Coalition for Human Rights in Development
Steering Committee Terms of Reference

Revised 3 November 2023

The Coalition for Human Rights in Development (the "Coalition") is a global coalition of social movements, civil society organisations, and grassroots groups working together to ensure that development is community-led and that it respects, protects, and fulfils human rights.

We do so by making sure that communities have the information, power and resources to determine their own development paths and priorities and to hold development finance institutions, governments, and other actors accountable for their impacts on people, peoples and the planet.

The Coalition consists of a General Membership, a Secretariat, and a Steering Committee (SC). To advance its mission, the Coalition works through regional and thematic working groups and committees which include members and partners. These advisory committees and working groups – such as in the Community Resource Exchange, Defenders in Development campaign, and campaigns on regional development banks – also set objectives, strategies and work plans.

A. Overall Role of the Steering Committee

The SC of the Coalition is predominantly responsible to:

1. Hire, manage and conduct an annual review of the Director, with Secretariat input;
2. With input from the annual review, maintain a competitive salary and benefits package for the Director;
3. Approve, based on recommendations from the General Membership, programmatic working groups and committees, and the Secretariat, the overarching strategy, objectives, areas of work and new positions of the Coalition.
4. Provide oversight of decisions by the Director and Secretariat on major operational and administrative issues, including hiring and removal of personnel and personnel policies;
5. With input from the Director and the Secretariat, define fundraising policies and priorities in line with strategy, objectives and work of the Coalition;
6. Support Director and Secretariat in fundraising and mobilising resources towards the collective work of the Coalition;
7. Steward the SC appointment process, including nominations and elections;
8. Review and approve the Coalition's quarterly finances and annual budget (with leadership by the Treasurer and Finance Committee);
9. Promote Coalition activities, conducting outreach to expand Coalition membership, and helping to facilitate engagement by the wider Coalition membership in activities and planning;
10. Provide input on Coalition activities and materials, including the work of Secretariat staff or consultants; and
11. Together with the Secretariat, publicly represent the Coalition in meetings and events, and with the media, on agreed upon Coalition positions.

B. Expectations of Individual Steering Committee Members

SC members are expected to:

1. Attend and participate in a minimum of three quarterly SC meetings;
2. Be active in a SC committees and General Membership working group or committee;
3. Provide timely responses and advice to requests for assistance from the Director;
4. Incorporate Coalition strategies and activities into their work plans and engage in Coalition activities in their country, region and internationally, where feasible and appropriate;
5. Identify and avoid any potential conflicts of interest with the Steering Committee, the Coalition, Coalition members and the Secretariat; and
6. In order to ensure that Coalition activities are accessible to members, support the Secretariat in capacity building efforts with members, where feasible.

C. Composition of Steering Committee

1. The SC will consist of ten (10) members, foremost composed of social movements, local groups and civil society organisations with demonstrable experience advocating for development justice.
2. To ensure diversity and to reflect the membership composition, the Steering Committee will include:
    a. at least five (5) people who identify as women;
    b. at least two (2) members from Indigenous or traditional communities; and
    c. no more than two (2) members from international organisations.[1]
3. To ensure equitable geographic distribution, there will be the following number of seats from each region: Africa and Middle East (2); Asia (3); Europe and South Caucasus[2] (2), North America (1), Latin America and the Caribbean (2).
4. SC members elect office bearers among themselves, including Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Staff Liaison (could also be performed by Secretary). Additionally, Steering Committee members are also divided in sub-committees: the Governance Committee (coordinated by the Chair and including all SC Officers), Finance Committee (coordinated by the Treasurer) and ad hoc committees such as the Fundraising Committee, Election Committee or Ombuds Committee (in response to specific complaints).

D. Appointment and Removal of Steering Committee Members

1. SC members will serve a three (3) year term. They cannot serve two consecutive terms, but they can run for re-election afterwards. Terms begin once approved by the existing SC until the following nomination process, unless the member steps down or is removed.
2. SC members are elected every three (3) years with an open and transparent process; every member organisation can submit their nomination for the SC and every member organisation can cast one vote to elect the 10 SC members.
3. A SC member may resign by giving written notice to the SC. In case of resignation before two-thirds of the term, the seat will be offered to the next highest voted candidate for that region that was identified during the election process until a candidate is approved by the SC.
4. The Secretary will record attendance at all SC meetings. If a SC member is absent for more than 2 consecutive SC meetings, the SC may vote for the removal of this member.

[1] With international organizations, we refer to non-governmental organizations that operate in more than one region.
[2] The region "Europe and the South Caucasus" includes Europe, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey.

5. The SC may also vote to remove a SC member for cause. Involuntary removal of a SC member is only permissible for cause, through a notice by the Chair, based on a decision of two-thirds (⅔) of the remaining SC members, and after due consideration of all relevant information.

E. Steering Committee Meetings & Decision-Making

1. Meetings of the SC will take place at least quarterly. The SC Secretary will ensure quarterly meetings take place and that SC Members are provided with minutes of SC meetings in a timely manner.
2. A quorum of half of the total SC members plus one, will be required for SC decisions.
3. The SC will strive to make decisions by consensus. With consensus, the input of every participant is carefully considered and there is a good faith effort to address all legitimate concerns. Consensus is the practice of adopting decisions by general agreement in the absence of any formal objection, with everyone supporting the final collective decision.
4. When consensus is not reached and there is a tie in votes, the Director can cast a deciding vote.
5. For actions or statements in support of agreed upon campaigns, SC members will have up to one (1) week to request revisions or communicate their feedback to the Director or to a person designed by the Director.
6. In the case of an urgent letter or communication, SC members will have up to three (3) days, or an agreed upon lesser time, to request revisions and communicate their feedback to the Director.
7. In the case of inviting new members to the Coalition, SC members will have one (1) week to voice their opinion to the Director.
8. No response to the Director after the above mentioned time periods have eclipsed indicates that the SC member is in agreement and supports or does not object to the given proposal, and the Coalition may move forward on it.
9. Broad budgetary priorities will be discussed and agreed by the SC. Financial reports and funding proposals will be discussed and agreed by the SC Finance Committee and shared on a regular basis with the Steering Committee.
10. Agreements of the Steering Committee that are of wider significance to the Coalition must be shared in writing with all Coalition members (in at least English, French and Spanish), and a suitable period of time for member feedback and input must be provided.
11. Decisions of the Steering Committee guide the activities of the Coalition, and advise the Coalition Secretariat. However, they are not necessarily binding on the programmatic activities of Coalition members.
12. Amendments and changes to these Terms of Reference, require two-thirds (⅔) of SC members' support.

F. Representation

1. In meetings, events, and communications on behalf of the Coalition, including with government officials and the media, the Secretariat and SC members may represent the interests of the Coalition along already agreed upon Coalition positions and actions.
2. The Secretariat may mention the composition of the SC in such materials or communications; however, the Secretariat will not seek to represent individual members and will not go beyond agreed upon Coalition actions.