

# **Constitution of Canada-Philippines Solidarity Organization**

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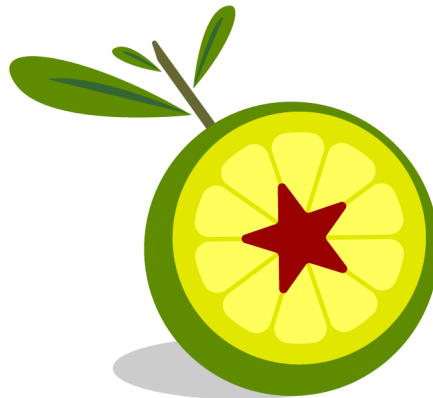
# Article I - Name and Emblem

## Section 1. Name

- a. The organization shall be called Canada-Philippines Solidarity Organization (CPSO).
- b. Local or regional Chapters shall append their name to this name with a hyphen. (Eg: Canada-Philippines Solidarity Organization - Toronto, CPSO-Toronto, or CPSO-TO)

## Section 2. Emblem

The emblem of CPSO shall be a kalamansi (Philippine lime) with a star in the middle, as illustrated:



## **Article II - Points of Unity**

CPSO is composed of non-Filipinos and Filipinos in Canada who are committed to defending people's rights and supporting the national democratic struggle in the Philippines. We work to strengthen ties of solidarity and resistance between the Filipino people and people in Canada.

As a solidarity organization, we are committed to building a progressive social movement with other global networks, community-based organizations, and concerned individuals engaged in the process of building a more peaceful, just, and democratic world.

CPSO works to provide political, educational, and material support for the mass movement in the Philippines. We educate people in Canada about the grave human rights situation in the Philippines, including the semi-feudal, semi-colonial system at its root. We believe that imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism are the three basic problems of the Filipino people which have resulted in the systematic state repression of their collective struggles for their right to self-determination, as well as their economic, social, and political rights.

We are committed to supporting the Filipino people in their search for justice, to bring forward their struggle to the rest of the world, and contribute to the realization of national democracy with a socialist perspective.

# Article III - Organizational Objectives

## Section 1. Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of CPSO shall be as follows:

- a. To educate, organize, and mobilize people in Canada to build international solidarity with the people of the Philippines in their collective struggle against imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism, and for national democracy with a socialist perspective.
- b. To connect the historical and ongoing manifestations of semi-colonialism (indirect colonial control), semi-feudalism (unequal land ownership), and bureaucrat capitalism (puppet government run on the basis of self-enrichment) in the Philippines to the structural injustices faced by Filipinos and other oppressed communities in Canada.
- c. To engage in solidarity with community-based organizations supporting Filipinos abroad, who are mostly workers and women, displaced and forced to migrate overseas due to the labor-export policy (LEP) of the Philippine government, land grabbing in the countryside, lack of national industrialization, and human rights violations.
- d. To coordinate with community-based organizations in the Philippines and their overseas chapters who are struggling for a genuinely democratic and sovereign Philippines, such as but not limited to Karapatan (Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights) and Bayan (New Patriotic Alliance).
- e. To work with other individuals, organizations, and alliances serving the interests of the Filipino people.
- f. To build relations with human rights organizations, anti-imperialist organizations, and organizations promoting the rights of working class and oppressed peoples everywhere.
- g. To support the overall well-being and collective unity of existing and future members of CPSO.

## **Article IV - Pledge**

I, [state your name], promise to advocate for people's rights in the Philippines and for the rights and welfare of Filipinos abroad.

I support the Filipino people's movement for National Democracy with a socialist perspective, and vow to promote the rights of the working class and oppressed peoples all over the world.

I will faithfully abide by and uphold the constitution and program of CPSO as well as protect its integrity and prestige.

# **Article V - Membership**

## **Section 1. Members**

CPSO membership is open to non-Filipino allies of all nationalities and Filipino peoples, who agree to the principles, objectives, and goals of the Constitution, and are prepared to actively work towards the stated objectives.

## **Section 2. Membership Process**

A person may become a member of CPSO after completing the following:

- a. Attend an orientation led by at least one (1) member of the CPSO.
- b. Join a meeting of CPSO.
- c. Collectively state the pledge with the meeting.
- d. Pay the first month's dues as an initial membership fee.

## **Section 3. Rights of Members**

Members shall have the right to:

- a. Be informed of and take part in any activities of Chapters, committees, and collectives.
- b. Take active part in decision-making, planning, and programming for the organization.
- c. Be informed of decisions made that affect the general membership.
- d. Express opinions and present suggestions.
- e. Be elected to their Chapter Coordinating Committee.
- f. Be selected as a delegate for the National General Assembly.
- g. Be elected as an officer of the National Coordinating Committee.
- h. Resign from the organization with a suitable explanation.

## **Section 4. Responsibilities of Members**

Members shall have the responsibility to:

- a. Abide by the constitution, principles, goals, and programs of CPSO.
- b. Protect the integrity and security of the organization.
- c. Attend General Meetings of their Chapter.
- d. Pay monthly membership dues totalling \$60 yearly (or less depending on financial situation).
- e. Attend educational and organizational meetings, collective undertakings, and other activities where cooperation is necessary.

## **Section 5. Supporters**

Individuals who do not have the capacity to fulfill the rights and responsibilities of CPSO membership may become supporters of CPSO by participating in or volunteering for CPSO activities, events, and campaigns; receiving CPSO news via the organizational newsletter; and contributing material and financial resources.

Supporters of CPSO *do not* have the right to:

- a. Vote in CPSO elections.
- b. Access CPSO records including its meeting minutes and financial reports.
- c. Access internal CPSO Google Drive Folders.
- d. Manage the website, social media, and other community outreach technologies, unless specifically authorized by the Chapter Coordinating Committee.

## **Article VI - Governing Bodies**

### **Section 1. The National General Assembly (NGA)**

- a. The National General Assembly (NGA) is a convention of general members represented by as many as two (2) voting delegates from each Chapter, in addition to an unlimited number of observing members.
- b. The NGA is the highest decision-making authority of the organization.
- c. The NGA cannot violate the terms of this document, and must instead vote to alter it as necessary.
- d. Any decision of another governing body of CPSO which conflicts with any decision of the NGA is void by default.
- e. The NGA shall convene to:
  - i. set the direction of the organization;
  - ii. approve general plans and programs;
  - iii. pass resolutions;
  - iv. elect officers to the National Coordinating Committee;
  - v. amend the constitution;
  - vi. recall, suspend, or expel any officer of the organization.
- f. The NGA shall meet no less than once every three (3) years.
- g. The date and venue of the NGA shall be decided by the National Coordinating Committee.
- h. A special NGA may be called at the request of any two (2) consenting Chapter Coordinating Committees.

### **Section 2. Chapter General Assemblies (CGAs)**

- a. Chapter General Assemblies (CGAs) are the conventions of general members in local or regional Chapters.
- b. CGAs are the second highest authority for decision making within their region or city, and their decisions are void by default when found to be in conflict with the National General Assembly or this document.
- c. CGAs are local bodies which shall:
  - i. convene to set the direction of the Chapter; approve Chapter plans and programs;
  - ii. elect officers to the Chapter Coordinating Committees;
  - iii. recall, suspend, or expel their Chapter officers
- d. CGAs shall meet no less than once per year.
- e. The date and venue of CGAs shall be set by the Chapter Coordinating Committee.
- f. A special CGA may be called at the request of two-thirds of the Chapter's membership.



## **Article VII - Coordinating Committees**

### **Section 1. The National Coordinating Committee (NCC)**

- a. The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) represents all Chapters of CPSO and is composed of elected members responsible for coordinating campaigns, projects, and information across all Chapters.
- b. NCC members are elected once every three years at the NGA.
- c. The NCC consists of at least a Chair, Secretary, Education Officer, Chapter Officer, and Treasurer.
- d. The NCC is responsible for scheduling NGAs, maintaining contact with the various local/regional Chapters, and coordinating work between the various local/regional Chapters.
- e. The NCC is responsible for executive decision making on behalf of the organisation as a whole but is bound by this document and the decisions of the NGA.
- f. The NCC has the authority, by a unanimous vote, to recall any elected committee member from any Chapter, at which point that Chapter must hold an election to appoint a new member to that committee position.

### **Section 2. Chapter Coordinating Committees (CCCs)**

- a. Chapter Coordinating Committees (CCCs) represent local or regional Chapters of CPSO and are composed of elected members responsible for the ongoing function of their Chapter.
- b. CCC members are elected annually at a CGA.
- c. CCCs will at minimum consist of a Chair, Secretary, and Education Officer. Other positions may be created by local Chapters as needed (ex. Treasurer, Membership Coordinator, Committee Leads, etc.).
- d. CCCs are responsible for scheduling local General Meetings and local CGAs, and ensuring decisions from these bodies are carried out.
- e. CCCs are responsible for holding Chapter General Meetings at least once per month to gauge interest and direct participation in the initiatives agreed upon via the CGA.
- f. CCCs are responsible for making decisions between Chapter General Meetings and CGAs, so long as these decisions do not contradict the letter or spirit of decisions made at the CGA or NGA.
  - i. In particular, CCCs may sign statements or letters on behalf of the local Chapter without consulting a General Meeting or Assembly.
  - ii. Any actions taken by CCCs made between General Meetings or assemblies must be reported at the following Meeting or Assembly.
  - iii. Authorise any and all financial transactions on behalf of CPSO.

# Article VIII - Composition of Coordinating Committees

## Section 1. Composition of the National Coordinating Committee

The NCC shall be composed of the following officers, with corresponding duties:

- a. Chair
  - i. Convene meetings of the NCC.
  - ii. Represent CPSO as the main spokesperson.
  - iii. Guide the development of external relations of CPSO.
  - iv. Ensure that work on national campaigns and projects is carried out.
  - v. Perform other tasks assigned by the NGA or NCC.
- b. Secretary
  - i. Ensure minutes are kept for meetings of the NGA and NCC.
  - ii. Manage other organizational documents pertaining to the membership of the entire organization.
  - iii. Oversee the development of the organization and its membership.
  - iv. Perform other tasks assigned by the NGA or NCC.
- c. Education Officer
  - i. Guide the development of internal political education of the membership.
  - ii. Keep track of the educational development of the membership through the educational curriculum.
  - iii. Perform other tasks assigned by the NGA or NCC.
- d. Chapter Officer
  - i. Coordinate communications with CCCs.
  - ii. Keep track of Chapters and ensure they are following constitutional practices.
  - iii. Perform other tasks assigned by the NGA or NCC.
- e. Treasurer
  - i. Manage and control funds on behalf of CPSO in accordance with the rules set out in this constitution.
  - ii. Keep a record of all revenues and expenditures in an official ledger.
  - iii. Surrender upon request any record made in conjunction with their role to the committee, within 24 hours.
  - iv. Perform other tasks assigned by the NGA or NCC.

## **Section 2. Composition of the Chapter Coordinating Committees**

The CCCs shall be composed of the following officers, with corresponding duties, as well as other positions as needed by the Chapter:

- a. Chair
  - i. Convene meetings of the CCC.
  - ii. Represent the Chapter to other Chapters and to the NCC, and as the main spokesperson of the Chapter.
  - iii. Guide the development of external relations of the Chapter.
  - iv. Ensure that work on local campaigns and projects is carried out.
  - v. Perform other tasks assigned by the CGA or CCC.
- b. Secretary
  - i. Ensure minutes are kept for meetings of the CGA, and for General Meetings and committee meetings of the Chapter.
  - ii. Manage other organizational documents pertaining to the membership of the Chapter.
  - iii. Oversee the development of the Chapter and its membership.
  - iv. Manage financial responsibilities on behalf of the chapter in lieu of a specific position for such.
  - v. Authorise any and all financial transactions on behalf of CPSO.
  - vi. Perform other tasks assigned by the CGA or CCC.
- c. Education Officer
  - i. Guide the development of internal political education of the membership of the Chapter.
  - ii. Keep track of the educational development of the membership of the Chapter through the educational curriculum.
  - iii. Perform other tasks assigned by the CGA or CCC.

## **Section 3. Creating New Committee Roles**

In the event that new Committee roles are needed, both the NCC and CCCs are empowered to create new peer positions and hold elections to fill them.

- a. A unanimous vote by the existing Committee members is required to create a new Committee position.
- b. The Committee creating a new position must also unanimously agree whom amongst the existing membership should fill the position.
- c. For Chapters creating their own positions, once a unanimous vote is achieved to create a new role, the Chapter Officer of the NCC will have the ability to veto the new position, forcing the Chapter to start over.
- d. Finally, new Committee positions must be ratified by a majority vote of the General Assembly, either at the National or Chapter level as appropriate.
- e. Each Committee role should be functionally distinct from all other Committee roles.
- f. When creating a new position, the Committee can delegate existing responsibilities of other Committee members to the new position with a unanimous vote.

- g. Wherever a Coordinating Committee must come to consensus or unanimous vote, each Committee Member has one vote to cast.

#### **Section 4. Creating Deputy Committee Roles**

The Chapter Coordinating Committee members have the authority to create deputy committee positions to assist them in conducting their duties.

- a. Any individual Coordinating Committee member can select a deputy candidate from the general CPSO membership to assist in fulfilling their duties.
- b. The choice of candidate must be unanimously approved by the other Coordinating Committee members.
- c. For CCC members appointing deputy positions, once a unanimous vote is achieved to appoint a deputy, the Chapter Officer of the NCC will have the ability to veto the new position, forcing the CCC to choose another candidate.
- d. Deputy positions must be ratified at the next Chapter General Assembly after their selection by the Chapter Coordinating Committee
- e. Deputy positions are not full Committee positions, and therefore do not have their own vote on issues where the Coordinating Committee must achieve consensus.
- f. Deputy positions carry the full authority of the Committee Member which authorised them.
- g. The Deputy can vote on behalf of or in place of their respective Committee Member in any capacity which requires their vote, and do not require approval to do so.
- h. A deputy officer will act in the position of their respective CCC officer in the event of that officer's resignation, death, expulsion etc.
- i. Such an event will require the CCC to schedule a Chapter General Assembly as soon as reasonably possible to elect a new officer or ratify the acting officer

# Article IX - Chapters

## Section 1. What is a Chapter?

- a. CPSO regional bodies, called Chapters, shall be created to democratically convene the activity of CPSO members and prospective members within their respective geographic regions.
- b. For cities, Local Chapters shall be created with a more narrow geographic focus.
- c. For rural and suburban areas, Regional Chapters shall be created with a broader geographic focus.
- d. Chapters shall consist of a minimum of five (5) members.

## Section 2. Rights of Chapters

Chapters shall have the right to:

- a. Send as many as two (2) voting delegates to the NGA.
- b. Submit members for election to the NCC.

## Section 3. Responsibilities of Chapters

Chapters shall have the responsibility to:

- a. Propagate the line, program, and policies of the organization on a local level.
- b. Recruit new members and collect membership dues from existing members.
- c. Submit timely reports to the NCC.

## Section 4. Chapter Organizing Committees (COCs)

- a. At least three (3) individuals may form a COCs to work toward the formation of a Chapter.
- b. Questions regarding whether individuals should join an existing Chapter or form a COC will be decided by the NCC.

## Section 5. Forming Chapters

- a. Once a COC has reached a point where it can meaningfully conduct political work and attend national coordinating meetings regularly, then it can hold its launching CGA, elect its CCC, and formally become a Chapter of CPSO.
- b. As per section 1 above, new Chapters must have a minimum of five (5) members in order to form.
- c. Once formed, Chapters are obligated to elect a CCC in order to carry on the official business of the Chapter and liaise with the NCC.
- d. Once formed, Chapters are obligated to collect dues and apportion some of those dues to the NCC.

# **Article X - Quorum, Voting, and Elections**

## **Section 1. Quorum**

- a. For the NGA, quorum is 60% of total delegates. As each Chapter is represented by up to two (2) voting delegates, this requires at least some Chapters to send both delegates.
- b. For CGAs, quorum is 60% of members of the Chapter.

## **Section 2. Voting and Motions**

- a. At all Assemblies, members should strive for consensus, but final decisions on any matter (including elections) shall be made by majority vote (50% + 1 vote).
- b. Amendments to the Constitution shall be made by a two-thirds consensus (66% + 1 vote) of the NGA.

## **Section 3. Elections and Term Limits**

- a. Elections for the NCC shall be held at the NGA, and for CCCs at CGAs.
- b. Members may be elected to the same position in the NCC for no more than one (1) consecutive term (at most three years).
- c. Members may be elected to the same position in a CCC for no more than two (2) consecutive terms (at most two years).

## **Section 4. Attendance**

- a. Members and Committee Members are expected to attend their local meetings in person whenever possible.
- b. All members of the organisation are expected to attend National meetings whenever possible.
- c. In the event that a Chapter cannot attend a National meeting in person, they may attend remotely, and will still be afforded one (1) voting delegate.

# **Article XI - Grievance Tribunal**

## **Section 1. Scope of the Grievance Tribunal**

- a. In the event of inappropriate conduct on behalf of a member of the CPSO, governing bodies are encouraged to form a Grievance Tribunal to address the concerns of the affected parties.
- b. For the purposes of disputes over authority, a Grievance Tribunal is considered to have the same authority as the NCC.

## **Section 2. Ideals of the Grievance Tribunal**

- a. The grievance tribunal is intended to maximise safety and transparency of the grievance process, as well as emphasise the values of accountability, fairness and self criticism.

## **Section 3. Composition of the Grievance Tribunal**

- a. The Grievance Tribunal should consist of an odd number of appointees, ideally the Chairperson, Secretary and Education Officers of the relevant governing body and as many additional appointees as are needed to create an odd number of votes.
- b. The NCC must appoint at least one (1) representative to the Grievance Tribunal who can speak on the NCC's behalf and who will act in the interests of the CPSO as a whole.
- c. In the event of a grievance between CPSO members, the wronged party shall have the right to appoint at least one (1) representative to the Grievance Tribunal on their behalf.
- d. Additional needed appointees are to be selected in such a way as to maximise transparency and fairness of the grievance process.

## **Section 4. Grievance Process**

- a. Once formed, the Grievance Tribunal members will work with the wronged party to come up with a series of possible remedies which are within their power to render.
- b. The wronged party will have the right to veto remedies which are unsatisfactory.
- c. The Grievance Tribunal will thus produce a minimum of two (2) possible remedies, with approval from the wronged party, and present them to the remaining members of the assembly for consideration.
- d. The remaining members of the assembly will vote to ratify their preferred remedy.
- e. The members of the Grievance Tribunal will carry out the ratified remedy separately from the regular business of the Organisation.
- f. In the event that a Committee member is the accused party, that committee member must not form part of the Grievance Tribunal and must be suspended from their position until the Grievance Process is completed.

- g. The members of the Grievance Tribunal will become responsible for the duties of any suspended Committee members during this process.
- h. In the event that sharing the details of the grievance process would endanger the wronged party in any way, the grievance tribunal is permitted to produce remedies which do not require the presentation of the remedies to remaining members of the assembly.

## **Section 5. Possible Remedies**

This is a list of suggested possible remedies, it is not intended to be considered exhaustive.

- a. Resignation from Organization
  - i. Membership to the organization is voluntary.
  - ii. A written resignation indicating the reason for resignation is highly encouraged.
  - iii. In cases where written resignation is not possible, a verbal resignation is enough and the CCC should put it in record.
- b. Termination of Membership
  - i. With due process, a member may be expelled on the grounds of violation of the constitution, damages to the integrity of the organization, or failure to pay membership dues for more than one year.
  - ii. The CCC will propose a process to the membership of their Chapter that ensures transparency, communication with said member, and that their rights are upheld.
- c. Removal From Office
  - i. With due process, any elected officer may be removed from office due to the loss of confidence, damages to the integrity of the organization, or by any reasons which the membership, subject to the majority vote of general members, consider as valid grounds.
  - ii. The grievance tribunal will propose a process to the general membership that ensures transparency, communication with said member, and that their rights are upheld.



## Article XII - Amendments

### Section 1.

- a. This Constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by two-thirds vote at the NGA.
- b. A quorum must be present in this process.
- c. A formal notice and copy of recommended amendments must be sent to the NCC prior to the NGA.

### Section 2.

- a. As of the writing of this document, there is only one (1) Chapter ready to form in accordance with the rules established herein.
- b. This Chapter, which shall be known as CPSO-TO, will be responsible for managing the responsibilities of the NCC until such a time as there are at least three (3) independent Chapters.
- c. Once at least three (3) independent CPSO Chapters exist, National elections will be held for the first time and the NCC will be formed.
- d. Once the NCC has been formed, CPSO-TO will pass existing National responsibilities onto the corresponding NCC members.

## Article XIII - History of this Document

**-Ratified and adopted on December 1st, 2020**

**-Amended by unanimous decision on December 19th, 2020**

Article VII, Section 2, Subsection f, point iii was added:

*"Authorise any and all financial transactions on behalf of CPSO"*

**-Amended by unanimous decision on March 27th, 2021**

Article VIII Section 4.

Add new sub-point

d. Deputy positions must be ratified at the next Chapter General Assembly after their selection by the Chapter Coordinating Committee

Add new sub-point

h. A deputy officer will act in the position of their respective CCC officer in the event of that officer's resignation, death, expulsion etc.

Add new sub-point

i. Such an event will require the CCC to schedule a Chapter General Assembly as soon as reasonably possible to elect a new officer or ratify the acting officer

## Appendix