

**THE FEDERATION OF LIBERIAN MANDINGO ASSOCIATIONS
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
(FELMAUSA)**

**GOVERNS THE SYSTEMS OF OPERATION FOR THE
FEDERATION**

REVISED CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

ADOPTED THIS, FIRST DAY OF JULY, A.D. 2012

**At the 5th FELMAUSA General Assembly
Held at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in
Philadelphia, PA, USA**

**THE REVISED CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE FEDERATION OF
LIBERIAN ASSOCIATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICAS (FELMAUSA)**

JULY 2012

CERTIFICATION AND NOTARIZATION

We hereby certify that all the necessary **PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS** to revise the **CONSTITUTION** and **BY-LAWS** of the Federation of Liberian Mandingo Associations in the United States of America (**FELMAUSA**) have been **DELIBERATED, AGREED UPON** and **ADOPTED** on this **1st Day of July**, in the Year, **2012** by more than **Two-Third (2/3)** Majority Vote of Active Member-Chapters of the Federation **Present** and **Voting Affirmatively, Freely, Fairly** and **Transparently** at the 2012 National Convention (General Assembly) of the Federation, held at the Wyndham Garden Hotel, in the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America (USA).

In witness whereof, as President of the Federation of Liberian Mandingo Associations in the United States (FELMAUSA), I append my Signature hereunder on the date indicated.

Signed this _____ Day of November 2012.

Mohammed Bility, President of FELMAUSA

Sworn to before me this _____ Day of November 2012

Signature of Notary Public

**THE REVISED CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE FEDERATION OF LIBERIAN
ASSOCIATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICAS (FELMAUSA)**

JULY 2012

CERTIFICATION

This Revised Constitution and By-Laws of the Federation of Liberian Mandingo Associations in the United States of America (FELMAUSA) was Prepared and Reviewed by Members of the Constitution Review Committee (CRC), and subjected to Review and Approval by the Member-Chapters of the Federation.

This Revised Constitution and By-Laws was **REVIEWED, APPROVED** and **ADOPTED** on this **1st** **Day of July**, in the Year, **2012** by more than **Two-Third (2/3)** Majority Vote of Active Member-Chapters of the Federation **Present** and **Voting** Affirmatively, Freely, Fairly and Transparently at the 2012 National Convention of the Federation, held at the Wyndham Garden Hotel, in the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

This Revised Constitution and By-Laws was **SIGNED** by President Mohammed Bility on behalf of the Federation on the _____ Day of November 2012, as the **OFFICIAL CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS** governing the systems of operation for the Federation of Liberian Mandingo Associations in the United States of America (FELMAUSA).

In witness whereof, as Members of the FELMAUSA Constitution Review Committee (CRC), we append our Names (Signatures) hereunder on the date indicated.

Abraham BILITY, Chairman

Vamba S. FOFANA, Vice Chairman/Advisor

Amara Kafumba KEITA, Secretary

Vakamba FOFANA, Member

Ahmed K. SIRLEAF, Member

Abubakaseleke Soko SACKOR, Jr., Recording Secretary

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PREAMBLE

Aware of the enormous responsibilities imposed upon us to promote, practice and nurture unity and determined to ensure a sustained appropriate social interactions between and amongst ourselves, Realizing that our forefathers labored tirelessly for the Republic of Liberia and all Liberians,

We, the **LIBERIAN MANDINGOS AND PEOPLE OF LIBERIAN MANDINGO DESCENT**, residing in the United States of America (USA), have pledged to work for the enhancement of Liberian Mandingo Communities, both at home and abroad, and have therefore organized ourselves into a United States-based Diaspora organization and do hereby ordain and establish this **CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS** for the governance of the Federation of Liberian Mandingo Associations in the United States (**FELMAUSA**), the umbrella group of Liberian Mandingos and their various organizations in the USA.

CHAPTER I (1)

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

Article 1

The name of the organization shall be known and styled as the **FEDERATION OF LIBERIAN MANDINGO ASSOCIATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**, or alternately referred to as "**FELMAUSA**" or the "**FEDERATION.**"

CHAPTER II (2)

MOTTO

Article 1

The motto of FELMAUSA shall be "**LOOKING AHEAD.**"

CHAPTER III (3)
LOGO (SEAL)

Article 1

FELMAUSA shall identify, exhibit, and use slogans bearing its Motto, Seal or Logo, Maps, Colors and Flags, as they may be decided by a simple majority vote of Accredited Delegates representing active Member-Chapters (Member-Organizations) of the Federation present and voting affirmatively at a Convention.

Article 2

FELMAUSA logo (seal) shall be used consistently and in uniformity in all of the Federation official correspondence.

CHAPTER IV (4)
HEADQUARTERS

Article 1 Corporate Headquarters

FELMAUSA shall have its **Corporate Headquarters** in the **City of Philadelphia**, United States of America (USA).

Article 2 Administrative Headquarters

The **Administrative Headquarters** of FELMAUSA shall be maintained in the State of the National President of FELMAUSA.

Article 3 Other Offices

FELMAUSA shall also have **Sub-Offices** at other such places within the territory of the United States of America (USA), as it may from time to time determine, or as the business of the Federation may require.

CHAPTER V (5)
POWER OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Article 1

This Constitution and By-Laws is the **SUPREME AND FUNDAMENTAL LAW** of the Federation and its provisions shall have binding force and effect on all of its authorities and Member-Organizations (Member-Chapters).

Article 2

All laws, rules, regulations, procedures, activities and programs found to be inconsistent with this Constitution and By-Laws shall be **INVALID** and of **NO** Legal Consequence.

CHAPTER VI (6)
OBJECTIVES

Article 1

The objectives of the Federation shall be:

1. To promote, protect and practice the tradition of our fore-fathers, including but not limited to the demonstration of respect for elders, the recognition of protocols in the Uncle-Nephew and Father-Mother relationship of the Mandingo culture.
2. To protect and promote the interest of the Mandingo communities at home and abroad.
3. To create an atmosphere that shall enable the membership to engage in meaningful discussion on issues relating to the welfare of the Liberian Mandingo Ethnic Society.
4. To create an environment in which the membership shall seek to improve the economic and educational opportunities for the Liberian Mandingo ethnic group.

5. To seek educational opportunities for the development of human resources within the Liberian Mandingo Community.
6. To form collaborative alliance with other Mandingo organizations operating within Liberia to encourage dialogue, and activities indicative of peace, unity and reconciliation among members of the Mandingo communities.

CHAPTER VII (7)

MEMBERSHIP

Article 1

All power of the Federation shall be vested in the Member-Chapters who shall cause their leaders to fill vacancies and leave offices. The Chapters shall also cause the federation to convene and to consult upon the common good, pursuant to this Constitution.

Article 2

Any group of not less than twenty-five (25) Liberian Mandingos including their spouses who have duly formed themselves into a Liberian Mandingo Association and are not within a proximate detachment of an already established FELMAUSA Member Chapter is eligible for membership with the Federation. Such Liberian Mandingo Association shall ascribe to the principles and objectives of the Federation of Liberian Mandingo Associations in the USA.

Article 3

Any Liberian Mandingo who resides outside the jurisdiction of an established Chapter in his/her State or City shall be encouraged to become active participant within a proximate Chapter.

Article 4

Any Member-Chapter that is in good standing, as provided for by these BY-LAWS and Constitution, shall be deemed eligible for membership to the Federation.

Article 5

Other categories of membership including honorary and associate shall be determined by chapters and recommended to the National Administration. Upon assessment of such recommendation and accepted, the National Administration shall seek the consent and approval of the Board of Directors.

CHAPTER VIII (8)

DUES

Article 1

Subject to approval of the National Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, through the Membership Committee, shall determine annual dues for Chapters. Such dues shall be reviewed periodically to reflect existing realities.

CHAPTER IX (9)

MEMBER-CHAPTERS

Article 1

FELMAUSA is deemed and shall operate as one organization, with **one Tax-Identification Number, one Tax Exempt Number**, with Member-Chapters operating around the Americas within the confines of this Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 2

The Federation shall, at all time encourage the formation of chapters in states and regions where there are appreciable concentration of Liberian Mandingos. Such Interested Liberian Mandingos may petition (in writing) the Executive leadership to organize a FELMAUSA

Chapter. Such petition must clearly state the reasons for a chapter and how the formation of said chapter would enhance the objectives of FELMAUSA.

Article 3

Two or more chapters may not operate and/or exist within 200 miles of each other within the same state. A group of states within close proximity to each other may combine to form a single chapter.

Article 4

The Executive Committee/ National Administration shall respond to petitioners, meeting the qualifications set forth in preceding sections of this Constitution, to organize FELMAUSA Chapter within 90 days.

Article 5

The Executive Committee shall submit a recommendation and **notification** to the Board of the **certification** of the new chapters meeting the requirement of this Constitution.

Article 6

Revocation or Expulsion. Member-Chapters may have their membership revoked or be expelled from the Federation by a two-third (2/3) vote of the convention, for conduct(s) in violation of this Constitution and these By-laws. Chapters may also have their membership revoked for conduct(s) that would bring disrepute to the Federation. Such conduct shall include but not limited to decrease of membership below the constitutional minimum, persistent non-payment of dues, lack of established organic structures (including Board of Directors) as well as a glaring demonstration of lost of interest in the Federation's Affairs.

Article 7

Members denied an organizing permit or recommendation for membership may appeal to the Board of Directors, which shall render a decision after a review of all relevant document(s) and information.

Article 8

Each chapter shall conduct its own internal affairs independent of the National body, and shall enact its own laws and regulations to govern its members. However, the Constitution of the Federation shall supersede chapter's Constitution, in situations that may denote conflict of understanding.

Article 9

No Member-Chapter shall act, speak or make any representation on behalf of the Federation on **NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES** without the expressed written consent of the President of the Federation.

CHAPTER X (10) **STRUCTURE OF THE FEDERATION**

Article 1

There are established as Principal Organs of FELMAUSA:

1. **A National Convention**
2. **A National Board of Directors**
3. **A National Administration**

Article 2

Such Subsidiary Organs as may be found necessary may be established in keeping with the present Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 3

The Federation shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of Liberian Mandingo men and women who are members of Member–Chapters (Member–Organizations) in **GOOD STANDING** with the Federation to participate in any capacity and under conditions of **Equality** in its Principal and Subsidiary Organs.

CHAPTER XI (11)

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

Article 1

The National Convention, or alternately referred to as the "**Convention**," shall be the annual congregation of **ACCREDITED DELEGATES**, which shall be the **HIGHEST DECISION–MAKING BODY** of the Federation.

Article 2

The Convention shall be held annually during or around the **July 4th Week–end**, to review the past and plan future activities of the Federation.

Article 3

Representation and voting at FELMAUSA’s Conventions shall be by accreditation of not more than **FIVE (5) DELEGATES**, through Member–Chapters. No one shall be deemed a Delegate without being accredited by the Chapter of his/her residency. At least fifteen days prior to any Convention, all Chapters of the Association shall submit an updated roster of their accredited delegates to the National Administration. The National Administration shall, upon receipt of such roster, make public to the FELMAUSA community, the number of delegates expected at the pending convention.

Article 4

Anyone may attend the Convention in observer status. However, observers shall not have voting rights, shall not participate in debates and shall not be voted into office for any position, within the Federation.

Article 5

Decisions and resolutions at the Convention shall be reached by **Simple Majority** votes of accredited Chapter delegates present at the Convention. However, decisions relating to impeachment and removal from office shall be consistent with impeachment provisions laid down under the present Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 6

The National President of FELMAUSA shall convene the National Convention and shall report on the state of the Federation, including fiscal activities of the Federation, its scope and activities covering the period preceding the Convention. However, whenever it becomes difficult for the President to convene the Convention, the National President may request the Board to postpone the Convention and shall provide in writing to the Board reason(s) and circumstances for the postponement.

Article 7

The convening of the Convention shall only be postponed by a decision of the National Board of Directors in the form of a resolution signed by a **two-third (2/3)** majority of in a quorum of Board members present and voting at a call-meeting. However, the maximum time within which a Convention shall be postponed should not exceed **six (6)** months.

Article 8

Each year, the National President or his designate shall issue a Convention Notice to the Board, Chapter leaders and the membership at least three months prior to the National Convention. The notice shall include a draft Convention agenda and shall specify the date(s) and venue of the Convention. The President shall ensure that the notice is circulated to the membership as widely as possible.

Article 9

The National President may convene an emergency session of the National Convention with the consent of the Board to discuss specific issue(s) affecting the Federation. However, no emergency Convention shall be convened within three months prior to the Convention. The Convention shall not be replaced by an emergency Convention. This Constitution shall not be amended nor a regular election held at any emergency Convention. However, a by-election may be held at an emergency Convention to fill vacancy and/or vacancies.

Article 10

Decisions about National Convention venue and date shall be made at the preceding Convention. In the absence of such decision or when it becomes difficult to host the Convention in a particular city, the National Administration shall in consultation with the Board designate an alternative city for the National Convention.

Article 11

Decisions of the Convention shall be binding on Member-Chapters (Member-Organizations), the National Board of Directors, the National Administration, and **ALL** other Subsidiary Organs of the Federation.

CHAPTER XII (12)

THE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Article 1

The National Board of Directors shall be the **HIGHEST DECISION-MAKING BODY** of FELMAUSA in the **ABSENCE** of the National Convention (General Assembly).

Article 2

LEGISLATIVE POWERS of the Association shall be vested in the National Board of Directors, or alternately referred to as the “**Board**” or “**National Board.**”

Article 3

The Board shall have oversight responsibilities over the National Administration of the Federation. In the absence of the Convention, the Board shall exercise **ALL POWERS** and take all decisions reserved for the National Convention under this Constitution and By-Laws, except the amendment of this Constitution and By-Laws. Decision of the Board shall, however, be subject to a review **by the** General Assembly, Regular or Emergency.

Article 4

The Board shall ensure that every organ of FELMAUSA adhere to the provisions of the Federation's Constitution and By-Laws, being fully cognizant that no one shall be considered above and/or below any of the constitutional provisions.

Article 5

The National Board of the Federation shall comprise of **TWO (2) ELECTED** local representatives from each Member-Chapter to serve a **two-year term**. Board members may be elected to succeed themselves as many times as the membership of their resident member-Chapters may wish to do so through their votes.

Article 6

Representation of local **Chapter Presidents** and/or any local Executive Officers on the FELMAUSA National Board of Directors shall **NOT** be **AUTOMATIC**, as they must be **ELECTED** and **ACCREDITED** by the membership of their resident Member-Chapters.

Article 7

Members of the National Board of Directors shall be legal residents of the United States of America (USA).

Article 8

The Membership of each Member-Chapter (Member-Organization) shall evolve its own structure, Constitution and By-Laws, as well as rules by which the Chapter shall be governed, and how its representative shall be determined and seconded to the National Board. However, any such law, rule, procedure, criteria, or by-law that contravenes any portion of the

Constitution and By-Laws of FELMAUSA shall be null and void. The Board, through the National President, shall have the right to declare any such contraventions or other non-democratic procedures null and void.

Article 9

The National Board reserves the right to determine, whether solicited or not, the constitutionality, intent and/or interpretation of any and all portions of the Constitution and By-Laws of all Member-Chapters, based upon the provisions of the FELMAUSA Constitution. Only the **National Convention** or a **Special Assembly of Delegates** can override the decisions of the National Board of Directors.

Article 10

In the case of a vacancy involving a Chapter's representative on the Board, the Chairman of the Board shall, through the National President, inform the appropriate Chapter and request the Chapter to fill the vacancy.

Article 11

The Board shall determine the rules of its proceedings, establish its leadership structure, set criteria and determine causes for which, and the extent to which, disciplinary actions may be taken against its members; and, with the concurrence of two-third majority of its full membership voting in person, recommend a replacement of any of its members.

Article 12

Officers of the Board shall serve a two-year term. They (Officers of the Board) may be elected to succeed themselves as many times as membership of the Board may wish to do so through their votes.

Article 13

The Board shall have the following additional powers:

1. Charter (or give cognizance to) all member-Chapters of FELMAUSA, consistent with this Constitution.

2. Confirm appointments of officers and members of autonomous commissions.
3. Impeach and remove elected officers from office for cause and consistent with this Constitution.
4. Approve elections guidelines for FELMAUSA elections for the national administration.
5. Approve the Annual and all ad hoc budgets of the Association.
6. Direct audits of officers and members entrusted with the finances of the Association.
7. Approve membership dues and other fees as shall be proposed by the Executive Committee through the President of FELMAUSA.
8. Approve all contracts and/or projects with a financial obligation of **ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,000.00)** and **ABOVE**, and ratify all agreements between the Federation and other entities.
9. Cite officers and members of the Association for cause.
10. Create additional standing committees and autonomous commissions.

Article 14

The Board of Directors shall act to establish benefits for the National President and the Chairman of the Board of Directors who shall continue to enjoy such benefits during the duration of their term in office. Such benefits shall be reviewed annually by the National convention which shall ensure that the benefits are within the financial or resource capacity of the Federation.

Article 15

The Board shall meet in regular sessions at least every four **(4)** months. A simple majority shall constitute a quorum. Decisions by the Board shall be in the form of a resolution. The Chairman of the Board may convene an emergency session of the Board.

Article 16

The Board shall take not more than **three weeks (21 Days)** to act upon a bill or request submitted to it by the President. Any time period extending beyond 21 days shall be considered as out of compliance and any such bill or request shall be considered passed by default of the Board.

Article 17

The National Board of Directors represents the membership of the Federation and is directly accountable to said membership. The National Board shall **Act** only as a **Group**. Individual Members of the National Board shall have **NO** power, **EXCEPT** that which is expressed by a **simple majority** of vote (on procedural matters) and/or **two-third (2/3)** majority vote (on substantive matters) of Members of the National Board.

Article 18

Members of the National Board of Directors shall be Members in **GOOD MORAL** and **FINANCIAL STANDING** with their respective Member-Chapters (Member-Organizations) and shall regularly attend and participate in their respective Chapter Meetings.

Article 19

Members of the National Board of Directors shall make serious **COMMITMENT** to financially support the Federation in a manner commensurate with their individual ability and **PARTICIPATE** in **FUNDRAISING** and other activities for the Federation as requested.

CHAPTER XIII (13) **THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

Article 1

The National Administration shall be responsible for the day-today administration of the Federation. It shall coordinate the activities of all Member-Chapters of the Federation, including standing committees.

Article 2

The National Administration shall comprise of the elected Executive officers of the Association.

Article 3

The elected officers that shall constitute the National Administration of FELMAUSA shall be as follows:

1. **National President**
2. **National Vice President for Administration**
3. **National Vice President for Operation**
4. **National Secretary-General**
5. **National Assistant Secretary-General**
6. **National Treasurer**
7. **National Financial Secretary**

Article 4

All elected officers shall be legal residents in the United States of America. They shall each be elected for a two-year terms. No elected officer shall serve for more than two consecutive terms of office. They may however run for the same office following the termination of one or more terms of office of another administration.

CHAPTER XIV (14) **THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Article 1

The **National President** shall be at least twenty-five (25) years-old and legal resident in the United States of America for at least one (1) year prior to his/her election.

Article 2

The President shall be the official spokesperson for the Federation and shall preside over all meetings of the Federation, including the National Convention, and shall direct the affairs of the National Administration.

Article 3

The National President shall appoint, for confirmation by the Board, all officers and members of standing committees. He/she shall also constitute ad hoc committee when and where necessary. His/her duties shall include but not limited to the following:

- A.** Conduct national and international affairs of the Association;
- B.** Submit to the membership in convention written annual report highlighting the activities and operation of the association;
- C.** The National President shall appoint, for confirmation by the Board, individuals to fill (only for the unexpired term or until by-elections are held) vacancies for elective offices within thirty days of the creation of a vacancy by death, resignation, disability, impeachment or other

Article 4

The National President of FELMAUSA shall be protected against profanities directed at him/her for any reasons. The Chief Executive shall enjoy the right to pardon anyone or group of Felmausans for acts of which they have been found guilty. However, such pardon shall not precede an act of judicial engagement by the Board or any body or bodies established for such purpose.

CHAPTER XV (15)

THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION

Article 1

The **National Vice President for Administration (VPA)** shall:

- A.** Be the principal deputy to the National President;
- B.** Assist in carrying out all other duties assigned him/her by the National President;
- C.** Meet the same qualifications as the President for eligibility to be elected;
- D.** Serve as Acting National President, in the absence of the National President.
- E.** Be Ex-Officio on all standing committees;

F. Assume the office of National President in the case of removal of the President from office, or upon death, resignation or inability to discharge the duties and functions of the National President of FELMAUSA.

Article 2

With the consent and approval of the National President, the National Vice President for Administration shall assist the National President in the following areas:

1. Establish and maintain an ongoing relationship between the Liberian Embassy and FELMAUSA;
2. Establish and coordinate a healthy working relationship with the Liberian government, through the Chief of Staff of the Republic of Liberia;
3. Establish and maintain a relationship between all political parties, U.S. Embassy, United Nations, vital media sources, and other pro-democracy organizations within Liberia;
4. Liaise with other Mandingo organizations in Liberia to establish a structural network that will educate our Mandingo community on the significance of their active participation in the political, economic and social affairs of post war Liberia;
5. Liaise with FELMAUSA Research & Public Relations Committee (RPRC) and other Liberian Mandingo organizations in Liberia to serve as a strong advocate on issues affecting Liberian Mandingos in and out of Liberia either through the King Sao Bosso Lecture Series or any other viable media;
6. Liaise with FELMAUSA RPRC to produce capable members who could serve as observers on national developments that are of interest to Liberian Mandingos.

CHAPTER XVI (16)

THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATION

Article 1

The **National Vice President for Operations (VPO)**, with the consent and approval of the National President, shall assist the National President in the following areas, including dealing with all internal matters, coordinating, and creating an effective and productive working relationship with the executive officials of all FELMAUSA chapters.

Article 2

In consultation with the National president, schedule and attend periodic meetings/conference calls with the executive officials of various FELMAUSA member-Chapters to enhance collaborative efforts on various fronts for the viability and success of FELMAUSA.

Article 3

Coordinate with state chapters to craft a system that will strengthen them in the area of voluntary community services, mentoring, education, social services, immigration and legal representation, among others.

Article 4

Organize regular meetings with various chapter heads as a way of reaching out to every chapter.

Article 5

Ensure the empowerment of FELMAUSA chapters by strategically helping them to:

1. Produce and uphold a comprehensive constitution that is parallel to that of FEMAUSA;
2. Establish an effective and efficient working relationship with their local government officials (such as city mayors, councilmen, governors, etc.);
3. Identify short-term community-based projects, implementable within a 90-day period.
4. Design strategies, and fund raising events geared at maximizing resources – financial and logistical;
5. Liaise with the Secretary General to create and maintain an up-to-date data base registry for FELMAUSA, primarily comprising names, contacts, and any and all information vital to Federation and its chapter states; and
6. Design programs to ensure women development, foster collaboration with them, and tap into the resources of our generous and resourceful women groups in various states.

CHAPTER XVII (17)

NATIONAL SECRETARY-GENERAL

Article 1

The **National Secretary-General (SG)** shall be the chief guardian of all documents and records for the Federation and shall be responsible for all correspondence, prepare all minutes of proceedings of the Convention and other meetings of ELMAUSA

Article 2

Assist the President in responding to correspondence(s) and carry out other duties as may be directed by the National President.

Article 3

He/she shall be consultant to all Felmausa Public-relations Committees and or, efforts including the Federation's Website and List Serve.

CHAPTER XVIII (18) **NATIONAL ASSISTANT SECRETAR-GENERAL**

Article 1

The **National Assistant Secretary-General** shall be the principal deputy to the National Secretary-General, and serve as Acting Secretary-General in the absence of the Secretary-General.

Article 2

In the case the National Secretary-General is rendered incapable, for whatever reason, to discharge his duties, the responsibilities of the office of National Secretary-General shall devolve upon the National Assistant-Secretary; in such case, the National President, with the knowledge and consent of the Board, shall appoint an Acting National Assistant Secretary-General to complete the unexpired term of the National Assistant Secretary-General.

CHAPTER XIX (19) **NATIONAL TREASURER**

Article 1

The **National Treasurer** shall keep all funds and financial records of the Association, and submit to the FELMAUSA Board of Directors through the National President, periodic financial reports of the Federation either upon self initiative or request/demand through the National President.

Article 2

The National Treasurer shall also, among others:

1. Receive all monies for the Association and deposit same in the Association's account(s);
2. Collect membership dues, fees and fines, and shall from time to time recommend to the Executive Committee banking institutions to keep the Association's money;
3. Submit annual financial report of the Association to the President at least two weeks prior to the National Convention and shall prepare annual and ad hoc budgets for the approval of the National Administration;
4. Make all disbursements within budgetary allotment, on behalf of the Association upon the approval of the National President.

CHAPTER XX (20) FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Article 1

The **Financial Secretary** shall serve as a check on the Federation's financial records. H/she shall keep the Check Books of the Federation and devise appropriate methods for financial transactions.

Section 2

Together with the Treasurer and subject to approval of the Board, the Financial Secretary shall produce a financial policy to govern the finances of the Federation.

CHAPTER XXI (21) STANDING COMMITTEES

Article 1

There shall be established subsidiary organs of FELMAUSA to be known as **Standing Committees**. The Standing Committees shall help the President in executing the works of FELMAUSA.

Article 2

In addition, the Chief Executive of FELMAUSA shall also have the power to appoint short-term-goal **Ad Hoc Committees** that shall be used to address certain specific issues of interest to the Federation.

Article 3

The following shall constitute the Standing Committees of FELMAUSA:

1. **Executive**
2. **Finance**
3. **Planning**
4. **Membership & Welfare**
5. **Social Affairs**
6. **Website**
7. **Public Affairs**

Article 4

The **Executive Committee** shall comprise of the elected officers of the Federation, and shall be headed by the National President. It shall review all major proposals submitted by other committees. This Committee is responsible for the day-to-day operations of FELMAUSA.

Article 5

The **Finance Committee** shall devise plans and projects for the funding of programs for the Federation. It shall, under direct supervision of the President, be responsible for all fund-raising activities for FELMAUSA, except for local chapters' activities. However, this Committee may collaborate and/or coordinate fund-raising activities with one or more chapters for the benefit of the Federation.

Article 6

The **Planning Committee** shall undertake research and feasibility studies in all sectors to include but not be limited to education, health care, agriculture to empower Liberian Mandingo Communities (**LIBERIAN MANDINGOS**). The Committee shall investigate and make appropriate recommendation on specific activities that would benefit LIBERIAN MANDINGOS at home, and members of the Federation in the Diaspora. It shall monitor and ensure implementation of all developmental projects and programs under the auspices of FELMAUSA.

Article 7

The **Membership & Welfare Committee** shall, under direct supervision of the President, be responsible for registration of all members of the Federation. It shall receive and screen all applications for membership to the Federation, as submitted by FELMAUSA Chapters. This Committee shall establish membership criteria for the Federation and submit such criteria to the Board, through the National President, for approval and subsequent distribution among chapters of the Federation for their guidance and implementation. The Committee shall assist chapters to conduct membership drives, and develop an official roster for the Federation, as well as undertake social services programs aimed at providing assistance to members in times of bereavements and sickness or otherwise. It shall establish clear criteria and strict guidelines by which assistance can be rendered to the membership, circumstances under which the Federation shall be obligated to assist a member, irrespective of status, origin, name recognition and other biases.

Article 8

The **Social Affairs Committee** shall be responsible for, and undertake, social activities and sports programs for the Federation. It shall work along with the Ways and Means Committee to execute programs and other social activities to raise funds for the Federation.

Article 9

The **Public Affairs Committee** shall have the responsibility to coordinate the public relation activities of the Federation. Its functions shall include but not limited to propagating positive image of FELMAUSA. This Committee shall also engage in the cultivation of avenues for public

awareness of the Federation’s policies, programs and achievements. This Committee shall monitor the management of FELMAUSA’s List Serve and shall ensure that appropriate exchanges are maintained at all time on the List Serve.

Article 10

The **Website Committee** shall regulate the management of the Federation’s Website, under direct supervision of the President. It shall devise a Website management and utilization policy, for approval by the National Board of Directors. The policy shall guide, among other issues, against the monopolization of the Website by anyone or group of persons.

CHAPTER XXII (22) **AUTONOMOUS COMMISSIONS**

Article 1

The following shall constitute the Autonomous Commissions of FELMAUSA

- 1. The National Audit Commission**
- 2. The National Elections Commission**

Article 2

The National President is empowered by this Constitution and By-Laws to direct audits of Standing Committees, the Elections Commission, individuals or groups of individuals entrusted with moneys of the Federation.

Article 3

The Chairman and members of Autonomous Commissions shall be nominated by the National President for approval by the Board of Directors. Once confirmed by the Board, the functions of these Commissions shall be independent of the President, Executive Committee and the Board of Directors.

CHAPTER XXIII (23)
THE NATIONAL AUDIT COMMISSION

Article 1

The **National Audit Commission** may be directed by the National Convention, the Board or the National President to conduct audits of any standing committee, an individual or group of individuals of the Federation who may have handled finances for the Federation. The Commission shall also conduct regular annual audit of the Executive Committee.

Article 2

The National President may authorize audit of the Audit Commission itself by commissioning an ad hoc auditing commission for such purpose. Copies of all audits shall be made available to the Convention, the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, and such records shall form part of the archives of the Federation.

Article 5

The **National Audit Commission** shall be headed by a Chairman, and shall constitute two other members. Members of the commission shall be nominated by the National President to the Board of Directors to be confirmed for a three-year term.

Article 6

Membership to the National Audit Commission shall be based strictly upon professional capability to conduct the required assignment based upon internationally accepted principles.

CHAPTER XXIV (24)
THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION

Article 1

The **National Elections Commission (NEC)** shall be responsible to conduct elections of National Officers of the Federation.

Article 2

The National Elections Commission shall comprise of a **Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary** and four (4) other members. The seven (7) Members of the Commission shall be nominated by the National President to the Board of Directors to be confirmed for a three-year term. No more than two (2) Commissioners shall come from the same Member-Chapter (Member-Organization).

Article 3

The National Elections Commission, once confirmed by the Board, shall be an **independent constitutional body** in the exercise of its functions and subject only to the present Constitution and By-Laws. It shall be autonomous and shall be subjected to any influence by neither the Board nor the Administration (Executive Committee), **EXCEPT** in adjudicatory matters relating to the conduct of elections.

Article 4

In a conflicting situation, only a General Assembly, called, emergency or regular, can alter the decision of the National Elections Commission.

Article 5

The National Elections Commission shall establish Election Guidelines for each general election, which shall be approved by the Board.

Article 5

The National Elections Commission may authorize its Chairman or any of its officers or any of its members to exercise and perform all or any of its powers and functions under the present Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 6

The National Elections Commission shall establish election laws (guidelines), requirements and eligibility criteria for the free, fair, transparent and smooth conduct of elections consistent with the present Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 7

The National Elections Commission shall accredit candidates who meet the requirements spelled out in the Elections Guidelines.

CHAPTER XXV (25) ELECTIONS

Article 1

All general (regular) elections and by-elections into the National Administration of the Federation shall be organized and conducted by the National Elections Commission in accordance with the present Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 2

Election of Officers of the National Administration shall be held biannually at a National Convention during or around the July 4th weekend.

Article 3

System of voting shall be secret ballot and the procedures shall be determined by the National Elections Commission.

Article 4

Each Delegate of a Member-Organization (Member-Chapter) shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

Article 5

Election is considered valid only if it is held at the National Convention (General Assembly) or on a subsequent date to be determined by the National Elections Commission, in case of by-elections, where a quorum is formed and a simple majority of Delegates representing the Member-Chapters (Member-Organizations) present at the time of the National Convention participate in the election.

CHAPTER XXVI (26)

CRISIS RESOLUTION CHANNEL

Article 1

An aggrieved registered and active member(s) shall submit a letter of complaint to the National President a copy of which must be sent to the Board of Directors. The National President, within ten (10) business days of receipt of such written complaint, shall constitute an ad hoc committee of five (5) reputable Elders and forward the name of the chairman of the committee (with adequate contact information to the complaining members). The complainant(s) shall, accordingly, submit a formal letter of complaint to the ad hoc committee, as constituted by the National President and which shall investigate the complaint(s).

Article 2

In the event any of the parties is not contented with the ad hoc committee's ruling, it shall appeal to the National Board of Directors, which shall receive and review said findings, hold hearings, or grant opportunity for the accused and/or the accuser to be heard.

Article 3

In the event a decision/ruling of the National Board of Directors is not satisfactory to any of the concerned parties, the concerned party(s) shall appeal to the Advisory Council, which shall hold additional hearing, if necessary, and render a **FINAL** decision.

CHAPTER XXVII (27)

LINE OF SUCCESSION

Article 1

In the event of the resignation, impeachment, incapacity, relocation out of the Federation's Jurisdiction or death of the National President, the National Vice President for Administration (VPA) shall become National President until the next election and the National Vice President for Operation shall become the National Vice President for Administration.

Article 2

In the event of the resignation, impeachment, incapacity, relocation out of the Federation's Jurisdiction or death of the National Vice President for Operation, the National President shall nominate for the advice and consent of the Board a new National Vice President for Administration.

Article 3

In the event of the resignation, impeachment, incapacity, relocation or death of the National Secretary-General, the National Assistant Secretary-General, the National Treasurer, or the National Financial Secretary, the National President shall nominate a successor for the advice and consent of the Board of Directors.

Article 3

The line of succession to the National President shall be in the order of the National Vice President for Administration, the National Vice President for Operation (VPO), the National Secretary-General, the National Chairperson of the Board of Directors, the National Assistant General Secretary, the National Treasurer, the National Financial Secretary, the National Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors, and the National Secretary of the Board of Directors.

CHAPTER XXVIII (28)
NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Article 1

The **National Advisory Council** (the **NAC**), hereafter referred to as the “**Advisory Council**,” shall be comprised of former National Presidents and former National Chairmen of the Board of Directors of the Federation who served honorably and completed their full term of office.

Article 2

Membership of the Advisory Council shall also include **Eminent Personalities** in the Liberian Mandingo Community in the Diaspora (United States) who have contributed to the advancement of the Liberian Mandingo community and/or the Liberian community at large.

Article 3

Former National Presidents and National Board Chairmen who were forced to resign or were impeached and removed from office shall be barred from serving on the Advisory Council.

Article 4

The Advisory Council shall develop its rules and determine its leadership. No rule of the Advisory Council shall be in violation of the present Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 5

The Advisory Council shall provide advisory opinions on the interpretation of the Constitution and By-Laws of FELMAUSA and shall adjudicate **CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES, GRIEVANCES, and CONFLICTS** between the National Administration and the National Board of Directors of the Federation.

Article 6

In the event the findings and recommendations of the Advisory Council are **REJECTED** by a party (namely; either the National Administration or the National Board of Directors) or parties (i.e., both the National Administration and the National Board of Directors) to the dispute, the National President shall within forty-five (**45**) days, call a Special Joint Emergency Session of all Principal Organs of the Federation to deliberate and vote on the findings and recommendations

of the National Advisory Council. A simple majority vote of a Special Joint Emergency Session shall constitute **FINAL** closure to the issue and shall be **BINDING** on all parties.

Article 7

In addition, the National Advisory Council, upon request of the National Administration (via the National President) and/or the National Board of Directors (via the Chairman or the Person in Charge), may investigate complaints filed against an individual or individuals and render final decision.

CHAPTER XXIX (29) **FIDUCIARY MATTERS**

Article 1

All monies belonging to the Federation shall be deposited into a Federation's accounts, which shall be maintained at a federally insured banking institution. The National President shall be the principal signatory to all accounts bearing the tax identification number of the Federation. The *Financial Sec.* and National Treasurer shall also be signatories to the Federation's accounts. The National President or his/her designate, along with any one of the other signatories shall be required to make withdrawals or other bank transactions.

Article 2

Notwithstanding **ARTICLE 12, Section 1**, no money shall be withdrawn from the Federation's account except for appropriations made in the annual or ad hoc budget approved by the Board. However, in case of an emergency, the Executive Committee may authorize the spending of not more than *one thousand dollars (\$1000)*. The National President shall within a two-week period of such emergency, inform the Board in writing and shall provide reasons for the emergency in writing.

Article 3

The Executive Committee, through the National President, shall submit quarterly financial reports to the Board. Such reports shall include quarterly statement, receipts and expenditures.

Article 4

The Federation's **Financial Management Practices and Procedures** shall entail practices and procedures in harmony with **Generally Accepted Accounting Principles** and sound financial management and good accounting practices.

Article 5

The National Treasurer shall submit all transaction documents to the National Financial Secretary.

Article 6

The Federation's account shall not be closed, funds withdrawn, or funds transferred without the authorization of the Board.

CHAPTER XXX (30) IMPEACHMENT

Article 1

Any impeachable offense as defined in this Constitution shall be considered a gross violation of this Constitution. Misapplication of the Federation's funds and/or resources belonging to the Federation, misuse of power, misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance are all hereby considered impeachable offenses.

Article 2

All cases of impeachment and removal from office shall originate with the signing of a petition by at least one members–chapter–in–good standing with the Federation. The petition shall be submitted to the Chairman of the Board or the next in command (if the petition is against the Chairman) who shall convene a special session of the Board within a six–week period to hold

the impeachment trial. If however the petition is against any member or group of members of the Board, the remaining members of the Board shall constitute an Ad Hoc Commission to undertake the impeachment proceedings.

Article 3

No elected National Officer shall be impeached and removed from office except by a **TWO-THIRD (2/3)** majority vote of members of the National Board of Directors, voting in person after an impeachment hearing.

Article 4

The Federation may pursue legal actions against Individuals impeached and removed from office for misapplication of the Federation's funds/resources.

CHAPTER XXXI (31) AMENDMENT AND RATIFICATION

Article 1

A chapter or group of chapters of the Federation may submit, to the Board of Directors, a proposal to amend this Constitution. The Board shall insure that the proposed amendment is made available at an ensuing convention a two-third (**2/3**) majority vote of which shall be required to pass an amendment on the present Constitution and By-Laws.

Article 2

Proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws shall be submitted at least **TWO (2) WEEKS** prior to the published date of the Convention. The proposed amendment shall be accompanied by reason(s) why the amendment is necessary. The proposed amendment shall be circulated as much as possible to the membership prior to the Convention.

CHAPTER XXXII (32)

TRANSITIONAL CLAUSES

Article 1

The **Incumbent Officers** of the Federation shall be dissolved upon the swearing-in of the newly Elected Officers, which shall take place in **twenty-one (21)** days following proclamation of elections results by the Elections Commission.

Article 2

The Swearing-in task shall, however, be delayed in the presence of a protest and which shall be addressed in not more than **forty-five (45) Calendar Days**.

Article 3

The Elections Commission shall be the final arbiter in elections-related disputes except wherein the entire commission or majority thereof is accused. The Administration shall, upon a protest situation against the Elections commission, constitute an Ad Hoc Committee to resolve the protest concerns.

Article 4

The present Constitution and By-Laws shall come into force immediately following its adoption and shall be the supreme laws of the Federation and its provisions shall be binding on all members of the Federation. The National Convention shall promulgate all amendments to this Constitution.

Article 5

Any and all previous Constitutions and By-Laws of the Federation of the Liberian Mandingo Associations in the USA, FELMAUSA, are hereby **AMENDED**. Any law or bodies of laws of the Federation that are not in conformity with this Constitution is hereby considered null and void.

CHAPTER XXXIII (33)
OATH OF OFFICE

Article 1

An individual, elected or appointed to an office of honor in FELMAUSA, shall take the following Oath:

“I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, uphold, protect and defend the Constitution & By-Laws of the Federation of Liberian Mandingo Associations in the Americas (FELMAUSA), United States Federal and State Laws, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties and responsibilities of the Office of _____ to the best of my ability. So help me the Almighty Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.”

CHAPTER XXXIV (34)
OATH OF OFFICE

Article 1

It shall be understood by all Member-Chapters of FELMAUSA that the Federation is held harmless from any and all actions done in its name without written or expressed authorization. This shall encompass, but not limited to, the release of written or verbal information.

HISTORY OF THE FELMAUSA CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Established In the Year 2007.

Revised this 3rd Day of July in the Year 2010.

Revised this 3rd Day of July in the Year 2011.

Revised this 1st Day of July in the Year 2012.

DECLARATION

Out of the following nine (9) Member-Chapters of five (5) Delegates each to the FELMAUSA National Convention, eight (8) Chapter Leaders and Delegates signed, attesting to the deliberations and subsequent adoption of the Revised Constitution & By-Laws at the July 1, 2012 National Assembly of Members.

1. **ARIZONA**
2. **GEORGIA**
3. **MINNESOTA**
4. **NEW YORK**
5. **NEW JERSEY**
6. **PENNSYLVANIA**
7. **TEXAS**
8. **WISCONSIN**
9. **WASHINGTON, DC METRO**

The following three (3) Member-Chapters did not attend the 2012 National Convention. Consequently, they did not participate in the deliberations that led to the adoption of the present Constitution and By-Laws:

1. **CHICAGO (ILLINOIS)**
2. **NORTH CAROLINA**
3. **NORTH DAKOTA**

GLOSSARY

Chartered Member-Chapter. A Member-Chapter that has been duly accredited by the Federation's Board of Directors.

Chartered Member-Organization. A Member-Organization that has been duly accredited by the Federation's Board of Directors.

Good Standing. Member-Chapters (Member-Organizations) that conduct chapter elections pursuant to their Constitutions and By-Laws; have two (2) representatives each on the National Board of Directors; paid all annual dues; settled any outstanding debts; and executed its obligations to the Federation in keeping with the present Constitution and By-Laws.

Liberia. The Republic of Liberia.

Liberian Mandingo. Any person who is a Mandingo and a citizen of Liberia by birth, marriage, or naturalization.

Liberian Mandingo Descendent. Any person who has Liberian Mandingo ancestry.

Member-Chapters (Member-Organizations). Chapters (organizations) that have fully completed the appropriate Membership Application Form with the required supporting documentation and membership fee and have been chartered as a member of the Federation.

Membership Fee. The required fee paid to become a Member-Chapter/Member-Organization of the Federation.

Member-Chapter/Member-Organization Due. The annual fee paid by Member-Chapters (Member-Organizations) to the Federation.

National Convention. The annual gathering of Delegates representing Member-Chapters of the Federation held on a rotational basis in cities of a Member-Chapter in Good Standing in the Federation.