted as national Associate Members of the Association.
- IV. **"Emeritus Members"** are individuals that receive this membership type in recognition of their role and performances described below under Article 6.3.IV.a that they have played in the development of the Association and who have contributed significantly to the disability rights movement. They are members without voting rights and without the right and responsibility to be elected to serve on the Executive Committee or other Committees of the Association.
- a. Emeritus Members are individuals who have significantly contributed to the Association, such as former Presidents of the Association, key Board or staff members, and other external individuals that have made a mark to the Association or to the disability rights movement.
  - b. Emeritus Members become members by being invited by the President of the Association, on recommendation by the Membership Committee and by simple majority decision of the Board members present.
4. Requests to become a global or regional member with voting rights must be addressed to the Board. The Board admits new member organizations as Full

Members of the Association, after receiving a recommendation from the Membership Committee, by unanimous decision of the Board members present, and informs the General Assembly accordingly.

## Article 16.1.b) Decision Making

1. The following rules apply to decision making:
  - b) Decisions on membership application for Full and Observer Members shall be made by unanimity of all Board members present, and by simple majority for Associate and Emeritus Members, unless the Board has to deal with the exclusion of a member organization pursuant to Article 7.1.b) (exclusion for unlawful or illegal actions) or pursuant to Article 7.1.c) (exclusion for non-payment). In such a case the member of the Board member organization in question cannot take part in this decision.

## 3.2. Excerpt from the Internal Rules

### Article 10 Membership Requests

1. An organization seeking any type of membership to the Association as described in [Article 6 of the Articles of Association](#) shall submit an **application form** duly completed. Details of the application form and a Guide for Membership to the Association shall be prepared by the Membership Committee and approved by the Board. The application form and the Guide for Membership to the Association shall be available on the Association's website. The application shall be addressed to the President of the Association who forwards the application to the Membership Committee for review. The application form shall be accompanied by the following documents:
  - a) letter of interest to become a member of the Association, as well as of agreement to the purpose and principles of the Association as stated in [Article 3 of its Articles of Association](#);
  - b) constitution of the association and its bylaws;
  - c) proof of legal establishment;
  - d) list of its members, including members address, country of registration, and members' representative contact detail;
  - e) list of members of its governing body;
  - f) financial statements and/or last financial audit of the organization if available;

- g) bank account details;
  - h) policies related to safeguarding and management of malpractice and misconduct; and,
  - i) such additional documents that may be requested by the Association.
2. a) Membership criteria for National umbrella organisations are described in detail in [Article 6.3.III. of the Articles of Association](#). National umbrella organizations seeking membership in the Association as national Associate Members shall demonstrate, through their constitution or other documents, that they are open for membership to all organizations of persons with disabilities, representing the diversity of the national disability movement. More specifically, those national umbrella organizations seeking Associate membership in the Association, shall be open for membership to members of the global and regional Full members of the Association from that country.
    - b) The President of the Association forwards the applications for Associate Members received to the Membership Committee for consideration and review.
    - c) National umbrella organizations seeking to become Associate Members need the approval of the regional member of the Association from the region of the world in which the national organization is applying for Associate membership. In the event that the Association does not have a regional member which covers the national organization applying for Associate membership, this provision does not apply, and it is left to the recommendation of the Membership Committee and to the decision of the Board by simple majority of Board members present to accept the national organisation as an Associate Member.
    - d) Associate Members become members by being invited by the President of the Association, on recommendation by the Membership Committee and through a simple majority decision of Board members present.
  3. Membership criteria for Emeritus Members are described in [Article 6.3.IV.](#) of the Articles of Association. All Board members have the right to propose to the President of the Association individuals for Emeritus Members of the Association. The President of the Association forwards the proposals for Emeritus Members received to the Membership Committee for consideration and review.
  4. Emeritus Members become members by being invited by the President of the Association, on recommendation by the Membership Committee and through a simple majority decision of Board members present. The President of the Association or the Executive Director, under the guidance of the President, refers all applications for membership received to the Secretary-General who is the Chair of the Membership Committee. The Secretary-General convenes the Membership Committee to consider and review the applications received for membership and

presents its recommendations to the Board for decision. The Membership Committee has the right to request any additional documentation needed to provide a complete recommendation to the Board.

5. The Board decides on Full and Observer membership requests by unanimous decision of the Board members present and on Associate and Emeritus membership requests by simple majority of Board members present, only when the Membership Committee delivers recommendations.