



GARN
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR
THE RIGHTS OF NATURE

CONSTITUTION OF THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR THE RIGHTS OF NATURE ("The Alliance/GARN")

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This constitution is the primary governing document of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (the Alliance) and supersedes and replaces the founding Statutes of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN) that were adopted on 5 September 2010.

2. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE ALLIANCE

- 2.1. GARN is an alliance of organizations, communities and individuals that work together to promote the universal and effective recognition of the Rights of Nature (Mother Earth) in law, and the upholding of those rights by all peoples as a means of living harmoniously within the Earth community. We are a movement that calls for the abandonment of the dominant anthropocentric paradigm in order to participate fully in an Earth Community of Life, inclusive of humans and other beings.
- 2.2. The objectives of the Alliance are:
- 2.2.1. to facilitate the emergence of an eco-centric and positive vision of human society that nurtures the Earth community, and creates new, non-hierarchical and respectful, governance systems that ensure human societies live within their ecological limits;
 - 2.2.2. to promote a political discussion and undertake initiatives in support of the struggles, alternatives and resistance of all groups that oppose any form of environmental degradation such as extractivism;
 - 2.2.3. to promote the universal adoption and implementation of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth;
 - 2.2.4. to uphold the rights of non-human beings to life, a healthy habitat and to thrive free from human exploitation;
 - 2.2.5. to honor the wisdom of Indigenous Peoples, whose laws are drawn from their inherent relationship with Mother Earth, and strengthen Indigenous Peoples' perspectives within the Rights of Nature, Rights of Mother Earth and Earth Laws movement;

- 2.2.6. to advance Indigenous Peoples' rights, sovereignty and jurisprudence, and other non-rights-based pathways found in customary law and traditional Indigenous Peoples' knowledge;
- 2.2.7. to promote a transition in industrial societies, from the anthropocentric legal and governance systems that promote the exploitation of Earth to legal and bio centric governance systems based on Earth jurisprudence that promote the harmonious co-existence of people with Nature and ecological restoration;
- 2.2.8. to promote the importance of recognizing Nature as a subject of rights, in ways that are consistent with 2.2.7 (in ways that are consistent with Indigenous Peoples' rights);
- 2.2.9. to promote and facilitate the enactment of policies and laws, locally and globally, that recognize and give effect to Rights of Nature, Rights of Mother Earth, and Earth laws¹;
- 2.2.10. to facilitate the creation of a strong social movement that advocates for Rights of Nature and Earth laws locally and globally and that is guided by the principles in Article 3; by identifying and reaching out to initiatives that exist, challenge and provide alternatives to capitalism and colonization;
- 2.2.11. to establish sustainable structures and operating systems to facilitate collaboration, education and relationships between members that strengthen the Alliance and the movement;
- 2.2.12. to foster political debate so that new trends of thought relating to the Rights of Nature and Earth laws emerge as a solution to the multiple societal crises of an outdated paradigm;
- 2.2.13. to establish certain baseline requirements for policies and laws to be recognized as legitimately advancing the Rights of Nature and Earth laws and to develop a process for certifying them as such.

3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF THE ALLIANCE

The following principles guide the actions of all members of the Alliance:

- 3.1. As members of an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings we each have a responsibility to contribute to the health and integrity of the whole Earth community.
- 3.2. In order to achieve our vision of societies that flourish in harmony with other beings, and are socially just and spiritually fulfilling, we must recognize, respect and defend the rights of all beings.

¹ Find a live glossary with a full list of definitions of Rights of Nature terminology here: www.garn.org/rights-of-nature-glossary

- 3.3. We will work in solidarity with one another to promote the recognition by all people that all beings are subjects with rights, to ensure that humans respect and uphold those rights, and to defend the rights of all beings.
- 3.4. We will integrate practices and rituals into our work that strengthen our connection to, and respect for, the Earth community and that evoke gratitude and humility regarding our place within it.
- 3.5. We respect the pluriversity of each community, considering that the harmony of all ecosystems, both terrestrial and oceanic, lies in the existence of diversity.
- 3.6. Defenders of the Rights of Nature and Earth Laws must be protected and not criminalized for their struggles.
- 3.7. We are guided by values such as transparency, integrity, respect, honesty, recognition, wisdom, peacefulness, democracy, collaboration, equality and inclusiveness.

4. OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The functioning of the Alliance shall be guided by the following operational principles:

- 4.1. Decisions by the Alliance shall be taken by consensus unless otherwise agreed in advance and in writing.
- 4.2. No member may vote on a matter in which they have a conflict of interest or vested interest.
- 4.3. If the Alliance cannot reach consensus on whether or not to participate in a meeting or activity or to support a statement or position, that does not preclude any member from doing so in their own name.
- 4.4. A member can represent the Alliance and speak on its behalf on the condition that the Executive Committee has given that member the mandate to do so.
- 4.5. Each member of the Alliance must collaborate in good faith with other members, and, as far as reasonably possible, act in a manner that:
 - 4.5.1. promotes the cohesion and effective functioning of the Alliance; and
 - 4.5.2. respects the views of other members.
- 4.6. Respecting the autonomy of every organization, any entity that forms part of the Alliance may adopt rules of procedure that do not conflict with this Constitution or with decisions of the General Assembly.
- 4.7. The Alliance must respect the right of each member to decide which activities of the Alliance to participate in and which statements or positions proposed by other members to support.
- 4.8. The Alliance and its members must both respect the freedom of its members, and regional and sub-regional organizations to make their own decisions concerning matters which affect them

directly while promoting solidarity among members and the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the Alliance.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1. Any person, community or organization (other than a sovereign State) may become a member of the Alliance if that person, community or organization applies for membership and:
 - 5.1.1. endorses the **Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth** proclaimed on 22 April 2010 at Cochabamba, Bolivia;
 - 5.1.2. subscribes to this Constitution, and the fundamental principles and values in it;
 - 5.1.3. meets the criteria for membership established by the Executive Committee.
- 5.2. Each member of the Alliance must promote the recognition and effective implementation of the Rights of Nature (also referred to as “Mother Earth” or the “Earth Community”) and must act in conformity with the Fundamental Principles of the Alliance.
- 5.3. The Executive Committee must prepare and make available, clear Membership Rules and Dispute Resolution (Art. 17) so that all members understand their rights and responsibilities.
- 5.4. **Membership termination:** The Executive Committee may suspend or terminate membership if it has reason to believe that a member has brought the Alliance into disrepute or violated the fundamental Principles and Values of the Alliance.
 - 5.4.1. The Executive Committee must give notice to a member of its intention to suspend or terminate its membership;
 - 5.4.2. The member will be given the opportunity to engage in a Dispute Resolution procedure (in accordance with 5.4);
 - 5.4.3. The member will have an opportunity to make representations before its membership is suspended or terminated;
 - 5.4.4. The Executive Committee must give reasons for its decision to either suspend, terminate or reinstate membership;
 - 5.4.5. A suspended or terminated member may appeal to the General Assembly, and the General Assembly may either confirm the suspension or termination or reinstate the membership.

6. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 6.1. The General Assembly shall be the deliberative, supreme decision-making body of the Global Alliance.
- 6.2. The General Assembly shall meet physically, online or in hybrid manner at least every year.
- 6.3. Each member of the Alliance is a member of the General Assembly and may speak at meetings of the General Assembly. Each organization and each community shall have one vote in making any decision for the General Assembly. Individual members may vote at meetings of the General Assembly but a resolution of the General Assembly may only be adopted with the

support of a majority of the members that are organizations or communities. During the first Assembly to be held on October 17th, 2022, all participating members may vote.

- 6.4. The Executive Committee must, as far as is reasonably possible, convene a meeting of the General Assembly at least once every year from the commencement of this Constitution, to provide opportunities for members to meet in person and via webinar or other similar technology.
- 6.5. Any decision by the Executive Committee may be changed by a resolution of the General Assembly adopted by at least 60% of the representatives of members that are organizations or communities participating at a General Assembly, either in person or by proxy. A person representing a member who is not physically in the presence of other members of the General Assembly shall be regarded as being present if that person is able to hear and speak to the other members of the General Assembly.

7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 7.1. The Alliance shall be coordinated by an Executive Committee representing the thematic and geographic breadth of the Rights of Nature movement, which is responsible for aligning the activities of the members and steering the Alliance towards the achievement of its goals.
- 7.2. The Executive Committee must:
 - 7.2.1. coordinate all the work of the Alliance, including all financial and governance issues;
 - 7.2.2. exercise oversight over the Global Coordinator of the Alliance;
 - 7.2.3. as far as reasonably possible, make decisions aiming for consensus, but where consensus is not possible, a majority of three-quarters of the quorum is required;
 - 7.2.4. keep accurate minutes of all Executive Committee meetings and ensure these minutes are made available to all members upon request;
 - 7.2.5. prepare and approve a strategic plan and budget for the Alliance prepared by the Global Coordinator at least once every two years;
 - 7.2.6. coordinate and monitor the activities of the Working Groups;
 - 7.2.7. convene all meetings of the General Assembly;
 - 7.2.8. appoint members of, and liaise on an ongoing basis with, the Advisory Group;
 - 7.2.9. coordinate and monitor all Global Alliance operational activities, including: working groups, Rights of Nature Tribunals, representations and correspondence to the United Nations and representations of correspondence to other organizations and entities;
 - 7.2.10. create, co-ordinate, support, monitor and if necessary close, sub-committees of the Executive Committee, and working groups;

- 7.2.11. invite other members to participate in Executive Committee meetings where necessary or desirable to address specific issues.

8. ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 8.1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of at least 14 and no more than 20 members. The Executive Committee must include: regional representatives (North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania), a representative of the Councils (i.e. Indigenous), hub representatives (Youth, Legal, and Academic), the Global Coordinator of the Alliance. The remaining members will be selected and appointed by the Executive Committee. The International Rights of Nature Tribunal Secretariat is not a member of the Executive Committee but can have a permanent seat to participate in the Executive Committee and report back about the Judge's Assembly.
- 8.2. The members of the Alliance in each World Region must elect a Regional Representative to represent their region, who should be a person other than the Hub facilitator. The world regions that are to be represented on the Executive Committee are: South America, North America, Oceania, Africa, Europe and Asia. If a Regional Hub has not yet been established, the Executive Committee will request a panel of Rights of Nature leaders from the region to select a representative for the region.
- 8.3. The representative of each non-regional Hub on the Executive Committee must be appointed by that Hub.
- 8.4. The Executive Committee shall appoint the additional members of the Executive Committee and in doing so must take account of: the history and experience of the appointed representative, the importance of ensuring that the Executive Committee reflects a diversity of perspectives and cultures, and includes appropriate expertise; and any recommendations made by the General Assembly or members.
- 8.5. The Executive Committee must ensure that at least two members are replaced every year, to ensure that there is both change and continuity in GARN's leadership. Leaving the Executive Committee will be voluntary, mutually agreed upon, and done with at least two months' prior notice. In the case of Hub representatives, sufficient notice must be given to allow the Hub to elect a replacement member.
- 8.6. Members of the Executive Committee may be elected or appointed for three years and while they may be re-elected or re-appointed, they may not be members for more than six years in any ten-year period.

9. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- 9.1. A quorum for a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be 7 members. A member who is not physically in the presence of other members of the Executive Committee shall be regarded as being present if he or she is able to hear and speak to the other members of the Executive Committee through technological resources.

9.2. The Executive Committee must, as far as reasonably possible, meet every month.

10. ADVISORY COUNCIL

- 10.1. The role of the Advisory Council is to contribute wisdom, advice and guidance to the Alliance (and particularly the Executive Committee) and generally to promote the Alliance, its vision and Fundamental Principles.
- 10.2. The Executive Committee may invite any person to become a member of the Advisory Council of the Alliance if the Executive Committee believes that that person will contribute to the effectiveness of the Alliance, for example by virtue of their skills, reputation or position. The Executive Committee shall keep in mind diversity, inclusion and representation of expertise, opinions, background and geography in formulating the Advisory Council.
- 10.3. A person who accepts appointment as a member of the Advisory Council becomes a member of the Alliance, must act in the best interests of the Alliance, may act as ambassador for the Alliance, and must not do anything to bring the Alliance into disrepute.
- 10.4. The Advisory Council or any of its members may participate in any meeting or discussion of the Executive Committee, a Hub, Working Group or any other structure established by the Alliance, if invited to do so. The Advisory Council may request an opportunity to participate in any such meeting or discussion.
- 10.5. The Advisory Council must elect a chair and coordinating committee consisting of at least 3 of its members and that committee shall be responsible for regulating and organizing the Advisory Committee in order to ensure that it makes an effective contribution to the Alliance, and participates in meetings of the Executive Committee, or other structures within the Alliance when invited to do so. The Advisory Council may adopt its own rules, procedures, or guidelines for engagement provided that they are not inconsistent with this Constitution.
- 10.6. The Executive Committee, after consulting with the coordinating committee of the Advisory Council, may terminate the appointment of any member of the Advisory Committee if it has good reason for doing so (for example if that member acts in a manner that may bring the Alliance into disrepute).

11. GLOBAL COORDINATOR OF THE ALLIANCE

11.1 The Global Coordinator of the Alliance is a person employed by the Secretariat, fiscal sponsor or judicial body of the Alliance but supervised and accountable to the Executive Committee of GARN.

11.2 Among the roles and responsibilities of the Global Coordinator of the Alliance are:

- Execute the activities defined by the Executive Committee and be accountable to this decision-making body;
- Supervise the work of the employees of the Secretariat, including the Organizer, Communicator, Development Coordinator, Designer, among others;

- Ensure that the operational efforts of the Alliance reflect the strategic goals of the Alliance;
- Work in tandem with the Executive Committee to generate and participate in strategic opportunities and forums to advance the Alliance and the Rights of Nature movement and contribute actively to the creation of dynamic opportunities to engage the public and strategic partners;
- Supervise the accounting and financial reporting together with the budget working group and in accordance to the decisions taken by the Executive Committee;
- Other activities directed by the Executive Committee and GARN members;

12. INDIGENOUS COUNCIL

- 12.1. Communities of Indigenous Peoples and organizations of Indigenous Peoples who are members of the Alliance may establish an Indigenous Council to coordinate their activities and to inform, educate and advise other members of the Alliance, the Executive Committee and other structures within the Alliance, regarding Indigenous perspectives.
- 12.2. The Indigenous Council shall regulate itself and may adopt their constitution, charters or guidelines, as they consider most appropriate. The constitution must reflect the values and objectives of the Alliance and must not conflict with this Constitution or any policy adopted by the Executive Committee or the General Assembly.
- 12.3. The constitution of the Indigenous Council must provide for the democratic election or selection of one person to represent it on the Executive Committee.

13. HUBS

- 13.1. Hubs are semi-autonomous coordinating committees formed by members of the Alliance to offer support to their projects and activities in a particular geographic region, demographic, or area of expertise. Unlike Working Groups, Hubs are permanent structures, which have their own membership systems and adopt projects successively, rather than being created to address a single project. Hubs must fulfill a necessity - that is, they must be formed in response to a need to coordinate the work of the Alliance.
- 13.2. The Executive Committee must consent to the establishment of a Hub but shall not withhold its consent without good reason.
- 13.3. Hubs must meet regularly and make decisions through their own internal governance structure, which must include one Facilitator in charge of liaising with the Executive Committee and the secretariat of the Alliance. It is recommended that Hubs have three Facilitators, in charge of Membership, Communications, and Governance, which will be able to coordinate with the respective Facilitators from other Hubs and with the GARN Secretariat.
- 13.4. A Hub may apply to the Executive Committee for funding, either for operational expenses or for specific projects. A Hub may also apply to donors and others for direct funding but must coordinate its fundraising with the Alliance's fundraisers to ensure that fundraising for the Hub does not come into conflict with the fundraising efforts of the Alliance as a whole.

Regional Hubs

- 13.5. Member organizations and communities within a region or subregion may establish a Regional Hub to coordinate their activities within the region. World regions are defined as South America, North America, Oceania, Africa, Europe and Asia. Sub-regions can be defined by members within world regions, to suit their needs.
- 13.6. The activities of a Regional Hub may include, but are not limited to:
 - 13.6.1. facilitating collaboration between members in the region;
 - 13.6.2. recruiting members and promoting the Alliance within the region;
 - 13.6.3. collaborating on activities that advance the goals of the Alliance in the region (including campaigns, advocacy and research);
 - 13.6.4. holding Regional Rights of Nature Tribunals and other events that advance Rights of Nature in their region; and
 - 13.6.5. other activities as determined by the members of the regional or sub-regional committee.
- 13.7. Each Regional Hub may adopt a constitution. The constitution must reflect the values and objectives of the Global Alliance and must not conflict with this Constitution or any policy adopted by the Executive Committee or the General Assembly.
- 13.8. The constitution of a Regional and Sub-Regional Hub must provide for the democratic election or selection of one person to represent their world region on the Executive Committee.

Non-regional Hubs

- 13.9. Member organizations and communities that share a common interest or focus (e.g. youth, teaching or law) may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, establish a Hub to coordinate their activities and to advance the goals of the Alliance within their area of interest.
- 13.10. Each non-regional Hub may adopt a constitution. The constitution must reflect the values and objectives of the Global Alliance and must not conflict with this Constitution or any policy adopted by the Executive Committee or the General Assembly and must provide for the democratic election or selection of one person to represent that hub at meetings of the Executive Committee.

14. WORKING GROUPS

- 14.1. Any two or more Alliance Members may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, establish a Working Group to deal with a specific function or theme on behalf of the Alliance.
- 14.2. A Working Group must report regularly on its activities to the Executive Committee, at least every two months for the duration of the Working Group.
- 14.3. The Executive Committee may prepare guidelines for the operation of Working Groups, to ensure clarity for all members who wish to create or participate in such Groups.

15. SECRETARIAT

- 15.1. The Executive Committee may appoint any organization that is a juristic person to serve as the secretariat of the Alliance for a fixed period (which may be renewed) and must enter into an agreement with that organization (“the Secretariat”) which specifies the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat.
- 15.2. The Global Coordinator of the Alliance may, on behalf of the Alliance, and for its benefit:
- 15.2.1. employ persons selected or approved by the Executive Committee (including the Global Coordinator of the Alliance) and promote hubs to nominate organizations to administer Hub projects;
 - 15.2.2. enter into contracts approved by the Executive Committee;
 - 15.2.3. establish and operate financial management systems and ensure the proper management of the finances of the Alliance;
 - 15.2.4. raise funds for the Alliance and manage its relationship with fiscal sponsors.
- 15.3. The Secretariat is accountable to the Executive Committee for the proper performance of its duties and must comply with any lawful instruction that the Executive Committee gives it.

16. RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL

- 16.1. The International Rights of Nature Tribunal was formally established by the People’s Convention signed in Paris on December 5th, 2015.
- 16.2. The Alliance and its Executive Committee shall progressively foster the development of the Tribunal as an independent entity, contributing to its logistical organization and operation in collaboration and agreement with the Assembly of Judges (composed by all former Tribunal judges and a Tribunal Secretariat)
- 16.3. GARN members and allies may submit cases and hearings, and request in situ missions, investigations, advisory opinions, or any other activity that is needed to address violation of Rights of Nature and seek redress.
- 16.4. The Judge’s Assembly will be in charge of the final selection of cases, judges’ panel and verdict development.

17. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 17.1. The Executive Committee must seek to resolve any disputes that arise between members, between a member and a structure established by the Alliance (including a Hub), or between such structures, in a manner that is fair, promotes reconciliation (if reasonably possible) and is in the best interests of the Alliance.
- 17.2. Where necessary the Executive Committee may request an independent third party to assist in resolving a dispute.

18. CEASING OPERATIONS

The Alliance may dissolve itself by a special resolution passed by 75% of the members of the Alliance present in person or by proxy at a meeting of the General Assembly. With the majority of the votes of all members, the whereabouts of the Alliance assets will be decided at this general assembly meeting.

The quorum for the General Assembly Meeting that dissolved the Alliance shall be done with the consent of both the Executive Committee and a majority of members.

19. AMENDMENT

- 19.1. This constitution can be amended and modified by a special resolution passed by 75% of the members of the Alliance present in person or by proxy at a meeting of the General Assembly.
- 19.2. The quorum for any General Assembly Meeting that resolves to amend the Constitution shall be 50 members that are organizations or communities.

Adopted by a resolution of the General Membership of the Alliance on (December 7th, 2022)

