

SIKA DEVELOPMENT FUND



CONSTITUTION OF SIKA DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Table of contents

1.0	THE ORGANISATION/PREAMBLE	- 2 -
1.1	PARTICULARS – Name, Address and Area of Operation	- 2 -
1.1.1	Name.....	- 2 -
1.1.2	Address	- 2 -
1.1.3	Area of operation.....	- 2 -
2.0	MISSION AND VISION.....	- 2 -
2.1	Mission.....	- 2 -
2.2	Vision.....	- 2 -
2.3	OBJECTIVES	- 3 -
3.0	FUNCTIONS OF THE ORGANISATION	- 4 -
4.0	MEMBERSHIP	- 4 -
4.1	Honorary membership.....	- 5 -
4.2	Termination of membership.....	- 5 -
4.2.1	Voluntary withdrawal	- 5 -
4.2.2	Expulsion	- 5 -
4.2.3	Re-admission into SDF	- 5 -
4.2.4	Natural Termination.....	- 5 -
5.0	FINANCES OF SDF.....	- 5 -
5.1	Sources of Income.....	- 6 -
5.2	Membership registrations	- 6 -
5.3	<i>Annual subscriptions of members</i>	- 6 -
5.4	Annual subscription of members in Sika	- 6 -
5.5	Voluntary Subscription	- 6 -
5.6	Grants.....	- 7 -
5.7	Other sources of funding	- 7 -
5.8	Membership subscriptions upon termination of membership	- 7 -

6.0	MANAGEMENT OF SDF'S FINANCES	- 7 -
6.1	Financial Reporting from Branches of the Organisation.....	- 7 -
6.2	Mismanagement of SDF Finances.....	- 8 -
7.0	COMPOSITION OF THE MANAGEMENT ORGANS OF SDF	- 8 -
7.1	General Assembly	- 8 -
7.1.1	The functions of the General Assembly.....	- 8 -
7.3	Executive Committee	- 8 -
7.3.1	Functions of the Executive Committee.....	- 9 -
7.4	Term of office of Executive Committee Members.....	- 10 -
7.5	Advisory Committee	- 10 -
7.6	Other Committees	- 10 -
8.0	DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS	- 10 -
8.1	The President	- 10 -
8.1.1	Duties and responsibilities of the President.....	- 10 -
8.2	The Secretary General	- 12 -
8.2.1	Duties and responsibilities of the Secretary General	- 12 -
8.3	The Treasurer	- 13 -
8.3.1	Duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer.....	- 13 -
8.4	The Auditor	- 14 -
8.4.1	Duties and responsibilities of an auditor	- 14 -
8.5	The Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary	- 15 -
8.5.1	Duties of the Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary	- 15 -
8.6	The Advisers (Advisory Committee)	- 16 -
8.6.1	Duties and responsibilities of the Advisers (Advisory Committee)	- 16 -
9.0	MEETINGS	- 17 -
9.1	General Assembly of the members.....	- 17 -
9.2	Executive Committee meetings	- 17 -

9.3	Ordinary meetings of the Executive Committee	- 17 -
9.4	Extraordinary meetings of the Executive Committee.....	- 17 -
9.5	Consequences for failure to attend Executive Committee meetings	- 18 -
9.6	Quorum.....	- 18 -
9.7	Proceedings at meetings	- 18 -
9.8	Amendments	- 18 -
9.9	Dissolution of SDF.....	- 19 -
10.0	Miscellaneous.....	- 19 -
10.1	Financial Year	- 19 -
10.2	Remunerations	- 19 -

1.0 THE ORGANISATION/PREAMBLE

Sika Development Fund (hereafter called SDF or the Organisation) was conceived to address development issues affecting the community of Sika, and the need to foster a strong sense of unity between all “Sikankos”. SDF is a charitable, non-political, non-religious organisation which aspires to respond appropriately and urgently to the basic needs of the people and the Village in areas such as healthcare, education, environmental protection, entrepreneurship and any other forms of development that can improve the well-being of the people of Sika.

There shall be established branches of SDF in other regions of the world as the Organisation may, from time to time, determine.

1.1 PARTICULARS – Name, Address and Area of Operation

1.1.1 Name

The Organisation shall be called Sika Development Fund (SDF). It is an initiative which is non-political and non-religious established to find innovative and sustainable mechanisms to empower the people of Sika with the view to promoting the socio-economic and cultural progress of the people of Sika (Upper Nuimi District, North Bank Division, The Gambia, West Africa).

1.1.2 Address

The registered Address shall be: Sika village, Upper Nuimi District, North Bank Region, The Gambia, West Africa

The Business/Postal Address shall be: Sika Development Fund (SDF), P.O. Box 2038, Abuko Nema KMC, The Gambia, West Africa.

1.1.3 Area of operation

The areas of operations shall be: The Gambia, USA, Europe and in any other part of the world where the Organisation may decide to set up branches.

2.0 MISSION AND VISION

2.1 Mission

SDF’s overarching goal is to embark on meaningful partnerships for sustainable socioeconomic developments and social progress amongst its members. In order to achieve this goal, we shall foster a strong sense of unity amongst “Sikankos” (refers to people from Sika, and those with strong affiliations to Sika, e.g. by marriage, origin of parents, etc.) in order to promote the individual and collective progress and prosperity of Sikankos.

2.2 Vision

The vision of SDF is borne out of the realisation of the need for sustainable socioeconomic growth and development of Sika and her people. The Organisation’s vision is to:

Create a united, prosperous and dynamic community by working harmoniously with each other to identify appropriate and innovative solutions to sustainably support all Sikankos in a way worthy of emulation by others.

2.3 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the Organisation is to improve the socio-economic lives of the inhabitants of Sika and Sikankos, wherever they live, by empowering them to engage in activities that will contribute to their well-being sustainably, and in the wider context, contribute to the socio-economic development of the community and the country they live in as a whole. In this regard, the Organisation shall endeavour to:

- i. Promote greater understanding and unity between all “Sikankos”, people of goodwill, and donors who care about development issues;
- ii. Work to support each other, by enabling the active participation of all in development programmes;
- iii. Strengthen good public relations between Sika and other villages, development partners and the Government of The Gambia to enable the effective implementation of the development programmes of the Village;
- iv. Contribute to the development of Sika in collaboration with the Village Development Committee, and any such organisation in areas such as healthcare, education, environmental protection, and other community-based initiatives;
- v. Encourage and promote educational, cultural and sports exchange programmes between the Village and other villages and communities within and outside The Gambia;
- vi. Provide both medical assistance (drugs, etc.) and medical aids to individuals with life-threatening and or life-limiting medical conditions so that they are able to fulfil their ambitions and also make a meaningful contribution to the life of the Village and the Organisation;
- vii. Act as mentors to youths so that they can be guided to fulfil their lifelong ambitions/dreams;
- viii. Provide support to individuals of demonstrable outstanding promise and /achievement to access secondary and tertiary education and go forth to serve;
- ix. Provide seed-corn funding to aspiring/demonstrable entrepreneurs (sustainable vegetable farming; fishing, preservation of locally produced seasonal crops/foods; and other enterprises. For clarity,
 - a) Depending on the availability of funds, SDF shall strive to offer initial seed-corn support that allows people to access among many things such as basic healthcare (through SDF-led and -managed fundraising campaigns), education and allow people to engage in income-generating activities. All monies spent by the Organisation in payment of fees as well as towards the financing of entrepreneurial activities shall be repaid to the Organisation according to the terms of the contract signed between SDF and the beneficiary/applicant;
 - b) Any funds issued as seed-corn money for enterprise development shall be fully refunded to SDF. The details of disbursement and repayment modalities shall be

defined in a contractual document to be signed by the individual concerned and an SDF representative;

- c) Projects funded by the Organisation, or items purchased by the Organisation to help individuals improve economically belong to the SDF until such time the loan or the item purchased by the Organisation for such income-generating activity is fully paid;
- d) In fulfilment of the agreed terms of the loan or the item purchased for individuals by SDF (described in section 2.3c above), the beneficiary must pay to the Treasurer or into SDF's account, a fraction of the loan at regular intervals or all of what they owe to SDF. The loan must be fully paid within the agreed period signed between the applicant/beneficiary and SDF. The Treasurer must deposit that money into the Organisation's bank account as soon as it is practical to do so.
- e) The Executive Committee shall define guidelines approved by the General Assembly for responding to requests for support in the above matters. In this regard, the Executive shall draw up/define eligibility criteria for support which shall be presented to the General Assembly for review and ultimately for approval. These approved criteria shall be applied honestly, transparently and strictly.
- f) The Executive shall not use its discretion to respond to specific calls, without following due process as defined in the Constitution and / or the guidelines of the selection criteria.

3.0 FUNCTIONS OF THE ORGANISATION

In furtherance of the objectives of the Organisation, but not otherwise, the Organisation may exercise the following powers:

- i. Raise funds and receive contributions in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the laws in the respective countries of operation;
- ii. Organise activities, events, lectures, discussions as may be from time to time determined by the Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary with the approval of the Executive Committee and
- iii. Collaborate with charitable, voluntary and statutory bodies operating in The Gambia and abroad in furtherance of the objectives of the Organisation.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

In the interest of unity and the furtherance of our aspirations, membership is open to all "Sikankos" and other persons who have strong relations with the village through family ties, friendship or other cultural factors inherent in the traditions of our society – All Sikankos are welcome to be members of the SDF. Membership of SDF is also open to friends of Sika or individuals or groups of people who are ready to support the development of Sika through the Organisation.

- i. People of all ages, sex, religious beliefs, and ethnic backgrounds are welcome to be members of the Organisation;
- ii. All members of the age of 18 and above can exercise full right of membership once they pay their annual subscription as prescribed in this constitution. It is not obligatory for those under 18 years of age to pay, but if they or their parents/guardians want to pay on their behalf, that gesture would be welcomed. However, in the event that they

or someone paid their annual subscription on their behalf, members under the age of 18 can vote but they cannot hold any Executive position in SDF.

- iii. Spouses of “Sikankos” are accorded the same privileges and opportunities as citizens of Sika and, therefore, also have right of membership of SDF, unless expressed otherwise – they can express full membership rights upon payment of their annual subscription;
- iv. In case of insanity, re-admission to full and active membership is automatic upon regaining good health.
- v. People with ill health will not be deprived of their membership rights, but they may be excused from certain activities upon request, verbally or in writing (e.g. payment of annual subscriptions) of the Organisation incompatible with their health until they regain their health.

4.1 Honorary membership

The Organisation may grant honorary membership to any person it considers fit for that position. Recommendations for honorary membership shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval by the General Assembly.

4.2 Termination of membership

Membership of the Organisation may be terminated under the following circumstances:

4.2.1 Voluntary withdrawal

A member may withdraw his/her membership from the Organisation at any time, but no membership fee or donations will be refunded, regardless of years of membership.

4.2.2 Expulsion

A member may be expelled from the Organisation if s/he acts in any way considered to be a serious violation of this Constitution and in any way considered to be detrimental to the interests, vision, values and aspirations of SDF.

4.2.3 Re-admission into SDF

Individuals who have made good the action(s) that caused their expulsion from SDF could apply to join SDF. They can submit their interest to come back to SDF through the Secretary General of SDF or online (<https://sikadevelopmentfund.com/Join-SDF/>), whichever is easier. Their application/interest to re-join SDF shall be reviewed/scrutinised by the Executive Committee of SDF and they shall be informed of the outcome of their application within 28 days of submitting their interest/application to re-join SDF.

4.2.4 Natural Termination

A member automatically ceases to become a member upon death; in such a case SDF has no recourse to refund any subscription payments or voluntary donations made by the deceased.

5.0 FINANCES OF SDF

The Organisation shall mobilise resources both from within and externally to finance its programmes.

5.1 Sources of Income

The Organisation shall derive its income from the following sources:

5.2 Membership registrations

Membership registration is free, but one must pay the annual membership subscription fee (see below) in order to exercise full membership rights (e.g., voting rights, eligibility to benefit, serve in the Executive Committee, etc.).

5.3 Annual subscriptions of members

It is envisaged that members and potential beneficiaries of the Organisation will see the initiative as a viable strategy in dealing with some of the issues that affect all of us. If SDF is to enjoy long lasting success, members must have a stake in it. One clear way of ensuring this is that members must all be annual subscription -paying members, whenever possible. As subscription-paying members, we shall all have a stake in monitoring, and overseeing the finances of the Organisation, and the projects/programmes SDF supports, and this collective effort from members shall ensure that SDF grows sustainably from strength to strength. It is for this reason that all members are encouraged to be active, and to pay up their annual subscriptions in a timely manner so that the Organisation can to meet its objectives which will help raise the living standards of all in Sika now and in the future. Each member shall pay an annual subscription as set out in this Constitution. All annual subscriptions must be paid not later than the 31st December of each year. The subscriptions for the different categories of members shall be as follows:

- i. SDF Members resident in The Gambia, but outside Sika, shall pay D400.00 per annum;
- ii. The annual subscription of SDF members in the diaspora is set at \$120.00;
- iii. Members who are unwell shall not pay any annual subscription during the period of their illness except if they choose to; and shall not owe any money to the Organisation upon regaining full health.

5.4 Annual subscription of members in Sika

The annual subscription of the Villagers shall be D100.00 per annum. The contribution is set to this level in full recognition of many factors, including:

- i. That the Villagers already make significant contributions to the Village Development Committee (VDC) funds and towards repairs of the water system;
- ii. To recognise and redress the fact that the Villagers shall occasionally partake in developmental activities that may be physical in nature (e.g. manual labour).

5.5 Voluntary Subscription

Members at their own discretion may decide to make additional contributions of any amount to the Organisation as voluntary contribution. The recording for voluntary Subscriptions should be separate from the annual membership subscription.

5.6 Grants

The Organisation may receive grants from organisations and individuals to conduct specific development projects within the village. In this case the Organisation together with the grantor may manage and supervise the project so funded. Such funds shall be managed in a transparent manner in accordance with the guidelines set out in this Constitution as well as any other procedures that may be required under the financing agreement with a grantor.

5.7 Other sources of funding

In addition to the above, the Organisation may raise funds by other legal means not specifically stated in this Constitution, *but not through loans*, which may be considered by the Executive Committee as beneficial to the advancement of the Organisation. As such, no such fund-raising activities should be organised without the prior approval of the Executive.

5.8 Membership subscriptions upon termination of membership

For the purpose of clarity, in the event of termination of membership under any of the circumstances above, the member forfeits (loses) any payments that were made including any subscriptions or contributions.

6.0 MANAGEMENT OF SDF'S FINANCES

All monies raised on behalf of the Organisation shall be applied to further the objectives of the Organisation and for no other purpose. To facilitate the management of SDF's finances,

- i. The Executive Committee shall open bank accounts for SDF in a country in Europe, a state in USA and in The Gambia – contributions and funds raised in the USA, Europe and in The Gambia shall be deposited in the relevant bank accounts in each country/state by the Treasurer or his/her Assistant, with appropriate records kept of these transactions;
- ii. "Sikankos" or members resident outside of The Gambia, but not in Europe or USA, shall have the option to choose which SDF bank account and in which country they wish to make their membership subscriptions;
- iii. Donor agencies shall also have the same option to choose which bank account they wish to make their grants/donations payable to;
- iv. SDF shall draw upon the resources held in these accounts, as deemed necessary to fund the programme(s) approved by the members of the Organisation with full membership rights;
- v. No contributions shall be expended without being banked first.

6.1 Financial Reporting from Branches of the Organisation

- i. The accounts shall be managed by the Treasurer, the President and Secretary General;
- ii. The responsible individuals (e.g., Treasurer, and President) shall provide a report of the financial status of SDF to the Executive and to the members (as stipulated in his/her role);
- iii. Such report will provide detailed information on the situation of the Organisation's finances. The financial and activities report will be provided at the end of every year.

6.2 Mismanagement of SDF Finances

The Executive and the general membership of SDF shall ensure that the Organisation's finances are not mismanaged or misappropriated. In the event of an established misappropriation or fraud on the part of an officer or officers of the Organisation, the person or persons responsible shall settle in full the amount involved, within a time stipulated by the Executive Committee, notwithstanding any other penalties as may be determined by the Executive Committee. Failure to comply shall lead to prompt legal action.

Individuals found guilty of fraud or gross mismanagement while managing SDF funds shall resign from whatever position they may occupy at the time and shall be barred from occupying positions within the Organisation in the future and shall face legal action. However, such individuals have the right to vote upon paying their annual subscription to SDF.

7.0 COMPOSITION OF THE MANAGEMENT ORGANS OF SDF

The management of the Organisation shall be constituted as follows:

7.1 General Assembly

The supreme authority for the conduct of the affairs of the Organisation shall be the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall convene at least once every year. The Executive Committee may, at any time, call a General Assembly meeting of the Organisation to discuss specific matters at hand.

7.1.1 The functions of the General Assembly

The functions of the General Assembly shall include:

- i. Review the annual activity report and audited accounts of the Organisation for approval;
- ii. Elect members of the Executive Committee;
- iii. Approve the annual work plan and budget prepared by the Executive Committee;
- iv. Review and approve/disapprove all resolutions put forward by the Executive.

7.3 Executive Committee

The day-to-day management of the affairs of the Organisation shall be entrusted to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall comprise: the President, 2 Vice Presidents, Secretary General, 1 Assistant Secretary General, Treasurer, 1 Assistant Treasurer, Auditor and 1 Assistant Auditor, Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary and 1 Assistant Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary and 5 Advisers all of whom shall be elected by the General Assembly of the Organisation. The Executive Committee has the freedom to co-opt members into the Executive Committee should it be necessary. However, the Executive Committee must exercise due diligence before co-opting any member into the Executive Committee. Such due diligence work must involve, among other things, whether the individual has paid their annual subscription, are willing and able to observe the functions of the Executive Committee (as described below) as well as their track record in advancing the core vision and mission of SDF.

7.3.1 Functions of the Executive Committee

- i. As the custodians of SDF's funds and the body responsible for recommending and or deciding how the funds are spent, all Executive Committee members must be regular in the payment of their annual subscription; no Executive Committee member shall be allowed to accumulate arrears for more than one year without good cause;
- ii. By accepting to serve in the Executive Committee of SDF, members also accept that non-payment of the annual subscription for a period one year, following the publication of a third reminder to pay within the same year, shall result in the automatic expulsion of the member from the Executive Committee on 31 December of that year. Unless such individual(s) make good their arrear(s), such member(s) shall lose their right to vote in any decision-making process of SDF at both the Executive and the membership levels.
- iii. The Executive Committee shall have the responsibility of directing the activities of SDF, ensuring that its structure and governance remain transparent, effective and efficient and that its objectives and purpose remain relevant and streamlined;
- iv. The Executive shall review and reassess SDF's goals annually or frequently as dictated by conditions on the ground and recommend changes to members for approval;
- v. When the resources are available, the Executive shall develop a programme of work and budget for consideration and approval by the General Assembly. The annual work programme shall indicate the activities to be undertaken as well as costs for such activities.
- vi. Demonstrate a clear understanding of needs of beneficiaries and likely or potential impacts of our actions or lack of action on them;
- vii. Develop a strategic direction for the Organisation to successfully overcome its challenges;
- viii. Ensure clear, honest, transparent and effective communication (orally and in writing) of issues with members i.e. involve them from the beginning to promote ownership and minimise the negative impacts of the Executive's actions;
- ix. Set realistic targets for resources mobilisation to allow SDF to meet its objectives and outline how the resources will be acquired;
- x. Establish a vision, scope and deliverables for SDF for the present and future – define what has to be achieved and over what time period;
- xi. Agree on specified strategies to successfully carry SDF through any challenge;
- xii. Prepare an annual report to show progress towards SDF's mission/purpose (i.e. meeting the needs of its beneficiaries);
- xiii. Demonstrate and communicate accountability for everything they do;
- xiv. Establish the roles and responsibilities of members (i.e. who shall take part in what);

- xv. Accept responsibility and liability of misuse of the Organisation's funds and resources, and also understand the Organisational, reputational and legal consequences for their actions;
- xvi. Act as role models for the youths, the community and the Organisation always.

7.4 Term of office of Executive Committee Members

The term of office for members of the Executive Committee shall be three years and the members are eligible for re-election. Any person nominated to the Executive Committee must not have more than one-year membership subscription arrears to SDF before taking up a position in the Executive Committee.

7.5 Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee members shall comprise not more than 5 members of whom at least 3 must be senior citizens of the village who have the relevant knowledge and experience, to provide guidance to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly. Members of this committee shall be selected by the Executive Committee with the approval of the General assembly. The Advisory Committee may meet as and when it considers necessary, at the request of the Executive Committee or the General Assembly. If it is considered that the membership of the Advisory Committee may enhance the operational efficiency of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee has the freedom, under this constitution, to co-opt the membership of the Advisory Committee into the Executive Committee.

7.6 Other Committees

The Executive Committee may also establish ad-hoc committees to implement specific projects or tasks. The composition of such committee shall be determined by the Executive Committee- through strict observance of the provisions within this Constitution.

Holders of these positions must work hard and appreciate the urgency of time and do all that is possible to help the Organisation achieve its aspirations and objectives.

8.0 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

8.1 The President

8.1.1 Duties and responsibilities of the President

- i. S/he is the leader of SDF and shall provide leadership capable of promoting and advocating for SDF and motivating the members;
- ii. S/he shall closely monitor the members of the Executive as well as those of other committees to ensure that all officials are performing to the expected standards, whilst maintaining the highest ethical standards in the execution of their duties.
- iii. S/he shall preside over meetings of the Organisation and shall help to conduct the business (e.g. meetings) of the SDF in an orderly manner as per the agenda;
- iv. S/he shall work closely with the Secretary General to provide the necessary support and guidance to the Treasurer;

- v. S/he shall guide the preparation of the annual activity report and financial statement to be presented at the AGM.

In the light of the responsibilities highlighted above it is recommended that the President shall have the following profile:

- a) S/he shall work to ensure that the mission and objectives of SDF remain relevant;
- b) S/he must be easily accessible to the members and the people we seek to support and inspire;
- c) S/he must be able to stay upbeat and create a positive outlook for the future of SDF;
- d) S/he must have experience of web-enabled communications and have high standard of communication skills (both orally and in writing) and analytical skills;
- e) S/he must have a good grasp of the job functions of people below him/her;
- f) S/he must be able to review the performance of people directly reporting to him/her to see whether the person has improved in their roles;
- g) Must have a vision and provide a strategic plan (e.g. future spending, objectives, etc.) for SDF to follow on an annual basis;
- h) In his/her annual report, s/he must provide an account of whether SDF is staying on target of its strategic plan or veering off track. Although the President may require the input of specific officials to drive the strategic plan of SDF, all members must see the critical need for them to help successfully drive the strategic plan of SDF;
- i) The President must proactively develop and maintain the key objectives of SDF;
- j) S/he must be able to keep ahead of developments undertaken by SDF and areas of need and also recognise issues which may potentially negatively impact on the activities of SDF;
- k) S/he must be a good listener and a patient individual; be amenable to suggestions and also be able to assist and or work with colleagues to devise and deliver appropriate strategies that will mitigate negative issues which may impact on SDF's activities;
- l) S/he must possess outstanding interpersonal skills and be able to establish affinity and credibility with members and outside agencies;
- m) S/he must have the ability to lead and inspire members, as well as the capacity to command respect from members and outside bodies;
- n) S/he must show the ability to focus inwards so that s/he can identify things that will position SDF to be able to get the funds it requires to meet its objectives;
- o) Must work with members to improve our activities, financial position and also keep the members upbeat about the work of SDF;
- p) Working in strong partnership with the Treasurer and Secretary General s/he must be able to act quickly to respond to the need to authorise payments;
- q) In the exercise of his/her role, the President may receive assistance and input from his/her next in line (e.g. the Vice President, Secretary General, etc.);
- r) The **Assistant Presidents** shall give assistance to the President in carrying out the above roles.

8.2 The Secretary General

8.2.1 Duties and responsibilities of the Secretary General

The Secretary General shall be responsible for all correspondence of the Organisation including letters, minutes, memos, reports, etc. other than financial reports. In his absence the Assistant Secretary General shall take charge of all responsibilities. Duties of The Secretary General shall be to:

- i. Record minutes of meetings of the General Assembly as well as the Executive Committee and ensuring that they as well as all other documents of the Organisation other than those relating to financial transactions are properly kept and readily available for reference or inspection;
- ii. Prepare minutes and all relevant reports, and circulate them to members in a timely manner;
- iii. Prepare end of year report on the activities of the Organisation on behalf of the Executive Committee for presentation at the General Assembly;
- iv. In the absence of the President or the Vice President s/he shall act as the head of the Organisation;
- v. Ensure that all correspondence of the Organisation is appropriately filed for easy access;
- vi. Circulate notice for meetings on time and through the best means of communication to ensure wider publicity and attendance of meetings, and
- vii. Do all other things that may be incidental to the requirements of his/her office as may be directed by the Executive Committee.

It is expected that the Secretary General shall be someone who can:

- a) Project a positive image of the Organisation and act professionally at all times;
- b) Be courteous and must be an effective and clear communicator (both orally and in writing);
- c) Have an excellent knowledge of the Organisation's vision and its objectives;
- d) Have the practical ability to perform basic administrative duties;
- e) Have the capacity to do multiple tasks effectively and efficiently and in a timely manner;
- f) Have good organizational skills – this ensures that all correspondence of the Organisation is appropriately filed and can be easily accessed. S/he must be able to gather and keep track of all the Organisation's activities which s/he shall have to prepare into a report for the members. Such a report must be available within two (2) months of the Auditor's report;

- g) Be able to use a computer – must have an email account and or be ready to embrace technology to help run the affairs of the Organisation effectively and efficiently.
- h) The **Assistant Secretary Generals** shall give assistance to the Secretary General in carrying out the above roles.

8.3 The Treasurer

8.3.1 Duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the proper management of all the finances of the Organisation. In his/her absence the Assistant Treasurer shall take charge of all responsibilities. Duties of the Treasurer shall be to:

- i. Put in place a system of proper internal control mechanism for security and control of the funds of the Organisation.
- ii. Maintain all the records relating to financial transactions of the Organisation. In this regard, the Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving all monies and making all payments authorised by the President and Secretary General of SDF. S/he shall have all financial transactions properly recorded in a book or in the file provided by the Organisation for this purpose. Such information may also be entered electronically;
- iii. Liaise with the focal persons and the elected Executive members in other countries/regions to determine monies received and paid by members in those areas, the amount remitted in the local account of SDF towards SDF-funded projects and the balance of physical cash not deposited to enable him/her to update his/her accounts.
- iv. Prepare an end of year report on the financial activities of the Organisation and provide such reports to the Executive Committee subject to verification by the Auditor and to present the report to the General Assembly on behalf of the Executive Committee.
- v. Maintain accurate, honest and transparent financial records of the Organisation. In this regard, it is not enough for him/her to commit to memory S/he must not over estimate his/her ability to remember details of financial transactions. All transactions must be entered electronically and or manually;
- vi. Regularly obtain bank statements to reconcile with the cash book so that discrepancies and errors can be identified and corrected in a timely manner.
- vii. Work in collaboration with the President and Secretary General, for effective implementation of SDF-sponsored projects.
- viii. Ensure that the Organisation's funds are spent in accordance with the Constitution and approved budget;
- ix. Provide guidance and support the Executive, in the preparation of the draft budget for the Organisation, to be presented by the Executive at the General Assembly for consideration and approval.

- x. Prepare and submit any statutory returns (e.g. tax returns, VAT returns, etc.) on behalf of SDF to the relevant authorities;
- xi. Operate a petty impress system to pay for minor expenditures. All funds disbursed under this arrangement shall be satisfactorily retired and confirmed by the auditor before any replenishment.
- xii. The Treasurer must be able to provide electronic information of all transactions recorded in the books for the Auditor and all members via the Secretary General;
- xiii. S/he must know how to manage money (e.g. how to make the most out of small sums of money) and how to make more money for SDF;
- xiv. S/he must remember that financial control and planning are the life blood of an organisation –S/he must therefore keep proper, accurate and honest accounts of SDF's finances and prepare regular statements of SDF's financial status;
- xv. The **Assistant Treasurers** shall work in partnership with the Treasurer in carrying out the above duties.

All items purchased by SDF remain the property of SDF and must be used as such and with respect.

8.4 The Auditor

8.4.1 Duties and responsibilities of an auditor

The Auditor shall be responsible for scrutinising the accounts of the Organisation. The Auditor must audit the accounts of the Organisation yearly and provide written report to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly via the Secretary General detailing out his/her findings. The Auditor shall be independent of the Executive Committee and shall be answerable directly to the General Assembly. The Auditor's report must be with the Secretary General by 30th April, at least 1 month before the AGM. Acting independently the Auditor shall:

- i. Identify risks of theft or loss from the Organisation and ensure that the Organisation's funds are managed in accordance with sound accounting principles;
- ii. Provide an honest assessment of the Organisation's financial standing and indicate whether the financial statements accurately show the financial condition of SDF;
- iii. Report any deficiencies in accounting policies and procedures of the Organisation as well as cases of fraud and any other concerns arising out of the audit;
- iv. Present his/her Report at the AGM for consideration and approval;
- v. Work to discover any potential weaknesses in SDF's financial reporting systems.
- vi. The **Assistant Auditors** shall work in partnership with the Auditor in carrying out the above duties.

8.5 The Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary

The Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary shall be responsible for organising members of the Organisation, including fundraising. In his/her absence, the Assistant Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary shall take charge of all responsibilities.

8.5.1 Duties of the Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary

- i. Raise awareness among members of the financial needs of SDF and suggest appropriate ways these needs can be supported via annual subscriptions, fundraising activities, etc.;
- ii. Organise income generating programmes and activities for the Organisation.
- iii. Provide guidance and support to the Executive Committee in developing a robust fund-raising strategy for resource mobilisation for SDF using a variety of techniques such as appeals, charity shows, sale of memorabilia, twinning with similar development Organisations and communities in and out of The Gambia and any other innovative measures that can generate funds for the Organisation;
- iv. Work with members to bring welcome publicity for SDF in all strands of its work including fundraising;
- v. Keep members informed of the social and cultural events of individual members and SDF.
- vi. Identify potential donors to support SDF;
- vii. Work with members to apply for grants from donor agencies;
- viii. Carry out the duties of the post within the laws of the state they operate with respect to legal ways of raising funds;
- ix. Effectively communicate to the members the need for raising funds to enable SDF to fulfil its aspirations;

It will be desirable and or essential if the post of Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary can be filled by someone who is:

- a) A good team player, who is committed to working with others to enable deliver SDF's objectives;
- b) Charismatic, energetic, inspirational and upbeat in going about their duties – this is for a worthy course;
- c) Has an excellent interpersonal skill, with the ability to inspire and engage with a wide range of funders and stakeholders;
- d) A good communicator, with the ability to communicate the vision and objectives of SDF to a range of audiences;
- e) Shows the ability to take decisions and responsibilities for their own actions or decisions;

- f) Organisationally skilful with the ability to deliver results during their term of office.
- g) The **Assistant Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretaries** shall work in partnership with the Social and Resource Mobilisation Secretary in carrying out the above duties.

8.6 The Advisers (Advisory Committee)

8.6.1 Duties and responsibilities of the Advisers (Advisory Committee)

- i. Although not essential, this post must be occupied by elders who have the wisdom of age and experience, capacity to listen patiently and bring people of diverse opinions together through diplomacy, persuasive dialogue and perseverance in putting an alternative view forward. Their duties and responsibilities shall include:
- ii. Provide diverse perspectives to every challenge SDF and its members face;
- iii. They shall help support the Organisation in making realistic and informed choices/decisions so that SDF is better able to effectively manage risks and improve its performance;
- iv. Provide support in developing a clear and relevant vision for the Organisation and help to convey the right messages to the relevant bodies;
- v. Help the Organisation understand the rewards of our actions – there must be open and frank communication between the advisers (the advisory committee).

In the interest of bringing people together and portraying a genuine positive image of the Organisation, the Advisory Committee:

- a) Must demonstrably show the ability to liaise and negotiate with members and outside agencies on behalf of SDF so that SDF is able to turn its strategy into reality;
- b) Show some ability to be able to use IT or work closely with people who can use IT so that their words of wisdom can be transmitted far and wide;
- c) Must have the patience to work with and help young people achieve their goals, e.g. in areas such as helping them draw up plans for employment, education, entrepreneurship, and training;
- d) Shall support and guide SDF to develop a clear and relevant vision for the future and convey the right messages to the relevant bodies;
- e) Shall help SDF to better define and plan the effective execution of its strategic plan and vision;
- f) Shall advise SDF on ways to translate its strategic plan into lasting success;
- g) May advise SDF on how to streamline its activities in order to bring services to the people it seeks to support in a timely manner.

9.0 MEETINGS

9.1 General Assembly of the members

The General Assembly will meet at least once a year. The Executive Committee may, at any time, call a general meeting of the Organisation to discuss specific matters at hand. In convening such meetings, the President in consultation with the Executive Committee shall prepare an agenda stating the business to be discussed. The meeting will be chaired by the President or his/her representative. The minutes of the meeting will be recorded by the Secretary General or his/her representative.

The proceedings at such meetings shall be held via face-to-face discussions, other forms of communication such as zoom and or any other web-based media. In the absence of a consensus, the matter shall be put to a vote and a simple majority shall be needed to approve the proposal.

- i. The decision(s) reached by committees shall be reviewed and ratified by the members of the General Assembly before they could be implemented;
- ii. Major decisions (activities or projects that have long lasting and consequential) impact on the lives of the villagers shall be ratified by the members of the Organisation before it could be implemented;
- iii. Long-lasting and consequential activities and projects shall be determined and defined by the Executive Committee of the Organisation and support for such activities shall be approved by the members of the Organisation.

9.2 Executive Committee meetings

9.3 Ordinary meetings of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will meet at least once a month. The agenda of the meeting will be drafted by the President and shared with the Executive Committee members for adjustment and approval ahead of the meeting. The meeting will be chaired by the President or his/her representative. The minutes of the meeting will be recorded by the Secretary General or his/her representative.

9.4 Extraordinary meetings of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee may at any time call an emergency meeting. The agenda for such a meeting shall be drafted by the President and put to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval before the meeting.

The meetings will be conducted via a suitable platform. The meeting will be chaired by the President or his/her representative. The minutes of the meeting will be recorded by the Secretary General or his/her representative. In the absence of a consensus, the matter shall be put to a vote and a simple majority shall be needed to approve the motion being discussed.

9.5 Consequences for failure to attend Executive Committee meetings

Executive Committee members who fail to attend Executive Committee meetings on six (6) consecutive occasions without good cause shall by their own actions declare themselves of failing to live up to the acute sense of the spirit of volunteerism that is needed in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the Executive Committee of SDF to which they have been nominated/co-opted. To that end, such members may be removed from the membership of the Executive Committee for the remainder of the term of office of that Executive Committee.

9.6 Quorum

The quorum shall determine the legitimacy of the decisions taken by the various organs of the Organisation or the General Assembly. The quorum for the meetings of the various organs of the Organisation shall be as follows:

- i. For all matters to discuss and decisions on issues concerning SDF and its activities, a simple majority of those present and or those who take part in the discussion by any means possible (e.g. email exchange, cell phone communications, any web-based exchanges, etc.) shall be required. The Executive Committee may use its discretion to assume that a non-response to a motion under discussion is an affirmative response

9.7 Proceedings at meetings

Where possible, proceedings at meetings shall include face to face discussions and other forms of communication such as Skype or other web-based media to allow participation of all members. Executive members should be able to call meetings (frequency to be decided), to discuss, among other things, how to monitor and evaluate ongoing projects, address issues raised by the General Assembly, etc. and later share any information with all SDF members.

9.8 Amendments

- i. Any amendment to the Constitution shall require the approval of a simple majority of those who take part in the discussion at the General Assembly by any means possible. The Executive may use its discretion to assume that a non-response to a motion under discussion is an affirmative response. This Constitution may be repealed and or amended in part or in whole as may be decided by the General Assembly following due process as set out herein.
- ii. Proposals for amendments must and can only be submitted by an active member, to the Secretary General at least 30 days before the meeting of the General Assembly at which it would be discussed.
- iii. The Secretary General shall prepare a draft resolution to the effect and bring it to the attention of the Executive Committee for review and recommendation for onward passage to the General Assembly.
- iv. Once the Executive Committee adopts the passing of the resolution for discussion at the General Assembly, the resolution must be circulated to members at least one week before the General Assembly meeting. The decision of the General Assembly on the resolution shall be final and conclusive.
- v. The amended clause shall be attached as addendum to the main Constitution and a copy filed for backup.

9.9 Dissolution of SDF

In the unlikely event that the Organisation is to be dissolved, its surplus funds and any material/assets it owns shall be given or transferred to any Village Development Organisation in Sika or other charitable Organisations with similar ambitions.

10.0 Miscellaneous

10.1 Financial Year

The financial year of the Organisation shall be 1st January to 31st December of each year

10.2 Remunerations

No remuneration shall be paid to any of the office bearers. However, out of pocket expenses directly relating to the activities of the Organisation may be refunded (at the discretion of the Executive Committee). Receipts for reimbursements must be submitted to the Treasurer/Executive Committee before payments are made.

Date this constitution was amended: 01/01/2023

Signatures

President:

Date:.....

Name (Print): Signature

Secretary General:

Date.....

Name (Print): Signature