

PARLIAMENT OF CEYLON

5th Session 1969-70



Congress of Religions Act, No. 13 of 1970

Date of Assent : March 12, 1970

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Congress of Religions Act, No. 13 of 1970

L. D.—O. 41/69.

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE CONGRESS OF RELIGIONS

[Date of Assent: March 12, 1970]

WHEREAS a Society called and known as the Congress of Religions has heretofore been established in Ceylon for the purpose of promoting religious harmony and progress in Ceylon: Preamble.

And whereas the purposes aforesaid would be more effectually prosecuted and attained by the incorporation of the said Congress:

And whereas the said Congress has applied to be incorporated and it will be for the public advantage to grant such application:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Representatives of Ceylon in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. This Act may be cited as the Congress of Religions Act, No. 13 of 1970. Short title.

2. (1) From and after the date of the commencement of this Act, the members for the time being of the Congress of Religions (hereinafter referred to as the "Congress") and such and so many persons as shall after that date be admitted members of the Congress shall be and are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate (hereinafter referred to as the "Corporation") with the name of "The Congress of Religions". Incorporation of the Congress of Religions.

(2) The Corporation shall, in the said name and for the purpose hereinafter mentioned, have perpetual succession, and may by the said name sue and be sued in all courts, and shall have full power and authority to use a common seal and to alter the same at its discretion.

3. The general objects for which the Corporation is constituted are hereby declared to be:— General objects of the Corporation.

(a) to establish and maintain an Inter-Religions Council composed of the religious leaders of the community to resolve acrimonies and allay suspicion among religious denominations;

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- (b) to sponsor action that promotes mutual understanding between religious denominations;
- (c) to sponsor action that promotes religious amity based on such mutual understanding; and
- (d) while not by any means undermining the value of sectarian or secular social service, to sponsor a form of service possessing a spiritual background that also galvanises the energies of the community as a whole.

The Council.

4. The governing body of the Corporation shall, subject to the rules in force for the time being of the Corporation as hereinafter provided, be the Council consisting of such members with such qualifications and who shall exercise such powers as the said rules shall direct. The first Council of the Corporation shall be the Council of the Congress of Religions for the time being consisting of Messrs. D. L. F. Pedris, T. R. Rustomjee, E. W. Kannangara, Alhaj S. M. A. Raschid, Mrs. Grace Wijeyekoon, Messrs. Oliver L. Abeyesekera, C. V. Wigneswaran, U. L. M. Farook, Theodore Abesekera, F. H. P. Joseph, Dr. Lucien Dharmaratne, Col. R. Sabanayagam, Messrs. S. Somasunderam, Ben J. Thiedeman, M. R. Unni Nayar, A. C. Nadarajah, S. T. Molligoda, M. M. Jayah, V. S. M. de Mel, Alhaj M. M. Cassim, Rev. Fr. S. T. Balasuriya, Messrs. S. C. Banker, C. Thanabalasinham, D. R. Gunasegaram, M. Kanagasabay, K. Kanagaratnam, Commander A. G. Devendra, Rev. Fr. V. de P. Gnanapragasam, Messrs. K. Sivapalan, C. B. Walgampaya, S. Sankarakumaran, Anurudha Ratwatte, S. H. M. Sahidu, S. Gunadhira and Commander D. C. Ingleton.

The Executive Committee.

5. The affairs of the Corporation shall be administered by an executive body called the Executive Committee composed of the office-bearers of the Congress as are eligible under the rules of the Corporation and it shall consist of such number of members with such qualifications exercising such powers and for such periods as the said rules shall direct.

Debts due and payable to Corporation.

6. All debts and liabilities of the Congress existing at the time of coming into operation of this Act shall be paid by the Corporation hereby constituted, and all debts due to and subscriptions and contributions payable to the Congress shall be paid to the Corporation for the purposes of this Act.

7. The Corporation shall be able and capable in law to receive and to hold property both movable and immovable, which may be vested in it by virtue of any purchase, grant, gift, testamentary disposition or otherwise; and all such property shall be held by the Corporation for the purposes of this Act and subject to the rules for the time being of the Corporation with full power (subject to any trust attaching to such property and to the law regulating such trusts) to sell, mortgage, lease, exchange or otherwise dispose of the same.

Power of Corporation to hold property.

8. The seal of the Corporation shall not be affixed to any instrument whatsoever except in the presence of the Board of Trustees, the General Secretary and a member of the Executive Committee of the Congress duly authorized for the purpose under the rules thereof, who shall sign their names to the instrument in token of their presence, and such signing shall be independent of the signing of any person as a witness.

Seal of Corporation.

9. It shall be lawful for the Corporation from time to time at any general meeting of the members and by a majority of the members present and voting, to make, subject to the provisions of sections 10 and 11, rules for the admission, withdrawal or expulsion of members, for the conduct of the duties of the Executive Committee and of the various officers, agents and servants of the Congress, for the procedure to be observed at meetings, for convening meetings, for the transaction of the business of the Congress, for the administration and management of the property of the Congress, for the determination of the subscription payable by members and the collection of such subscriptions, and otherwise generally for the management of the affairs and the accomplishment of the objects of the Congress. Any such rule may at such a meeting be amended, added to or repealed.

Power to make rules.

10. The rules set out in the Schedule to this Act shall for all purposes be the rules of the Corporation:

Rules in the Schedule to be the rules of the Corporation.

Provided however that nothing in this section contained shall be held or be construed to prevent the Corporation at all times hereafter from making fresh rules or from altering, amending or adding to the existing rules or to rules which are hereafter made by the Corporation.

Amendment
&c., of rules.

11. No rule in the Schedule to this Act nor any rule which may hereafter be passed at a meeting shall be altered, added to, amended or rescinded, except by a vote of the majority of the members present and voting at a general meeting of the members of the Congress.

Savings of
rights of
the Crown.

12. Nothing in this Act contained shall prejudice or affect the rights of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Heirs and Successors or of any body politic or corporate or of any other persons, except such as are mentioned in this Act, and those claiming by, from or under them.

SCHEDULE

THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE CONGRESS OF RELIGIONS

The Congress of Religions is established to promote religious harmony and progress in Ceylon.

1. *Name and Objects.*

The Objects of the Congress of Religions are:—

- (A) To establish and maintain an Inter-Religions Council composed of the religious leaders of the community to resolve acrimonies and allay suspicion among religious denominations.
- (B) To sponsor action that promotes mutual understanding between religious denominations.
- (C) To sponsor action that promotes religious amity based on such mutual understanding.
- (D) While not by any means undermining the value of sectarian or secular social service, to sponsor a form of service possessing a spiritual background that also galvanises the energies of the community as a whole.

2. *Powers of the Congress.*

The powers of the Congress are:—

- (A) To hold and manage funds raised, obtained or received for the objects of the Congress.
- (B) To purchase or acquire on lease or in exchange or on hire or by gift or otherwise, any real or personal property and any rights or privileges necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Congress.
- (C) To sell, improve, manage or develop all or any part of the property of the Congress.
- (D) To do all things that are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects of the Congress or any of them.

3. First Governing Body.

The names of persons who constitute the first Governing Body of the Congress of Religions composed of members of the General Council of the Theosophical Society and who undertake to devote a definite period of time each week or month in service to the work of the Congress and who have been elected by the Council are—

- (1) D. L. F. Pedris, (2) K. Somasuntharam, (3) S. N. B. Wijeyekoon, (4) Ben Thiedeman, (5) Al Haj S. M. A. Raschid, J.P., (6) F. H. P. Joseph, (7) C. Saravanamuttu, (8) T. R. Rustomjee.

4. Membership.

- (A) A member of the Congress of Religions may join any number of Provincial Units or Sections as an Associate Member. Such a member, however, shall be registered as a member of the Congress only through the Provincial Unit or Section through which he pays his annual dues to the Congress. He can pay his dues only through the Provincial Unit or Section where he resides. A member, however, can be an unattached member and pay his dues direct to the Headquarters.
- (B) Any person of 18 years of age and above shall be eligible for membership.
- (C) Students who have reached the age of fifteen can be enrolled as student members of the Congress.

The General Council of the Congress (or the Executive Committee if so delegated to do so by the Council) has an absolute discretion in deciding whether an applicant enjoys student status and continues to do so. All such applications for membership should be forwarded to the General Secretary of the Congress.

- (D) Every application for membership shall be on an authorized form and duly signed by the applicant.
- (E) A candidate for admission desiring to be attached to any Provincial Unit or Section (which terms are described below) shall present his application to the Chairman or Secretary of that Provincial Unit or Section, unless he is an unattached member when he shall send his application direct to the Secretary of the Congress.

5. Voting Power.

- (A) Every member above 18 years of age in good standing shall be entitled to vote in matters concerning the Congress as a member of the Provincial Unit or Section through which he pays his annual dues to the Congress.
- (B) An "unattached" member in good standing shall be entitled to vote through the Congress direct.
- (C) Student members will not be eligible to vote at elections to the General Council, Provincial Units or Sections of the Congress. They can however participate in the programme of activities of the Congress and are entitled to receive the Congress Bulletin.

6. Parent Body, Provincial Units and Sections and Student Associations.

(A) *Parent Body*:—The Parent Body shall consist of 24 members resident in Colombo and elected as provided for under clause 7, B (1) below.

(B) (i) *Provincial Units*:—Provincial Units shall correspond to the Territorial areas of the Northern, Southern, Western, Eastern, Central, North-Central, North-Western, Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces.

If a Provincial Unit in the opinion of the General Council can develop its own local organisation for administrative purposes, it will be so vested with authority by the General Council at its discretion. In such a case the Executive Committee of the Congress will have authority to remit the whole or any part of the subscriptions received from the provincial unit to the provincial administration and give it any further assistance that it is deemed necessary.

(B) (ii) *Sections*:—A section is composed of 20 members functioning in an area so demarcated by a Municipal or Local Authority for purposes of representation of such an area in such a local body.

Such an unit in the opinion of the General Council must be capable of developing its own administrative structure. A section so constituted will have its own Rules and Regulations which shall not be incompatible with the Constitution of the Congress and shall be approved by the General Council.

The Executive Committee of the Congress will have authority to refund the whole or any part of the subscriptions received from a Section to that Section for use in the furtherance of that Section's activities and to give it any further assistance as is deemed necessary.

A Section will also wherever possible be afforded opportunities in the various programmes of activity organised by the Provincial Units in which they function.

(B) (iii) *Student Associations*:—Student members with the approval of the General Council, and such conditions as are laid down by the General Council, could form Student Associations of the Congress to promote the aims and purposes of the Congress. A minimum of six (6) members is necessary for the formation and recognition of such an association.

Student Associations can frame their own rules and regulations which must receive the approval of the General Council or the Executive Committee, if authorized by the Council to grant such approval.

The same rules as are applicable to ordinary members of the Congress shall be applicable to the student members in regard to termination of membership.

The Council has the authority to dissolve a Student Association if it considers it to be in the interests of the Congress to do so.

- (C) Each Provincial Unit and Section shall have power to make its own Rules, which shall not be incompatible with the Constitution and Rules of the Congress. Every Rule of a Provincial Unit or Section and any amendment to any such rule shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Congress for the attention of the Executive Committee within thirty days of its adoption. Any such Rule or amendment shall come into force, if approval has not been refused, within ninety days of acknowledgment of its receipt.
- (D) If due to a change in the Constitution, or Rules of the Congress, any Rule of a Provincial Unit or Section or Student Association which at its inception was not incompatible with the Rules of the Congress ceases to be compatible, such a Rule shall cease to be valid and shall be amended to be in consonance with the Rules of the Congress.
- (E) The Provincial Units and Sections of the Congress shall hold annual meetings after at least seven days' notice to members to discuss the work for the ensuing year and to transact the following among other business:—
- (i) Consideration of the Annual Report of the Provincial Unit or Section submitted by its Secretary.
 - (ii) Consideration of the audited financial statement for the year.
 - (iii) Election of Representatives to the Council of the Congress as required by Rule 7 (B) (ii) and (iii).
- (F) Each Provincial Unit and Section shall send the Annual Report to the Secretary of the Congress on, or before, the 20th April.
- The Report shall contain:—
- (i) A list of members of the Provincial Unit or Section with details regarding payment of their dues.
 - (ii) A list of the officers of the Provincial Unit or Section with their full addresses.
 - (iii) A summary of the activities of the Provincial Unit or Section during the period under report.
 - (iv) A detailed statement showing the immovable property of the Provincial Unit or Section.
 - (v) The Financial Statement of the Provincial Unit or Section for the period under report for the year ending 31st March.
 - (vi) Any other matter judged suitable by the Committee of the Provincial Unit or Section.

7. The Council of the Congress.

- (A) The general administration and management of the Congress shall be vested in the Council which shall be the governing body of the Congress.
- (B) The Council shall be composed of members of the Parent Body, Representatives of Provinces and Sections and Co-opted Members and shall be in existence for three years.
- (i) *Members of the Parent Body:*—In order to ensure a quorum of members at meetings of the General Council which will normally be held in Colombo,

24 members will be appointed by the General Council from members resident in Colombo to constitute what is termed the Parent Body. The Council will appoint these members prior to cessation of its term of authority to the new Council. The Council will, as far as possible, give priority in its selection to members serving on the Council and resident in Colombo who have participated actively in the work of the Council.

- (ii) *Provincial Units*:—A Provincial Unit can have representation in the General Council provided there are a minimum of 10 members of the Province. The maximum number of Provincial representatives on the Council will, therefore, be 36.

Provincial members will be selected unless otherwise provided in the Constitution, on the basis of one vote to be exercised by each Congress member resident in the Province. Procedure for election shall be on the basis of procedure approved by the General Council.

Where a Provincial Unit for administrative purposes is recognised by the Council, such a local organisation will make its own arrangements for selecting members to the Council. Voting, however, unless otherwise provided for in the Constitution, must be on the basis of one vote for each member in good standing.

The procedure for the selection of representatives will be on the basis of procedure approved by the General Council. In the case of Provinces without such provincial administration, nomination to the General Council for such a Province will be made by the General Council from members of that Province in good standing.

- (iii) *Sections of the Congress*.—A Section as a whole will have one vote in provincial elections to the General Council in areas where a provincial administration exists.

- (iv) *Co-opted Members*:—The Council is entitled to co-opt a maximum of 8 members whose special services will be of value to the Council. The duration of membership of co-opted members will be the life time of the Council that has elected them. They will have full voting rights in the Council.

- (C) Each Provincial Unit shall elect to the Council its representatives once in three years but shall also have the right to withdraw its nomination if it deems necessary, and nominate someone else.

- (D) Each Provincial Unit shall inform the Secretary of the Congress of such election by the 20th of April, in each year, and shall give the names and addresses of the representatives so elected.

- (E) Every year on a fortnight's notice given by the Secretary of the Congress, the Council shall meet at the place decided on by the Council to transact the following business:—
- (i) To elect once in three years the Officers of the Congress viz.:—The President, a maximum of five Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a maximum of four Assistant Secretaries, and Treasurer. The term of office of these Officers shall be three years.
 - (ii) To appoint an auditor for the year on such terms as may be decided upon.
 - (iii) To pass the budget for the ensuing year.
 - (iv) To appoint Units and committees, if any, required to carry out the work of the Congress and,
 - (v) Any other business.
- (F) The meeting of the Council, the Executive Committee and the General Body shall be presided over by the President or by one of the Vice-Presidents in the former's absence or in the absence of Vice-Presidents by a Chairman elected for the purpose of the meeting.
- (G) Any vacancy in the Council occurring through death, resignation, or other causes, shall be filled,—
- (i) in the case of elected members, by the Provincial Unit which such member represented, electing a successor for the unexpired term; and
 - (ii) in the case of members of the Parent Body, by the General Council similarly for the unexpired term;
 - (iii) in the case of co-opted members, any vacancy shall be filled by fresh co-option, similarly for the unexpired term.
- (H) The proceedings of the Council shall not be invalidated by reason of any vacancies remaining unfilled.
- (I) The quorum of the Council will consist of 1/5th of the total number elected as provincial members and members of the Parent Body. This number required for a quorum can also include co-opted members.
- (J) An absent Councillor shall be entitled to vote on any business by giving a written proxy to another member of the Council present at the meeting.
- (K) The business of the Council shall be transacted either at meetings or by circulation of papers among members.
- (L) The process of circulation shall be adopted only if the business is of an urgent or formal nature. If objection is raised to this method of deciding the matter in question, in a particular instance by one-fifth of the members, then the matter in question shall again be brought up at the next meeting of the Council.
- (M) Resolutions to be moved at an ordinary meeting of the Council shall reach the General Secretary two weeks before a meeting of the Council. A resolution to

suspend this provision of the Constitution might be moved by a member under circumstances of urgency, but such a resolution must receive the unanimous approval of members of the Council who are present.

- (N) Special meetings of the Council may be convened by the Secretary with the approval of the President.

A special meeting of the Council shall be called by the Secretary within 21 days of receiving a written requisition to do so, signed by one-tenth of the membership of the Council or by two-thirds of the members of the Executive Committee. Such a requisition shall state the special business for which the Council meeting is to be called, fortnight's notice of which shall be sent out by the Secretary in summoning the Council.

8. Previous to the Convention of the Congress, on a date determined by the Executive Committee, the Council shall meet to consider and pass the Reports of the Secretary and the audited annual statement of accounts of the Treasurer which had been previously submitted to the Executive Committee, and to transact any business of which at least one month's notice shall be given to the Secretary by any of the Councillors and to consider such other business which may be sanctioned by the Chairman of the Council.

9. The Executive Committee of Congress.

(A) The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Office-Bearers of the Congress as elected under 7 (E), (i), and shall be responsible for the management and administration of the affairs of the Congress, subject to the over-riding decisions of the Council.

(B) The President will be ex-officio Chairman and the Secretary the ex-officio Secretary of the Committee.

(C) The Executive Committee shall ordinarily be convened by the Secretary.

(D) The quorum for a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be one-third of the membership, which must include either the Secretary or the Treasurer.

(E) A meeting of the Executive Committee for any special purpose may be called by the President whenever he deems it necessary.

(F) A special meeting shall be called by the Secretary on the requisition of not less than 3 of its members, who shall state in writing the business for which the meeting is to be called.

(G) For all meetings of the Executive Committee at least three days' notice shall be given.

(H) The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a month.

(I) The Annual Reports of the Secretary and Treasurer, with the financial statements of the Treasurer shall be placed before the Executive Committee for consideration before they are presented to the Council at its Annual Meeting.

(J) Any vacancy occurring in the Committees and Units appointed by the General Council of Congress shall be filled by the General Council of the Congress.

(K) The President shall preside normally over the meetings of the Congress, the Council and the Executive Committee.

(L) Any one of the Vice-Presidents shall preside over the meetings in the absence of the President.

(M) The Vice-Presidents shall assist the President in the work of the Congress and perform such duties as may be assigned to them by the President.

(N) The Secretary shall be the executive officer of the Council of the Congress and the Executive Committee of the Congress. He shall be the Secretary of the Council and of the Executive Committee.

(O) He shall prepare the Annual Report of the work of the Congress and submit same to the Executive Committee before the Annual Convention of the Congress.

(P) The Treasurer shall be responsible financially for the monies and the properties of the Congress, and for keeping the accounts in proper order, for collecting dues, and shall submit the accounts along with the estimates for future expenditure to the Council at its annual meeting, after the accounts have been passed by the Executive Committee. He shall place before the Executive Committee every quarter, a statement of income and expenditure and table the relevant accounts of the Congress. He shall issue receipts from a receipt book consecutively numbered for all monies received by him on behalf of the Congress, and obtain proper vouchers for all payments made by him. All payments shall be made by him in accordance with the budget, or as approved by the Executive Committee.

A budget estimate of the income and expenditure of the Congress shall be prepared by him in consultation with the Secretary and President and submitted to the Executive Committee before the annual convention.

(Q) Office-Bearers of the Parent Body and Provincial Units and Sections should not be office-bearers of political parties.

(R) A member of the Council or of any Committee or Unit of the Congress who does not attend three consecutive meetings without prior intimation ceases to be a member of the Council, Committee or unit to which he has been elected. He is, however, eligible for re-election.

10. *Inter-Religions Council.*

(A) The Inter-Religions Council will be a self-contained body working under its own rules of procedure.

(B) All matters coming up for discussion by the Inter-Religions Council will in the first instance be approved by the General Council of the Congress.

(C) All decisions arrived at by the Inter-Religions Council will be based on the unanimous vote of every one present, and the General Secretary of the Congress is authorized to implement those decisions without reference to the General Council.

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(D) The General Council will fill by election, any vacancy in the Inter-Religions Council.

11. *Convention, Time and Place.*

The Congress shall meet annually in convention. The date and place of the convention shall be decided by the Executive Committee normally in the month of May. The convention should take place normally in June.

12. *Delegates to the Convention.*

(1) Any member of the Congress is entitled to attend the convention of the Congress as a delegate provided he is in good standing, that is, he or she has paid all annual dues to the Congress up to 31st March of the previous calendar year, and has his or her name registered as a delegate.

(2) Such a registered delegate above the age of 18 years shall be entitled to vote at the annual convention of the Congress provided that he is a member in good standing.

13. *Business.*—At the annual convention the following business shall be transacted:—

- (i) Consideration of the Annual Report of the Congress for the preceding official year.
- (ii) Consideration of the Report of the Treasurer and the audited financial statements of the Congress for the preceding year.
- (iii) Consideration of any other matter connected with the work of the Congress proposed by the President, Secretary or the Treasurer.
- (iv) Consideration of any other business on behalf of the Council.
- (v) Consideration of any proposal brought forward by a member or members of the Congress of which an intimation in writing shall have been given to the Secretary one month before the convention.
- (vi) All members should be given at least one month's notice of the date of the convention.

14. *Property—Administration of Property.*

(1) A Board of Trustees of three members elected at Annual General Meeting shall hold office until:

- (a) they are unable to do so; or
- (b) they resign; or

(c) they are discontinued by a decision of the General Council. Immovable property of every description and every investment belonging to the Congress should be held in the name of the Trustees.

(2) All immovable property of a Provincial Unit or Section shall belong to the Congress unless otherwise provided for by the Rules of the Provincial Unit or Section. All Provincial Units and Sections shall adopt the necessary rules to fulfil this requirement.

(3) Purchases, exchanges, sales or other transfers of movable property other than investments for and on behalf of the Congress may be effected by the Secretary on a programme or budget approved by the Executive Committee where the amount of individual items does not exceed Rs. 300. In the case of purchases, exchanges, sales or other transfers of movable property of more than Rs. 300 value, the sanction of the Executive Committee shall be obtained. The sanction of the General Council is necessary for the purchase, exchange, sale or hypothecation or transfer of immovable property.

(4) (a) Any interest or dividend requiring to be drawn or outstanding to be collected or deposit to be realized or any other act to be done in respect of the above may respectively be collected, realized on behalf of the Congress jointly by the Secretary and the Treasurer.

(b) Any Government or other promissory note, share debenture, other instrument to be negotiated, sold or renewed or any other act to be done in respect of the above will be dealt with by the General Council.

(5) (a) All documents requiring to be executed or made in favour of the Congress shall be made out in the name of the Congress of Religions. If such documents are in respect of immovable property, or investment, they must be signed by the Trustees.

(b) All documents other than those in respect of immovable property or investment (as mentioned in section 5 (a) above), requiring to be executed by and on behalf of the Congress, may be executed by the Secretary and a member of the Executive Committee who are further empowered to present any such documents for registration and do all other acts necessary on this behalf. If the deed relates to any property for the use of any particular Provincial Unit or Section, the Executive Committee of the Congress may authorize any person it deems fit to execute the deed required in that connection and present for registration and do all other acts necessary on that behalf.

15. *Litigation*.—All suits, actions or other proceedings by or against the Congress of Religions may be instituted or defended as the case may be by the Secretary on behalf of the Congress or by such officers as are authorized by the Executive Committee.

16. *Official Year*.—The official year of the Congress shall begin on 1st April. This will apply also to all Provincial Units and Sections of the Congress.

17. *Accounts*.—(1) An account or accounts shall be opened in the name of the Congress in such Post Office or Bank or Banks, as the Executive Committee of the Congress shall decide. All cheques shall bear the signature of the National Treasurer and the President or Secretary or any other person or persons authorised by the Executive Committee from time to time.

(2) *Entrance Fee*.—Every application for membership to the Congress must be accompanied by a Membership Fee provided that the Secretary with the previous approval of the Executive Committee may remit the same wholly or in part. Unattached

members and Provincial Units and Sections directly attached to the Headquarters shall send the Membership Fee to the Congress Office in Colombo.

(3) *Annual Dues.*—Every member of the Congress shall pay the prescribed Annual Dues.

(4) (a) For members attached to Provincial Units the annual Congress dues shall be Rs. 3 for six months or Rs. 6 annually.

(b) Members belonging to a Section will pay a minimum of 25 cents a month or Rs. 3 a year which will be remitted to the Treasurer of the Congress by the Treasurer of the Section. The Executive Committee of the Congress has the authority to refund the whole or part of the subscription so obtained to that Section for use in the furtherance of that Section's activities and to give it any further assistance as is deemed necessary.

(5) For unattached members, the annual Congress dues shall be Rs. 3 for six months or Rs. 6 annually.

(6) Student members will pay a subscription of Rs. 2 per annum. The General Council has the authority to waive a student member's subscription under provision 17 (8) of the Constitution.

(7) Members who have not paid their dues by 31st March of the previous calendar year shall be deemed to be in arrears and not in good standing from 1st April next succeeding, when they automatically cease to be members.

(8) The Secretary, with the approval of the Executive Committee, on the recommendation of the Secretaries of Provincial Units and Sections shall have the power to waive the whole or part of the annual dues of any member. Such waiving of dues shall be only for a period of one year. It may, however be extended from year to year on receipt of recommendation from the Secretaries of the Provincial Units and Sections, or at the direction of the Executive Committee.

(9) A member of a Provincial Unit or Section shall pay his annual Congress dues through the Secretary of the Provincial Unit or Section, who shall forward same to the Congress Office. The unattached members shall pay their dues direct to the Congress Secretary.

(10) Provincial Units and Sections are entitled to levy dues for the running of their activities from members of Provincial Units and Sections with the approval of the Executive Committee.

(11) *Recovery of Annual Dues.*—Any member who has not paid the Congress dues up to 31st March will be informed direct if unattached, or if attached to a Provincial Unit or Section, through the Secretary of such Provincial Unit or Section, that his dues are in arrears and that unless immediate payment is made he may be considered as having resigned.

(12) *Commuted Dues.*—Any member may commute his annual Congress subscription for a sum of not less than Rs. 100 to be paid to the Congress, and thereafter such member will not be liable to pay any annual subscription to the Congress. Such a member will be called a Life Member of the Congress of Religions.

(13) *Lapsed Remittances.*—In all cases where remittances of monies are received by the Secretary's Office without any advice, the Secretary may at his discretion apply such remittances towards any of the liabilities of the remitter, and inform him of the action taken.

(14) *Lapsed Membership.*—Any member whose annual dues for two consecutive years remain unpaid shall have his name removed from the list of members.

(15) If a member loses his membership by failing to pay his Provincial Unit or Section according to the Rules of the Provincial Unit or Section, but has paid his dues to the Congress, the Secretary of the Provincial Unit or Section shall at once notify the Congress Secretary and the Congress Treasurer giving the name and address of the member. Thereupon the Congress Secretary shall register the said member as an unattached member, and collect his dues as an unattached member.

(16) *Revival of Membership.*—Any member whose name has been removed from Congress membership roll due to non-payment of dues, may revive his membership at any time by the payment of all arrears. The Congress Secretary may, however, with the previous approval of the Executive Committee waive such arrears of dues in whole or in part.

18. *Exchange of Membership.*—(1) Any member wishing to exchange membership in a Provincial Unit or Section for unattached membership shall notify the Secretary of his Provincial Unit or Section and also the Secretary of the Congress.

(2) An unattached member, wishing to join a Provincial Unit or Section shall apply to the Secretary of the Provincial Unit or Section he wishes to join for admission and on acceptance shall notify the fact to the Congress Secretary. Before accepting such a member, the Secretary of the Provincial Unit or Section shall ascertain from the Congress Secretary whether the member has paid his dues up to date.

(3) *Transfer from a Provincial Unit or Section.*—Any member wishing to transfer his membership from one Provincial Unit or Section to another shall, when applying for admission to the Provincial Unit or Section he wishes to join, produce, from the Secretary of the Provincial Unit or Section he leaves, a certificate showing that his dues have been paid up to date. On acceptance of his membership by the new Provincial Unit or Section, the Secretary of the new Provincial Unit or Section shall notify the fact of his transfer to the Secretary of his old Provincial Unit or Section.

19. The Executive Committee may by vote of at least two-thirds of its members remove any person from membership of the Congress and the Council by a vote of at least two-thirds of its members can dissolve a Provincial Unit or Section.

20. *Affiliated Organizations.*—The Congress may have Organizations, with their objectives similar to the objective of the Congress affiliated to the Congress. Such organizations may each send one delegate who will have the right to vote at meetings of the Council.

Such affiliated bodies may also send observers to the annual convention; such observers will not have the right to vote and will not be eligible to participate in discussions or move resolutions. The number of such observers will be decided on by the Congress.

The Council may at its discretion terminate such affiliation.

21. *Amendments—The Constitution.*—(1) The Constitution, Articles or Rules may be altered or amended by the Council at its annual meeting, or at a meeting specially called for the purpose. The approval of at least two-thirds of the total membership of the Council present and voting shall be necessary to effect any such change in the Constitution and Rules. At this, as in other meetings, voting by proxy shall be allowed. All proxies should be attested by a member and can only be in favour of members in good standing of the Council.

(2) At least two months' notice of any proposed alteration or amendment shall be given to each member of the Council through the Secretary, and the proposed alteration or amendment shall be published one month before the annual Convention in the Congress journal, if one is being published. Any member in the Congress in good standing may propose such an alteration or amendment.

22. *Expression of Views and Confidential Matters.*—(a) Every member of the Inter-Religions Council, the General Council and the Executive Committee of the Congress has the individual right to express his views in public on any issue which may or may not come before the Inter-Religions Council.

(b) Every member of the General Council, the Inter-Religions Council and the Executive Committee of the Congress has the individual right to express his views in public on any matter of public interest which is under discussion by the General Council and the Executive Committee of the Congress.

(c) A member of the General Council, Inter-Religions Council and the Executive Committee of the Congress should treat as strictly confidential and personal any information, oral or documentary, which exclusively comes into his possession through his membership of the General Council, Inter-Religions Council and the Executive Committee of the Congress.

23. Any matter not covered by the above Rules or the interpretation of the above Rules shall be decided by the Council of the Congress, and such decisions shall be final as far as the specific matter is concerned.