

# **Climate Action Network**

## **CAN Charter**

**as adopted by the CAN International General Assembly on 29 February 2020  
Arusha - Tanzania**

### **Our network rules and guiding principles for network governance**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This document aims to provide clarity and set rules for the way the CAN global network is organized and works. It should be used as a guide to define how members, Nodes and CAN International best work together with the ultimate aim to bring the change we need.

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#### **A. DESCRIPTION, VISION AND MISSION**

1. CAN is a network of member organizations from all over the earth committed to combating harmful climate change. This network is based on trust, openness and democracy. It is first a network of organizations brought together by a common concern. The network of independent members of CAN act in terms of their own mandates and organizational aims and objects. This Charter does not create a new organization; rather, it establishes rules and guidelines which members will adhere to in formalizing their national, regional and global co-operation.
2. CAN notes that Life on earth is under severe threat from catastrophic climate change, which is being caused by humans through our constant production of greenhouse gases. CAN as a network faces this threat with the common concern of its members all over the world.
3. The vision of CAN is a world striving actively towards and achieving the protection of the global climate in a manner which promotes equity and social justice between peoples, sustainable development of all communities, and protection of the global environment. CAN unites to work towards this vision.
4. CAN's mission is to support and empower civil society organizations to influence the design and development of an effective global strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure its implementation at international, national and local levels in the promotion of equity and sustainable development.
5. The objectives of CAN are:
  - a) To prevent dangerous climate change through awareness and capacity building of governments and citizens worldwide.
  - b) To protect the global climate from dangerous human interference.
  - c) To be the conscience of the world concerning issues of climate change.
  - d) To promote the protection of the global climate from dangerous human interference; and so to facilitate the radical transformation in the way we use resources, the land and energy.
  - e) To prioritize sustainable development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
  - f) To inspire government, business, community, and individual action to this effect.
  - g) To develop an objective understanding of climate change and its causes, and share this information with all people, especially all members.
  - h) To organize, support, inspire and coordinate its members to take effective action on climate change, either as one global voice, or in the regions where members operate
6. The Strategies of CAN include:
  - a) Active participation in the international climate change negotiations and all other relevant fora.

- b) Raising awareness and pushing issues onto the global agenda to influence the climate change decision-making process.
- c) Placing new climate change, equity and sustainable development issues on the global agenda.
- d) Contributing to the establishment of global, regional, national and local climate change agendas through mobilizing a genuinely inclusive civil society process at all levels.
- e) Promoting a nuclear free future
- f) Ensuring the gains at the global level are translated into concrete benefits at the national and local level, and are implemented effectively and work to benefit of poor people and countries .
- g) Facilitating a process for developing campaigns and negotiating strategies at the global level
- h) Holding global institutions and the private sector accountable for their actions and ensuring they respond to social and environmental concerns.
- i) Developing and disseminating knowledge that is crucial to addressing the trans-national challenges of climate change.
- j) Addressing the participatory gap through the creation of inclusive processes.

7. The Primary activities of CAN are:

- a) Information sharing
- b) Capacity Building
- c) Lobbying on common positions
- d) Coordination of media messages
- e) Coordination of research efforts
- f) Cooperation with other NGO groupings
- g) Mobilization of public support and awareness
- h) Any other activities which would promote the CAN objectives

## **B. CAN MEMBERS**

8. All non-profit organizations, including community based organisations, that do not represent government nor industry interests and which actively promote ambitious climate action and sustainable development, are eligible to become members of CAN and may apply to do so.

9. By applying for membership the applicant organisation declares that it will respect and apply the rules of this Charter, support the vision, mission and activities of CAN, and bind itself to the CAN Code of Conduct.

10. Applicant organizations must apply for membership with the relevant National or Regional Node where the applicant is active. In case there is no Node covering the applicant's work area, or in case the applicant's work area covers several different Nodes, the applicant may apply to become a member of CAN International. In some cases applicant organisations (in particular development NGOs) may work in multiple countries or regions but have their governance and/or advocacy activities mainly based in one country or region. In those cases the applicant should apply with the relevant National or Regional Nodes as determined by their governance. Nodes (including CAN International), when rejecting an application on this basis, will refer the applicant to the correct Node.

11. Organisations with offices that are active in multiple Nodes are strongly encouraged to apply and engage both with CAN International for their coordinating office and with all the national and regional nodes their offices are active in.

12. All Nodes as well as CAN International have their own procedures for accepting, suspending, **expelling** and resigning of members. These procedures, while different, should all guarantee principles of trust, inclusiveness and transparency, need to be fully in line with all the principle of this Charter, and should be available on the respective Nodes' and/or CAN International's website. For Nodes where such processes are not available, the CAN International rules should be followed.

13. All Nodes may establish specific membership categories, including the categories for observer members.

14. By becoming a member of a CAN National or Regional Node, whatever the category of membership, the organisation will not only have access to the relevant membership services and engagement opportunities of this specific Node but also to those offered by CAN International. Nodes will regularly inform both new and existing members of the services and engagement opportunities offered by CAN International. Similarly, members of National Nodes should have access to the membership services and engagement opportunities of the Regional Node the National Node is member of.

Nodes can also decide to provide access to a number of their membership services to members of other Nodes and/or CAN International, if they wish to do so, and depending on their own provisions. All Nodes are free to decide this independently.

15. In case an application is refused by a National or Regional Node, or by CAN International, and irrespective of any appeal procedures that may be offered by the relevant Node, the applicant may apply with a different Node or with CAN International, guided by paragraph 11 above, but must include in its application the reasons why it is submitting a new application **and why its previous application was rejected**.

### C. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL NODES

16. A National Node is an association of CAN Members in a particular country. A Regional Node is an association of CAN Members, and/or CAN National Nodes, in a group of countries on an international basis. The name of any Node must adequately reflect the country/countries it represents.

17. Nodes are formed to enable members to increase their capacity to reach our common objectives and bring the change that is needed.

18. Any National or Regional Node **will strive** to match the minimum requirement for Node status listed in the "*Building Effective CAN Nodes*" **policy**. The CAN International Secretariat will, where possible, support Nodes in reaching both the minimum requirements as well as the criteria for effective Nodes, and will provide the CAN International General Assembly an annual update of the Nodes' status in reaching the different requirements. The ambition is for every Node to be an effective one. The Nodes are requested to provide all necessary information to the Secretariat well in time for this.

19. All Nodes are expected to subscribe to the provisions of this Charter, the CAN Code of Conduct and the "*Our CAN Values*" Statement, and must act on the basis of trust, inclusiveness, transparency and be accountable for this.

20. Any group of CAN members and/or organisations eligible for CAN membership can propose to establish a new National or Regional Node. Applications for establishing new Nodes must be addressed to the CAN International General Assembly and must include an overview of the proposed members of the Node (at least **three**), a clear strategy on how the minimum requirements for Nodes will be reached, and how the Node aims to reach the criteria for effective Nodes. The CAN International General Assembly will decide on the acceptance of new Nodes, after consulting the relevant CAN members and Nodes active in the relevant country/region on the acceptance of the new Node.

21. The CAN International General Assembly can suspend or cancel the use of the CAN name and/or logo by National or Regional Nodes, in case of breaches to the principles of this Charter, the Code of Conduct of CAN and the minimum requirements for Nodes. Any complaints about such breaches should be first raised within the Node. If no resolution can be found the CAN International Secretariat should be informed which then raises the issue with the CAN International Board. If no resolution can be found, the issue will be brought to the General Assembly.

22. **In principle**, any new Regional Node must include all existing National and Regional Nodes based in its territory. And any new National Node must become a member of the existing Regional Node covering its territory.

23. Once accepted the Node may carry out activities under the name of CAN. The CAN International Secretariat keeps a list of all accepted Nodes which should be available on its website.
24. The CAN International General Assembly keeps track of the demarcation of the different Nodes, identifies the countries or regions that are not covered by CAN Nodes, and together with the CAN International Secretariat develops a strategy on what to do with the countries and regions not covered. Similarly, the CAN International General Assembly may adopt a vision and strategy on how to further develop the Nodes, which may include, while respecting Nodes' autonomy, a vision on the potential needs to merge or split Nodes, and/or establish new Nodes.
25. The CAN International General Assembly must consider whether any application to establish a new Node impacts the agreed demarcation of the geographical extent of existing Nodes, and in the case of such an impact agreement must be sought first with the existing Nodes before the proposal can be considered.
26. A National or Regional Node **will strive** to create its own legal entity, raise its own funds, and conduct the activities it determines for the purposes of furthering the CAN vision, mission and activities in their country or region. All National and Regional Nodes shall have a proper governing body based on principles of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability.
27. National and Regional Nodes are free to set up their own rules and codes of conduct but such rules should not be in conflict with the provisions of this Charter, the CAN Code of Conduct and the "*Our CAN Values*" Statement.
28. Each National or Regional Node governing body is accountable to its members. In the event of a failure of this accountability, the members may report this to the CAN International Board, which may take appropriate action.
29. Each National or Regional Node must appoint a Coordinator or co-coordinators, **recognizing that Nodes may designate different titles to these roles**, taking into consideration geographic and gender **equity**.
30. The National or Regional Node may set the rules for the appointment, rotation, terms of reference, and activities of the Node Coordinator.
31. The National or Regional Node may also decide to appoint a Node focal point for its relationship with CAN International which can be the same or a different person than the Node Coordinator.
32. National and Regional Nodes may decide to set up a Node secretariat with its own staff, objectives and work programme.
33. The CAN International Secretariat will, funding permitted, organise an annual meeting bringing together representatives of the International Secretariat and the Node focal points. This meeting aims to:
- provide a platform for Nodes to discuss cooperation and coordination;
  - support Nodes in their further development;
  - strengthen the cooperation between Nodes and CAN International;
  - initiate, further develop and evaluate joint projects between Nodes and with CAN International.
34. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Charter, the CAN International Board must fulfill the function of dispute resolution agency within the CAN network, including within the Nodes of organization within CAN. In the case of a dispute arising and not adequately provided for in this Charter, the CAN International Board must attempt to resolve the dispute, and CAN members agree to this role by the International Board. The CAN International Board may appoint one or more of its members to act as an intervener in disputes, or may appoint an independent third party to do so. All dispute resolution procedures will be designed by the CAN International Board, and will in all cases include an attempt at mediation. Arbitration of a dispute may only occur if the parties to the dispute agree to do so and can agree to an arbitrator, who may be a CAN International Board member. In the case of arbitration, the decisions of the

arbitration will be final and binding. In all other cases where mediation has failed and arbitration is not agreed to, the matter will be referred to the next CAN International General Assembly for a final and binding decision.

## **E. GOVERNANCE**

35. The governance and CAN policy or position statements development process of the CAN global network (as distinct from the Secretarial function, which is dealt with separately) is the responsibility of all CAN members, and is expressed through **decisions** of the General Assembly of CAN. The CAN Secretariat may elaborate upon decisions in order to implement them, by creating processes and procedures in line with such decisions.

## **F. CAN POSITIONS, STATEMENTS AND STRATEGIES**

36. A statement refers to a position statement for open publication taken by CAN at an international level through the decision making process and includes existing CAN statements.

37. Any member or Node of CAN may release a statement in its own right. This statement should not be in contradiction with CAN positions reached by consensus. Therefore, all members or Nodes should strive to ensure that their views are reflected in CAN positions on this basis.

38. If a member or Node wishes to release a statement under the name CAN, the statement or excerpt should be an agreed CAN position statement. Any member or Node is free to release such an excerpt at any time. In the event of a member or Node wishing to place its own interpretation on the excerpt, the provisions in the next paragraph apply.

39. Members or Nodes should take care not to release statements in the name of CAN which are contradictory in substance or in interpretation to CAN statements. In the event of doubt in this regard, a member or Node should first present a statement to the relevant CAN working group or CAN-talk with a request that the statement be released by the member or Node in the name of CAN. In this case the working group or general members must determine whether the statement is in line with CAN positions.

40. In the case of a member or Node releasing a statement which is made in the name of CAN, but which is in conflict with a position of CAN, and which remains so after consultation with the appropriate body, then any other member may raise a formal complaint to the CAN Secretariat. The CAN Board may then take the steps outlined in the Case of a breach of the CAN Code of Conduct.

41. Issue Based Working Groups may be formed in order to bring CAN expertise to bear on particular issues. The Groups will be formed by request from any member or Node, or at General Assemblies by decision, and with facilitation by the CAN Board.

42. The CAN secretariat will coordinate the appointment of Coordinator or Co-Coordinators, for each Issue Based Working Group, based on suggestions and acceptance of the Working Group itself. Working Group Coordinators will adhere to the Terms of Reference for Working Group Coordinators.

43. Issue Based Working Groups are formed to deal with particular issues, and to draw together expertise within the network.

44. Draft Outputs of Issue Based Working Groups will be published within CAN for comment under the administration of the Secretariat. Issue Based Working Groups will take into account comments received and forward a final outcome to all members.

45. The outputs of Issue based Working Groups will become CAN position statements when sufficient consensus is achieved within the network.

46. Issue based Working Groups may be funded by CAN.

## **G. FUNDRAISING**

47. Funds raised by CAN must first be utilized to fund the activities of the CAN secretariat, CAN activities, and CAN publications and media.
48. Further funds raised may be specific to projects and programs, or to CAN members or Nodes, in which case they should be accounted for on this basis.
49. General funds held for assistance to members or Nodes may be distributed to members on the following conditions:
- a) The allocation of funds is on written application by the member(s) in good standing.
  - b) The allocation has been approved by the CAN Board
  - c) The member has accounted to the CAN Secretariat to the satisfaction of the auditors for all previous allocations of funds.
  - d) The member provides proper proof of spending of funds to the satisfaction of the auditors.
50. In the allocation of funds, special consideration will be given to regions/countries/members which are short of funding to enable them to participate at General Assemblies, COPs, intersessionals and expert meetings.
51. The CAN secretariat will from time to time publish the routing of all funds within CAN and to CAN members. Any member is free to comment on and give advice to the CAN Secretariat regarding the allocation of funds raised.
52. The decisions of the CAN Board on the sourcing, administration, and distribution of funds is final, but is subject to full disclosure to CAN members and CAN membership comment.
53. CAN Nodes will be free to raise funds in the name of CAN.
54. Such fundraising activities will be done in consultation with and with full disclosure to the CAN Board.
55. Funds raised by CAN National and Regional Nodes will be noted by the CAN Secretariat.
56. All funds raised through CAN International shall, to the extent that funding and resources allow, be subject to an annual audit based on generally accepted accounting principles.
57. The CAN legal entity will be subject to a yearly audit.

## **H. VALUES, CODE OF CONDUCT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

58. Based on the desire to advance and improve people's lives through combating the harmful effects of climate change, we are committed to the following fundamental values that underpin the mission and objectives of the Climate Action Network and its members. We therefore commit ourselves to:
- a) Participatory, accountable and transparent decision-making.
  - b) Ensuring that the Network remains true to its vision, mission and objectives.
  - c) Mutual cooperation, collaboration and networking internally and with other organizations around issues of mutual concern.
59. As an international network of organizations, we recognize the importance of establishing and maintaining appropriate and effective bodies that will govern the internal functioning of our Networks at the global, regional and national levels. To this end we will:
- a) Ensure the Network has a clear vision, mission, objectives and policies, and adheres to them.
  - b) Ensure the governance structure reflects the race, age group and gender composition of CAN globally and the various target constituencies that the NGO works with, with regard to both their composition and their geographic spread.

60. Our commitment to promote participatory, accountable and transparent decision making is enshrined in this code of conduct. Whilst not a binding obligation on members, we aim to:

a) Develop mechanisms to enable all our members to be involved in planning programs that directly affect them;

b) Provide opportunities for regular evaluations and updating of programs;

c) Hold General Assemblies with full, open and accurate disclosure of relevant information concerning goals, programs, finances and governance of the Network;

d) Hold regular strategic planning sessions to which all CAN members are invited to contribute;

e) Provide clear and transparent accounting on financial matters to the broader membership.

61. All Members of CAN are committed to this Code of Conduct.

62. The following constitute serious breaches of this Code of Conduct:

a) Misrepresenting the Network and its positions;

b) Fraud or corruption;

c) Failure to properly acknowledge public statements opposing CAN position statements;

d) Opposition to CAN vision, or complete declared opposition to CAN position statements;

e) Failure to account to CAN when required.

63. Breaches by members or Nodes may result in expulsion of members from CAN as provided for in our Charter.

64. The CAN Board may formulate a Disciplinary Code to amplify this Code of Conduct and set procedures for its application. The Disciplinary Code will become part of this Charter by decision of the General Assembly.

#### **CHANGES TO THIS CHARTER**

65. This Charter may be amended or terminated by the General Assembly of CAN International.