



# SERVAS INTERNATIONAL

## MOTIONS REGARDING DISTANT VOTING PASSED BY THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2006 HELD AT LATINA.

### Motion 1:

That the Servas International Statutes be amended as follows:

- a/ That section VI of the Statutes be renamed "**Voting at Meetings**".
- b/ That the following be added to the Statutes as a new section VII **Distant Voting**

"VII Distant Voting

- 1) The member groups of Servas International may make decisions affecting Servas International between meetings of the General Assembly using the following Distant Voting process.
- 2) Each member group of Servas International shall have one vote on each motion to be decided by the Distant Voting process. Votes may be cast by post mail or electronically using a verifiable voting process.
- 3) The Distant Voting process shall not be used to amend the Statutes or to vote on the dissolution of Servas International.
- 4) In each calendar year between each General Assembly at least one Distant Vote shall be held to vote on the annual accounts, auditor's report and any changes to the budget.
- 5) The Distant Voting process may be used to vote on:
  - a) matters to be decided before the next meeting of the General Assembly;
  - b) a motion to suspend or remove from office any officer of Servas International;
  - c) the election of officers to fill Executive Committee or other Servas International vacancies by secret vote;
  - d) motions arising from decisions of the General Assembly.
- 6) No later than two months after a General Assembly the Executive Committee shall publish a schedule of proposed Distant Votes up to the next General Assembly. The closing date for the votes shall be determined as follows:
  - a. the first Distant Vote cannot be earlier than six months after the General Assembly;
  - b. the next Distant Votes shall be at least four and no more than eight months after the preceding Distant Vote;
  - c. the last Distant Vote cannot be later than six months before the next General Assembly.

A scheduled Distant Vote shall be cancelled if no motions have been received.

- 7) A motion for inclusion in the next Distant Vote may be submitted to the President when requested by at least one tenth of the member groups (represented by their National Secretaries), or by any member of the Executive Committee. All motions submitted by member groups must be sent to the President at least six months before the scheduled closing date for the vote to be included in a Distant Vote.
  - 8) In addition to Clause 7, the General Assembly may specifically authorise a committee or working group to prepare and submit motions to be voted on by the Distant Voting process.
  - 9) The Distant Voting process shall include three voting options for each motion, "support/yes", "against/no" and "abstain"
  - 10) Resolutions to be decided by the Distant Voting process as well as the voting procedure to be used must be distributed to member groups in writing at least three months before the closing date for the vote.
  - 11) Motions shall be declared adopted as if they have been passed by a meeting of the General Assembly if they get a double majority:
    - a) when the majority of the votes cast are "support/yes",
    - b) AND when the "support/yes" vote is at least four tenths of the number of member groups allowed to vote in the Distant Vote.
  - 12) The procedures for the conduct of the Distant Voting process shall be governed by the Servas Regulations for Distant Voting. The Servas Regulations for Distant Voting may be amended or replaced by a majority vote of the General Assembly."
- c/ That the current sections VII to IX of the Statutes be renumbered VIII to X and any references to them adjusted accordingly.

**Motion 2:**

That the following be adopted as the **Servas Regulations for Distant Voting**.

**"Servas Regulations for Distant Voting**

**Principles**

- 1/ The Distant Voting process shall operate by sending voting papers and information to one person, the Authorised Voter, from each member group who has been authorised to receive and cast the Distant Vote for that member group.
- 2/ The aim of the Distant Voting process is to allow all member groups to participate without being unduly disadvantaged by issues of language, distance, available finances and access to information technology.
- 3/ The procedures for deciding who receives the voting papers and then how the Distant Vote is cast shall be determined locally by each member group.
- 4/ The Distant Voting process shall be conducted in a fair, open and transparent manner with information about the Distant Vote and the results available on request to all Servas hosts and travellers.
- 5/ To assist member groups to make an informed decision all motions will be accompanied by a balanced outline of the issues involved and information on where additional information can be obtained.
- 6/ To protect the integrity of the voting process details of how each member group voted shall be available on request to all member groups, except where the motion was to be decided by secret vote.

- 7/ These Principles shall be used to clarify particular issues relating to the Distant Voting process that are not clear or have not been anticipated in the Responsibilities and Procedures set out below.

### **Responsibilities and Procedures**

- 1/ The President shall be responsible for ensuring that the Distant Voting process is conducted in accordance with the Statutes and these Regulations.
- 2/ The General Assembly shall be responsible for appointing an independent person to be responsible for the organization of the Distant Voting process. This position shall be called the Distant Vote Administrator. The Distant Vote Administrator shall be appointed from suitably qualified candidates recommended by the Executive Committee and shall not hold any other position in Servas International.
- 3/ The Distant Vote Administrator's duties include:
- a) advising the General Secretary of the timetable for each Distant Vote in accordance with the schedule determined by the Executive Committee;
  - b) recommending to Executive Committee, if considered necessary, that one or more independent persons or organisations be engaged to assist in the running of the Distant Vote;
  - c) receiving and counting the votes, except when a secret vote is required in which case the receiving and counting of votes shall be done by a person or organization independent of Servas;
  - d) reviewing the wording of the submitted motions and referring them back to the submitter for revision if the wording is unclear or not in a form that can be voted on by a "yes" or "no";
  - e) arranging the translation of voting information and supporting material in accordance with current Servas practice.
- 4/ The General Secretary shall be responsible for:
- a) advising member groups of the timetable for each Distant Vote, including the closing date for votes, the date by which the motions and supporting material will be sent to member groups and the date by which any changes to Authorised Voter details must be received;
  - b) keeping a record of the name and contact details of the person designated by each member group to be their Authorised Voter for the Distant Voting process;
  - c) providing the Distant Vote Administrator with a list of the member groups allowed to vote and contact details for the Authorised Voter for each member group;
  - d) assembling the supporting information to be sent with the voting material;
  - e) sending advice of the results of the Distant Vote to member groups within one month of receiving them from the Distant Vote Administrator.
- 5/ The National Secretary of each member group shall be responsible for advising the General Secretary of:
- a) the name and contact details for the Authorised Voter for their member group;
  - b) the preferred methods of communication for the Distant Voting process;

- c) the preferred language for written material and if possible, one or more other languages that would be acceptable;
  - d) any changes to this information, in particular when an upcoming Distant Vote has been notified.
- 6/ The Distant Vote Administrator's duties shall also include:
- a) preparing a report, including recommendations for approval by the Executive Committee on: a budget and timetable for the Distant Vote process, the method of electronic voting, the postal address and the vote authenticity checks to be used;
  - b) sending the motions, the voting material and supporting information to the Authorised Voter for each member group as advised by the General Secretary;
  - c) receiving the votes cast, verifying that they are valid and can be counted, and then recording how each member group voted on the motions. Votes may be disallowed on the grounds that they were not received on time, that they are not authentic, that the voter's intention is not clear or that the vote cannot be counted for any other reason;
  - d) counting the valid votes: "support/yes", "against/no" and "abstain", to determine the result of the vote on each motion and to identify any motions passed by the double majority needed to give the decision the same effect as a General Assembly vote;
  - e) reporting the results to the General Secretary within one month of the closing date for the vote;
  - f) preparing a written report to the Executive Committee on the Distant Vote within two months of the closing date for the vote. The report shall include the voting results on each motion, the number of member groups allowed to vote, a detailed list of how each member group voted on non-secret motions and the number of votes received but not counted with the reason they were disallowed;
  - g) holding all votes received in a secure place and keeping the votes and the results confidential until member groups have been advised of the results by the General Secretary;
  - h) handing over all voting papers and such other information as may be requested as part of an independent recount and audit of the Distant Vote;
  - i) destroying all votes received and any other confidential information if no request for a recount has been received within three months of the date the results of the Distant Vote are sent to member groups;
  - j) disposing of any confidential information and other records relating to the Distant Vote process in consultation with the General Secretary.
- 7/ The voting material and supporting information to be sent to the Authorised Voter for member groups shall in all cases include details of the voting procedure, the date by which votes must be returned to be counted and a voting paper containing the motions to be voted on. One or more of the following shall also be included as is appropriate for each of the motions to be voted on:
- a) a copy of the annual accounts and auditor's report, with comments from the Treasurer and/or Executive Committee if they wish;
  - b) details of budget changes proposed and the reasons for them;

- c) a balanced outline of the background to the motion with a summary of the key issues for and against the proposal,
  - estimates of the financial implications, if any, of adopting or not adopting the motion,
  - additional information or submissions in support of and against the motion or details of how this additional information can be obtained;
- d) a statement of the grounds for the suspension or removal from office of the Servas International officer concerned and their statement in reply;
- e) brief CVs and statements from the candidates nominated for election and a job description for each position to be elected;
- f) any other information that in the opinion of the General Secretary or Executive Committee will assist member groups to make an informed decision.

The voting information and supporting material shall be translated and distributed in English and other languages in accordance with current Servas practice.

- 8/ If the matters to be voted on in a particular Distant Vote create a conflict of interest for the President or the General Secretary the remaining Executive Committee members shall appoint another member of EXCO as a replacement to carry out their Distant Vote responsibilities until the voting process has been completed.
- 9/ An independent recount and audit of the results of the Distant Vote may be called for by a written request to the President by:
  - a) one tenth of the Authorised Voters for the Distant Vote,
  - b) or any Servas International officer who is the subject of a motion under Section VII, Sub Clause 5b of the statutes,
  - c) or any candidate for election under Section VII, Sub Clause 5c,
  - d) or any of the submitters of a motion included in the Distant Vote,
  - e) or the Executive Committee.

The request must be made within three months of the date the result of the Distant Vote is sent to member groups. A request for an independent recount and audit of the results shall not suspend the effect of the Distant Vote.

The President shall be responsible for appointing an independent person to conduct the recount and audit of the running of the Distant Vote. The results of the recount and the audit report shall be completed and given to the President within two months of receipt of the request.

The result of the recount shall be declared as the result of the Distant Vote and advised to member groups. Details of the recounted voting and the audit report shall be available on request to member groups. Any further challenges to the results shall be resolved at the next meeting of the General Assembly.

- 10/ The term of office of the Distant Vote Administrator shall end 3 months after the next General Assembly.

**Motion 3:**

That the General Assembly authorise the Executive Committee to appoint a Distant Vote Administrator to be responsible for organizing the Distant Voting process during the transition period until the next General Assembly.