# CONSTITUTION

OF

### COMMITTEE OF STATES' COMMISSIONERS OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA (COSCEN)

2023

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#### CONSTITUTION

OF

## COMMITTEE OF STATES' COMMISSIONERS OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA (COSCEN) PREAMBLE

We the entire members of the Committee of States' Commissioners of Education in Nigeria under the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF), having firmly and solemnly agreed to form a group for our betterment and the advancement of the interest of the nation and its educational fortunes, hereby agree to make/enact this Constitution to guide and coordinate our interactions and affairs, and provide a Committee for effective participation to better the lives of members as well as that of the States and Nation.

#### **ARTICLE 1**

#### Part I

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### 1. SUPREMACY OF THE CONSTITUTION

- (1) This Constitution is supreme and its provision shall be binding on all executives and members of the Committee.
- (2) If any Committee/Sub-Committee or group Handbook and parole agreement of the group is inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution, this Constitution shall prevail, and that other Committee/Sub-Committee or group Handbook and parole agreement of the group shall to the extent of the inconsistency be void.

#### 2. NAME OF THE COMMITTEE

The name of the Committee shall be **Committee of States' Commissioners of Education in Nigeria** (Herein also called the "COSCEN" or "the Committee")

#### 3. MOTTO OF THE COMMITTEE

The Motto of COSCEN shall be "Safeguarding the Future through purpose driven education"

#### 4. LOGO OF THE COMMITTEE

The Logo of COSCEN shall be with a blue and white colour similar to that of the Nigerian Governors' Forum

#### 5. THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE COMMITTEE

The Official Language of COSCEN shall be English language.

#### 6. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

The aims and objectives of the Committee shall be:

- To promote and support subnational collaboration and collective actions for progressive measures that shall bring about socio-economic and educational development of the States and Nigeria in general;
- (2) To foster the spirit of unity and cooperation among States and members;
- (3) To advocate for overall development of the educational goals of the Nigerian Governors Forum and the nation;
- (4) To offer material and moral support to members in particular and the Nigerian Governors Forum and the nation in general;
- (5) To promote educational and technological development in the States for sub-national sustainability;
- (6) To work assiduously towards the harmonization of the educational policies of States of the Federation
- (7) To organize seminars, workshops, and interactions across States of the Federation with the view to advancing education in all its spheres and manifestation.

#### 7. CONFERENCES & PROGRAMMES

The Committee shall from time to time, organize conferences, webinars, workshops and seminars. The Conferences and/or programmes shall be targeted at addressing pressing and pending issues bothering the Committees. These hosted events will be organized to address the needs of critical stakeholders in the education value chain;

Nothing in this section shall preclude any member or state from organizing statewide or national conference, webinar, workshop or seminar in isolation or in collaboration with COSCEN or any other State, and nothing precludes this COSCEN or any invited member or state from attending.

#### 8. RELATIONSHIP WITH NGF

- (a) The Secretariat of the COSCEN shall be at the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) through the Department of Education. The Head of Education of NGF shall be the National Coordinator of the COSCEN.
- (b) The Committee shall operate through the Secretariat of the Nigeria Governors' Forum. The Head of Education (NGF) who is also the National Coordinator of COSCEN, shall interface with the Federal Ministry of Education, development partners, private sectors, civil society organizations and critical education stakeholders for subnational collaboration, partnership and development in line with the strategic plan of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) on Education.
- (c) Report to the Head of Education of Nigerian Governors' Forum and the Federal Ministry of Education to carry out education development activities across the 36 states of the Federation and FCT.
- (d) Engage with the Ministers of Education through the National Council on Education (NCE) to formulate policies and take decisions to address National and subnational educational development challenges.
- (e) Have a focal person, the Director of Planning, Research and Development (DPR&D), Federal Ministry of Education for national and subnational collaboration and interface through correspondence and mutual respect for educational development in the states and nation.

#### 9. RELATIONSHIPS WITH FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

COSCEN shall collaborate with the Federal Ministry of Education for training and manpower development, curriculum development and educational policy formulation. COSCEN shall also serve as a link between foreign investment and development partners and derive benefits in form of sponsorships and policy drive. The Head of Education/National Coordinator shall be tasked with the responsibility of providing a platform for COSCEN's engagement with development partners and education stakeholders aimed at strengthening partnership and collaboration. Development partners such as United Nations Office, World Bank, UNESCO UNICEF, European Union, private sectors, Embassies and other development partners and donor agencies etc., shall be engaged from time to

time to mobilize funds, grants and other interventions to support states to meet up with their education priorities. The Secretariat shall be equally assigned with developing knowledge base, information sharing and opportunities for member States for the overall benefit of the 36 States of the Federation and FCT.

#### PART II

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### 10. QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

- 1. The following persons are qualified members of the COSCEN:
  - (a) Every State Commissioner in charge of Education in Nigeria duly sworn in by the Governor of the State or any person acting in that capacity
  - (b) Every person qualified to be a member shall become a member and have their names registered in the Register of members upon payment of the sum of N200,000.00 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira) only, being registration fee.
  - (c) Where a member is admitted into the Committee at any time during the year, the full annual subscription for that year shall be deemed payable.
  - (d) Without prejudice to the provisions of this Constitution, the Executive Council in its absolute discretion may waive, reduce or postpone the payment of any levies, fees or Subscriptions.

#### 11. RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

All members shall:

- (1) Have their names registered in the Register of members;
- (2) Be entitled to a copy of the COSCEN Constitution;
- (3) Be entitled to vote and be voted for;
- (4) Be entitled to be heard in meetings upon a show of hand and an acknowledgement by the Chairman;
- (5) Be entitled to an initial free copy of minutes of meeting and subsequent copies upon payment of necessary fees;
- (6) Entitled yearly, to a copy of all reports made by all the Committees;

- (7) Entitled to notices of General meeting from the Secretary; indicating venue, time and date of such meeting, either by text message, call or social media platforms;
- (8) Entitled to be present in General meetings either in person or by proxy, provided that another member of COSCEN entitled to be in the same meeting is not made his proxy;
- (9) The Executive Committee may from time to time recommend such persons as it thinks fit, for appointment as Honorary Members, Patrons, or Advisers but the approval lies solely with the General Meeting.

#### 12. REGISTER OF MEMBERS

There shall be kept at the Secretariat, a Register of all members.

#### 13. DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

- 1. All members of COSCEN shall be obliged to:
  - (a) Pay the Sum of N200,000.00 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira) only as registration fee upon Registration and filling of appropriate forms by each Commissioner;
  - (b) Without prejudice to the duties imposed on each Commissioner in (a) above, each State of the Federation shall pay an annual dues of N2,000,000.00 (Two Million Naira) into a designated account;
  - (c) In addition, Members shall be obligated to payment of such monies agreed upon in General Meetings for execution of projects collectively agreed to be embarked upon by Members in General meetings.

#### 14. DISQUALIFICATION AS MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

- 1. A member will be deemed to have been disqualified if he;
  - (a) ceases to hold office as Commissioner for Education;
  - (b) fail to pay his monthly dues for a consecutive period of 12 months;
  - (c) communicate in writing, to the Chairman, his intention/decision to cease being a member;

 Any member who wishes to withdraw his/her membership shall forfeit all rights and shall not be entitled to any refund of any money contributed nor enjoy any form of benefit of COSCEN members.

#### PART III MEETINGS

#### 15. THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee shall meet quarterly at a location and time to be determined by the majority in general meeting.

#### 16. MODE OF MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee or its Sub-Committee shall meet physically at an agreed place and date. Provided that where physical meeting is impracticable, meetings may be convened virtually after sufficient notification to that effect.

#### 17. QUORUM FOR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A quorum shall consist of one quarter of members present at a meeting

#### **ARTICLE 2**

### Part I THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

#### 18. THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

There shall be established for the COSCEN an Executive Council which shall consist of all the Executive Members of the Committee which shall include the Chairman, 6 (six) Vice Chairmen, one from each of the geopolitical zones of the Federation, the Secretary, Assistant Secretary, the Public Relations Officer/Head of media and Publications and Chairmen of all Sub-Committees created by this Constitution

#### 19. EXECUTIVES, QUALIFICATIONS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

All person elected into any of the positions of an Executive must be literate with formal education.

#### (1) THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman shall exercise powers as a National Executive member. In so doing he or she shall:

- (a) Preside over all meetings of the Committee;
- (b) Be the chief spokesman of the Committee and shall have right to vote at any election, and power of veto;
- (c) Be the Chief Accounting Officer of the Committee;
- (d) Direct and co-ordinate the activities of the various officials of the Committee;
- (e) In consultation with the Secretary, he shall summon meetings;
- (f) Consultable to every member of the Executive.

#### (2) THE VICE CHAIRMAN

The Vice Chairman (one each from the six geopolitical zones) shall exercise powers as an Executive member. In so doing he or she shall:

- (b) Carry out responsibilities as a coordinator of a particular geopolitical zone and other functions as may be assigned by the Chairman from time to time;
- (c) Assist the Chairman and deputize (through consensus on who presides in the meeting) for him in his absence;
- (d) Through consensus among the six zonal Chairmen, assume the full functions of the Chairman if and when the Chairman is absent; sick or on account of other reasons cannot perform his duties as Chairman;
- (e) Perform such other duties as assigned to him by the Chairman.

#### (3) SECRETARY

The Secretary shall exercise powers as an Executive member. In so doing he or she shall:

- (a) Take Minutes of all meetings;
- (b) Be responsible for the coordination and overseeing of activities of all the Heads of sub-Committees;

- (c) Be responsible for collecting and collating reports from all the sub-Committees;
- (d) Collaborate with the National Coordinator to ensure smooth administration of the secretariat of the Committee;
- (e) Be briefed by the Secretariat on correspondences and shall submit annual written report approved by the executive on the activities of the Committee;
- (f) Be the custodian of all records and properties of the Committee in collaboration with the National Coordinator;
- (g) Prepare agenda for all meetings.
- (h) Collect and collate all the reports from the various Heads of sub-Committees on a yearly basis

#### (4) CHAIRPERSON/HEAD OF COMMITTEES

The Chairperson of the various sub-Committees shall exercise powers as an Executive member. In so doing he or she shall:

- (a) Coordinate and execute the activities and functions of sub-Committees of the Committee
- (b) have at most two other members to be part of the subcommittee
- (c) Collect and collate reports submitted to him/her by members of the sub-committee bi-annually
- (d) Give accounts and reports of activities of the sub-committee when called to do so by the Chairman
- (e) Submit to the Secretary through the Secretariat reports of the sub-committee on a quarterly or yearly bases as the Secretariat may require.

#### (5) THE LEGAL ADVISER

The Legal Adviser shall:

- (a) Advise and represent the Committee in all legal matters affecting the Committee
- (b) Carry out such legal duties and assignments as the Committee may from time to time direct.

#### **ARTICLE 3**

#### Part I

#### 20. SUB-COMMITTEES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

#### 1. FINANCE AND TREASURY SUB-COMMITTEE

- ii. This sub-committee shall be headed by a professional or a person with good knowledge of financial matters appointed into the office by the Chairman.
- iii. This sub-committee shall have at least 4 members, including the Secretary of the Committee.
- iv. The Committee shall:
  - (i) Be responsible for balancing the account of the SCEN through proper audit of receipts and keeping of records evidencing income and expenditure.
  - (ii) Be responsible for proper record keeping of income and expenditure of the COSCEN and shall prepare annual financial statement of accounts in collaboration with the Secretariat.
- v. Notify members of any default on their parts to pay any outstanding dues.
- vi. Request for audits, get the books of account for inspection and auditing from the Secretariat.
- vii. Request for receipts for all monies of the COSCEN collected through the Secretariat and produce same for auditing together with any other relevant papers at the request of the internal Auditors when needed.
- viii. Pay all funds received immediately into the account of the COSCEN at a designated Bank that may be approved for the Committee by the Nigerian Governors Forum.
- ix. The use of cash book shall be adopted by the sub-committee
- x. Keeping impress account of not more that N1,000,000.00 for unforeseen expenses.

#### 3. WELFARE SUB-COMMITTEE

This sub-committee shall be headed by a person appointed into office and shall be responsible for:

- a. liaising with the hosting State or Branch on the welfare of the Delegates to the meeting in form of feeding, accommodation and also ensure proper arrangements regarding the venue for such-meetings.
- b. ensuring the welfare of members in some peculiar circumstances as may be determined by the Executive Council and discuss at General Meeting.

#### 4. EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING SUB-COMMITTEE

This sub-committee shall be headed by a person appointed into office with two other members and shall be responsible for formulation of educational policies to be implemented by the Committee in collaboration with the Nigerian Governors Forum education unit.

#### 5. AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE

This sub-committee shall be headed by a person appointed into office who is an Accountant by Profession or a person who has good knowledge of accounting principles/ practice.

The sub-committee shall:

- (a) Monitor and guide prudent financial reporting by the Committee.
- (b) Provide professional auditing services in line with extant financial regulations and standard practice
- (c) Conduct annual audit of the COSCEN's financial transactions and in so doing, he will state:
  - (i) Whether proper books of accounts have been kept by COSCEN.
  - (ii) Whether the COSCEN's balance sheet and income and expenditure accounts are in agreement with the books of account.
  - (iii) Whether he obtained all the information and explanations which he considers necessary for the purposes of the audit.

Part II

#### 6. AD HOC SUB-COMMITTEES

There shall be a five man ad hoc committee appointed to address particular issues for the COSCEN when the need arises.

#### 7. DISCIPLINARY SUB-COMMITTEE:

- a. There shall be a Disciplinary Sub-Committee which shall be saddled with the responsibility of disciplining erring members of the Committee.
- b. If any complaint is received and/or submitted about the conduct of member(s) and the complaint is deemed as being detrimental to the prestige and/or good governance of the Forum, such complaints shall be forwarded by the National Executive Council to the Disciplinary Sub-Committee.
- c. The Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall investigate the complaints against the conduct of member(s) and shall invite the member(s) concerned for an opportunity to appear before it for clarification and or enter a defence in that regard. The Sub-Committee shall make recommendations to the National Executive Council on the disciplinary measures to be taken against such member(s) if found culpable at the end of the Sub-Committee's investigations.
- d. Upon the receipt of the recommendations of the disciplinary Sub-Committee, the National Executive Committee shall apply any or all of the following disciplinary measures: (a) Reprimand, (b) Fine, Expulsion.
- e. Member(s) dissatisfied with the decision of the National Executive Council shall have a right of appeal against the decision in the first instance to the Annual General Meeting of the Forum.

#### 21. ROLE OF HEAD OF EDUCATION UNIT

The Head of Education Department, Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGE) shall serve as the National Coordinator and administrative head of the Secretariat of the Committee. He/she shall perform both administrative and advisory functions to the National Executive Council on matters relating to education policy formulation, domestication and implementation for COSCEN as a body, the states and nation in general.

#### **ARTICLE 4**

#### Part I

#### TENURE OF OFFICE

#### 22. TERM/TENURE AND DURATION OF OFFICE

National Executive members shall be elected to a single tenure of 3 years.

#### 23. VACANCY IN OFFICE

- They shall be vacancies in any of the National executive if any of the following occurs:
  - (a) Resignation from office in writing to members of COSCEN indicating the reason therein;
  - (b) Expiration of their tenure in office;
  - (c) Declaration of insanity by a Government approved Psychiatric hospital or a Court of competent Jurisdiction;
  - (d) An executive or official is officially declared bankrupt by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction;
  - (e) An executive or Official is convicted of any criminal offence by a Court of competent jurisdiction;
  - (f) An executive or official is appointed or elected into a political office at the State or Federal level;
  - (g) An executive or official ceases to reside in Nigeria;
  - (h) An executive or official dies during his term.
- Vacancy may also occur if and when an executive or official is suspended by the Executive Council for being indicted or investigated for:
  - (a) any capital offence in or outside Nigeria
  - (b) any fraud related offence
  - (c) In the event of a vacancy occurring as a result of any of the above in the first two year of an executive or Officer's tenure in office, an election shall be held, within a period of two months from the date of such vacancy to fill the vacancy and such replaced executive or official's tenure shall terminate on the date the original tenure would have terminated.

#### 24. DISSOLUTION

After serving for a period of three years, all executive offices shall be dissolved and all documents and materials affiliated to the said offices shall be handed over to the newly inaugurated executives and officers through the Secretariat.

# ARTICLE 5 Part I ELECTIONS

#### 25. ELECTIONS

- All National Executive members (except Committee Members), shall emerge into office by elections, coordinated and supervised by the National Coordinator of the Secretariat of the COSCEN and facilitated by the Executive Council for that purpose
- Save as otherwise provided herein, voting at all meetings shall be by show of hands. However, when conducted online, voting shall be by indicating the name of the candidate supported
  - (a) Save as otherwise provided herein, a simple majority shall decide the winner in any election;
  - (b) Voting at election of Executives Council members shall be by secret ballot;
  - (c) At the meeting for election of officers, all contestable offices shall be declared by the National Coordinator shall be the Head of Education, Nigerian Governors' Forum or any other person appointed by them to act on his behalf
  - (d) Zoning shall be adopted during election of Executive members. The Chairman and Secretary shall rotate through North/South dichotomy. That is, if the Chairman is zoned to the North, the Secretary shall come from the South, and vice versa.
  - (e) When a vacancy occurs in any office, the Chairman may as an interim measure, appoint a person to fill the post until a fresh election is conducted to fill such an executive post; Or ratified in a general meeting in the case of a committee post.

#### 26. ELIGIBILITY FOR ELECTION

All members shall be eligible to vie for any of the positions or offices herein provided

### ARTICLE 6 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

#### 27. SOURCES OF GENERATING INCOME

Sources of income for COSCEN include:

- i. Registration fees
- ii. Monthly dues
- iii. Contributions for specific project
- iv. Gifts and donations from Patron and Matrons
- v. Awards from competitions
- vi. Sponsorship support from development partners and education stakeholders

#### 28. FINANCIAL RECORDS

All monies received and spent for or by COSCEN shall go through the Chairman, Secretary and National Coordinator (Secretariat) for proper records and book keeping.

#### 29. BANK ACCOUNT, SIGNATORIES AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 1. There shall be opened for COSCEN account(s) with any commercial bank(s) in Nigeria.
- 2. The signatories to these accounts shall be the Chairman and Secretary of the Committee and the National Coordinator is the head of Education, Nigeria Governors' Forum.
- The Financial Year of the Committee shall be January 01 to December 31 of each year. The Executive Council shall have the powers to prescribe subscriptions and levies and other fees and to receive donations in furtherance of the aims and objectives of the Committee.
- 4. All annual subscriptions are due on January 30 in each year and must be paid before the 1st day of June.
- Any member whose subscription is in arrears after the last day of June shall automatically cease to be a member of the Forum or dealt with as the Executive Council deems appropriate.

# ARTICLE 7 PART I STANDING ORDERS

#### 30. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

- The Committee may alter the provision of this Constitution at a General Meeting by a resolution passed by a simple majority of its members. Such amendments shall in due course be forwarded to the Nigerian Governors Forum for approval.
- No addition, alteration, or amendment shall be made to or in this Constitution for the time being in force, unless the same have been previously submitted to and approved by the Executive of the Nigerian Governors Forum.

#### 31. BYE-LAW/SUB-COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

i. The Committee may make bye laws in addition to the Constitution which must not be contrary to this Constitution or the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

#### PART II

#### 32. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- The income and property of COSCEN when so ever derived shall be applied solely toward the promotion of the objective of the Committee as set forth in this CONSITUTION and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly, by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to the members of the body.
- 2. PROVIDED that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith, or reasonable or proper remuneration to any officer or servant of the body in return for any service actually rendered to the body but so that no member of the Executives shall be appointed to any salaries office of the Committee or any office of the Committee paid by fees; and that no remuneration or other benefit in money shall be given by the Committee to any member of such Committee except repayment of out of pocket expenses or reasonable and proper rent for premises demised to the Committee provided that the provision as aforesaid shall not apply to any payment of any company to a member of the Committee and such member shall not be bound to account for any share of profits he may receive in respect of any such payment.
- 3. IN the event of a winding up or dissolution, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any remaining property whatsoever

shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Committee but shall be given or transferred to some other institution or institutions, having objects similar to the object of the Committee and the body or bodies are prohibited from distributing its or their incomes and property amongst its or their members.

#### PART III

#### 33. INTERPRETATION

- 1. In this Constitution, unless the context otherwise requires"
  - a. "Ad hoc Committee" means Ad Hoc Committee created under this Constitution
  - b. "Executives" means
  - c. "Executive Council" means Ad Hoc Committee created under this Constitution
  - d. "Matrons" means patrons appointed for the Committee
  - e. "Nigerian Governors Forum" means the forum for Governors duly elected in the various States of Nigeria
  - f. "Patrons" means patrons appointed for the Committee
  - g. "sub-committees" means sub-committees of Committee of States Commissioners of Education in Nigeria
  - h. "The Committee" means Committee of States Commissioners of Education in Nigeria

#### Part IV

#### 34. CITATION

This Constitution shall be cited as the Constitution of States Commissioners of Education in Nigeria

#### **ARTICLE 8**

## OATH OF ALLEGIANCE/OATH OF OFFICE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

So help me God

#### OATH OF OFFICE

I,
So help me God.
Assent:
Chairman COSCEN of NGF Head of Education NGF