



THE CONSTITUTION
OF
THE ASCEND NETWORK

2025

ARRANGEMENTS OF CHAPTERS

THE PREAMBLE

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THE PREAMBLE

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ASCEND NETWORK.

IN THE NAME OF THE ALMIGHTY GOD,

We the members of The Ascend Network;

CONSIDERING the groups of people with common interests are accustomed associate together, for the protection of their interests and the joint-pursuit of their common aims and objectives, to their mutual benefit;

DETERMINED to establish a framework by which democratic principles are strengthened and adhered among us;

COMMITTED to live by the principles of integrity, diligence and service, and to live up to the demands of probity and accountability;

DO HEREBY ENACT, ADOPT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

THE CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER ONE

NAME, SUPREMACY AND INTERPRETATION

NAME

1. The organization shall be known and called “The Ascend Network”, hereinafter referred to as “TAN”.

SUPREMACY OF THE CONSTITUTION

2. (1) This Constitution shall be the supreme law of TAN and any rule in force within TAN or any act found to be inconsistent with any provision of the Constitution shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

(2) Notwithstanding the above clause, this constitution shall be subject to the Statutes and Directives of TAN.

INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

3. In this Constitution, unless the context otherwise requires- “Constitution” refers to this document and any amendments.

4. Rules of Interpretation:

(1) This constitution shall be interpreted in a fair and reasonable manner.

(2) Words have their ordinary meaning unless defined otherwise.

(3) Context and purpose shall guide interpretation.

5. Authority:

(1) The Legal Committee shall have final authority to interpret this constitution.

6. Limits:

(1) No interpretation shall contradict the core values of TAN.

(2) Amendments require a majority vote.

CHAPTER TWO

OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

7.(1) TAN, shall exist as a continental youth organization committed to leadership development, ethical governance, Pan-African cooperation and community impact across African universities and national chapters. Its objectives shall include—

a) to establish a coordinated, continental platform for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and youth empowerment, taking into consideration, ethical leadership and accountability, professionalism, discipline and effective administration across national and chapter levels;

b) to promote visionary leadership, integrity and excellence among its members; and

c) to foster Pan-African unity and integration among students and youth across the continent.

(2) For the purpose of achieving its objectives, TAN shall have the following functions—

a) to provide strategic guidance and direction for its national and chapter organs through governance rules, policies and guidelines that ensure ethical conduct, accountability and compliance with this Constitution and applicable national laws;

b) to implement and supervise leadership programs and capacity-building initiatives as well as community impact projects, including but not limited to the InterVarsity Leadership Conference, TAN Talks and the Skill-Up Series;

c) to maintain systems for the transparent administration of elections, appointments, conflict resolution, discipline and appeals;

d) to advance Pan-Africanism by fostering partnerships and integration with continental institutions, youth bodies, chapters and development organizations; and

e) to ensure the preparation and publication of annual reports, audited financial statements and other documentation necessary for accountability.

CHAPTER THREE

MEMBERSHIP

8.(1) The membership structure of TAN shall comprise several categories of members, including officers, committee members, and eligible members, the composition of which shall be defined by this Constitution.

(2) The categories of membership shall include—

a) the National Executive Council (NEC), the supreme administrative body of TAN;

b) chapters which shall be led by a Chapter Executive Team, comprising of at minimum, a Chapter President and two (2) Chapter Coordinators; and

c) ordinary members drawn from recognized chapters.

9. National Officers, excluding the National President and National Vice President, shall appoint or be supported by a five-member committee, who shall support execution, research, logistics, while reporting for their respective departments and serving as liaison with chapters for regional coordination.

Qualification for Membership

10.(1) A person qualifies for membership of TAN if that person—

a) is a student or youth within a recognized institution or community aligned with the aims of TAN;

b) accepts the objectives and functions of the Network;

c) undertakes to abide by this Constitution and all regulations made under it.

Rights and duties of Members

(2) Every member of TAN shall enjoy the rights herein provided and shall be subject to the corresponding duties set out below—

a) every member of TAN shall have the right—

(i) to participate in programs and activities of the Network;

(ii) to vote and be voted for in accordance with electoral rules;

- (iii) to access information, reports and communications duly published by TAN;
- (iv) to contribute to discussions, development initiatives and leadership platforms of the Network.

b) every member of TAN shall have the duty—

- (i) to respect and uphold this constitution at all times
- (ii) to uphold the objectives and values of the Network;
- (iii) to comply with lawful directives of TAN authorities;
- (iv) to act with integrity, discipline and respect for fellow members;
- (v) to report misconduct or violations of governance rules to the appropriate authority.

Termination or Suspension of Membership

11.(1) Membership may be suspended or terminated—

- a) for breach of this Constitution;
- b) for gross misconduct or violation of governance rules; and

c) upon voluntary resignation submitted in writing.

(2) A member whose rights are suspended or terminated shall have the right of appeal in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures established by TAN.

12. For the purposes of this Constitution, a “member” of TAN is any individual who subscribes to the objectives, values and governance requirements of the Network and is admitted in accordance with this Constitution and any applicable regulations.

CHAPTER FOUR

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NEC)

Establishment and Mandate

13(1) The National Executive Council (hereinafter referred to as NEC) shall constitute the supreme administrative and policy-making organ of the Network.

(2) The NEC shall provide strategic leadership, policy oversight, and executive authority for the governance and advancement of the Network across Africa.

Composition of the National Executive Council

(3) The NEC shall consist of the following ten (10) officers:

- a) Founder / Senior Advisor
- b) National President
- c) National Vice President
- d) General Secretary
- e) Financial Secretary / Treasurer
- f) Director of Communications and Public Relations
- g) Director of Programs, Events and Community Impact
- h) Director of Partnerships
- i) Director of Legal and Governance Affairs
- j) Director of Pan-Africanism and Continental Integration

(4) The NEC may, where necessary, establish additional advisory or technical roles, provided such roles do not conflict with this Constitution.

Functions and Powers of the NEC

(5)The NEC shall—

- a) determine the strategic direction of TAN and approve annual plans and budgets;
- b) adopt policies, governance rules, and constitutional amendments in accordance with this Constitution;
- c) oversee national programme, partnerships, and risk-management mechanisms;
- d) ensure transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct in all operations of TAN; and
- e) establish committees and approve senior appointments or removals as provided under this Constitution.

National Officers: Roles and Duties

Founder / Senior Advisor (Ex Officio)

14. The Founder shall—

- a)serve as a strategic advisor and custodian of institutional memory;
- b) represent TAN in an ambassadorial capacity when so delegated;
- c)perform such advisory functions as may be assigned by the NEC; and
- d)exercise veto power over decisions of the NEC, subject to any limitations prescribed by this Constitution.

National President

15. The National President shall—

- a) serve as the Chief Executive Officer and principal representative of TAN;
- b) provide visionary leadership and approve national strategies and budgets;
- c) preside over meetings of the NEC and the Annual General Meeting; and
- d) ensure the implementation of NEC decisions and effective supervision of national officers.

National Vice President

16. The National Vice President shall—

- a) assist the National President and act in that capacity where the President is unavailable;
- b) coordinate chapter activities and inter-departmental collaboration;
- c) preside over NEC meetings in the absence of the President; and
- d) oversee leadership development and capacity-building initiatives.

General Secretary

17. The General Secretary shall—

- a) prepare and circulate notices, agendas, and reports of NEC and AGM meetings;
- b) manage official correspondence and membership records; and
- c) keep accurate minutes and maintain all official records of TAN.

Financial Secretary / Treasurer

18. The Treasurer shall—

- a) manage and account for all financial transactions of TAN;

b) prepare annual budgets, quarterly financial statements, and audited accounts; and

c) ensure financial transparency in coordination with the Director of Legal and Governance Affairs.

Director of Communications and Public Relations

19. The Director shall—

a) develop and implement TAN's communications strategy and brand standards;

b) manage media relations and digital platforms; and

c) ensure effective internal and external communication.

Director of Programs, Events and Community Impact

20. The Director shall—

a) design and implement national programmes, including leadership conferences and skills initiatives;

b) coordinate community impact projects and evaluate programme outcomes; and

c) supervise programme logistics and related budgets.

Director of Partnerships

21. The Director shall—

a) establish and manage strategic relationships with partners, donors, and stakeholders;

b) identify funding and collaboration opportunities; and

c) develop frameworks for partnership-based growth and impact.

Director of Legal and Governance Affairs

22. The Director shall—

- a) provide legal advice and ensure compliance with this Constitution and applicable laws;
- b) oversee elections and constitutional interpretation;
- c) draft and review contracts, MOUs, and governance policies; and
- d) serve as the principal authority on discipline and dispute resolution.

Director of Pan-Africanism and Continental Integration

23. The Director shall—

- a) promote Pan-African cooperation and cross-border engagement;
- b) coordinate continental partnerships and student exchange initiatives; and
- c) advance the inclusion of diverse African perspectives within TAN.

National Departments and Committees

Establishment

24.(1) Each National Officer, except the Founder, National President, and National Vice President, shall be supported by a departmental committee.

(2) A departmental committee shall consist of five (5) members unless otherwise approved by the NEC.

Duties of Committee Members

(3) Committee members shall—

- a) support the implementation of departmental programmes and activities;
- b) facilitate coordination between national and chapter structures; and
- c) assist with research, documentation, reporting, and evaluation.

Chapter Structure and Administration

Establishment of Chapters

25.(1)Every university or institution in which TAN operates shall constitute a Chapter.

(2)Each Chapter shall function under the authority and supervision of the NEC through the National Vice President.

Chapter Executive Team

(3)Each Chapter shall be governed by a Chapter Executive Team consisting of—

- a) a Chapter President; and
- b) two Chapter Coordinators.

(4)The Chapter Executive Team shall be responsible for the administration and representation of TAN at the chapter level.

Duties of Chapter Officers

Chapter President

(5)The Chapter President shall—

- a) provide leadership and direction for the Chapter;
- b) ensure compliance with national policies and priorities; and
- c) submit quarterly reports to the National Secretariat.

Chapter Coordinators

(6)The Chapter Coordinators shall—

- a) support programme planning and execution;
- b) promote member engagement and welfare; and
- c) facilitate communication between the Chapter and the National Secretariat.

CHAPTER FIVE

TERMS AND ELECTIONS

Terms of Office

26.(1) All National Officers shall hold office for a term of one (1) year, commencing on the date of their assumption of duty and ending at the close of the subsequent Annual General Meeting (AGM), unless otherwise provided in this Constitution.

(2) Terms of office for Chapter Officers shall be determined by their respective Chapter Constitutions; however, no term shall exceed one (1) year.

(3) National and Chapter Officers may be eligible for re-election, subject to any limits or conditions prescribed in this Constitution or relevant bylaws.

Elections

Election of National Officers

27.(1) National Officers shall be elected by the National Executive Council (NEC), together with eligible members or delegates, in such manner as may be expressly provided in this Constitution.

Nomination and Eligibility

(2) Nominees for National and Chapter offices shall be selected through due diligence and careful consideration. Eligibility criteria for leadership positions shall be prescribed by this Constitution or regulations made under it.

Electoral Administration

(3) The Director of Legal and Governance Affairs, together with the relevant committee, shall oversee the conduct, integrity, and fairness of all national electoral processes, ensuring full compliance with constitutional provisions.

Quorum and Voting Procedures

Quorum

28.(1) The quorum for a duly constituted meeting of the National Executive Council shall be a simple majority of its members.

(2) Where all ten (10) NEC positions are filled, a quorum shall comprise not fewer than five (5) members.

Voting

29.(1) Unless otherwise stipulated by this Constitution, decisions of the NEC shall be determined by a simple majority of members present and voting.

(2) A decision to remove a National Officer or to amend this Constitution shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of all NEC members, being not fewer than six (6) votes, or such higher threshold as may be expressly provided elsewhere in this Constitution.

Vacancies and Interim Appointments

30. Where a vacancy arises in any National Office by reason of resignation, removal, incapacity, or any other cause, the National Executive Council may appoint an interim officer to fill the vacant position.

31. Any interim appointee shall serve until the next Annual General Meeting, at which time a formal election shall be conducted to fill the position for a full term.

32. Where multiple vacancies materially impair the effective functioning of the National Executive Council, the Council may issue special directives to ensure continuity of governance, subject to the safeguards provided under this Constitution.

CHAPTER SIX

MEETINGS AND REPORTING

MEETINGS AND REPORTING

Types of Meetings

33.(1) National Executive Council (NEC) Meetings

The National Executive Council shall meet at least twice in every month to deliberate on matters of policy, strategy, implementation, and the overall progress of the Network.

(2) Annual General Meeting (AGM)

An Annual General Meeting shall be convened once in every calendar year for the purposes of—

- a) receiving and considering the annual report on the activities of the Network;
- b) receiving and considering the audited financial statements; and
- c) electing National Officers in accordance with this Constitution.

(3) Chapter Executive Meetings

Each Chapter Executive Team shall meet at least once every month for the administration of chapter affairs and shall submit quarterly reports on activities, membership, and programs to the National Secretariat.

(4) Departmental Committee Meetings

Departmental Committees shall meet not less than three times in every month, or at such other times as may be determined by the relevant National Officer, for the effective execution of departmental mandates.

(5) Emergency Meetings of the National Executive Council

An emergency meeting of the National Executive Council may be convened where urgent matters arise—

- a) by the National President; or
- b) upon a written request supported by not less than two-thirds of the members of the National Executive Council.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCIPLINE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Principles of Leadership and Accountability

34.(1)The Ascend Network (TAN) shall be founded upon the principles of integrity, transparency, responsibility and ethical leadership.

(2)Every officer and member of TAN shall be subject to the Constitution and shall conduct himself or herself in a manner that upholds the dignity and good name of the organization.

(3)In the exercise of their functions, officers shall be accountable to the National Executive Council and to the membership of TAN in such manner as this Constitution may provide.

Code of Conduct

35.(1)There shall be a Code of Conduct prescribed by the National Executive Council to regulate the conduct of officers and members.

(2)Without prejudice to the generality of clause (1), the Code of Conduct shall require every officer and member to—

- a) act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interest of TAN;
- b) refrain from acts that bring TAN into disrepute;
- c) avoid discrimination, harassment or abuse;
- d) declare any conflict of interest in writing;
- e) exercise proper care in the use of TAN resources; and
- f) comply with lawful directives issued by authorized bodies of TAN.

Misconduct

36.(1)An officer or member commits misconduct where he or she—

- a) misappropriates funds or property belonging to TAN;
- b) abuses office or engages in conduct prejudicial to the proper functioning of TAN;
- c) falsifies documents or financial records;
- d) neglects official duties or acts with gross inefficiency;
- e) engages in harassment, discrimination or conduct injurious to another member;
- f) breaches confidentiality obligations; or
- g) commits any act incompatible with the objects of TAN.

(2)The categories of misconduct may be further prescribed by rules made under this Constitution.

Complaints and Reports of Misconduct

37.(1)Any member may lodge a complaint of misconduct against a national officer, chapter officer, or member.

(2)A complaint shall be in writing and submitted to the Director of Legal and Governance Affairs.

(3)A complaint not in writing may be considered where supported by credible evidence.

Procedure for Disciplinary Action

38.(1)The Director of Legal and Governance Affairs shall, within seven days of receiving a complaint, acknowledge receipt and commence preliminary steps.

(2)Where a matter cannot be resolved amicably, the Director shall constitute a Conflict Resolution Panel consisting of three impartial members of the National Executive Council.

(3) The Panel shall—

- a) investigate the complaint;
 - b) conduct interviews and receive evidence;
 - c) attempt mediation between the parties;
 - d) where mediation fails, conduct a hearing and make a determination.
 - e) The investigation shall be concluded within fourteen days, unless extended for good cause with notice to the parties.
- (4)The Panel shall issue its written decision within seven days after the hearing.

Sanctions

39.(1) Where misconduct is proven, the Panel may recommend—

- a) a caution or written warning;
- b) restitution or repayment of misused funds;
- c) suspension from office for a period not exceeding six months;
- d) removal from office; or
- e) expulsion from TAN.

(2)A decision to remove a national officer shall be subject to approval by a two-thirds majority of the National Executive Council.

Right of Appeal

40.(1) A person aggrieved by the decision of the Panel may appeal within fourteen days to an Appeals Panel constituted by three members of the Advisory Board.

(2)The decision of the Appeals Panel shall be final.

Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

41. Proceedings in disciplinary matters shall, as far as possible, be kept confidential.

42. Records of complaints, investigations and decisions shall be kept by the Director of Legal and Governance Affairs for a period prescribed by this Constitution or any rules made under it.

Reporting and Institutional Accountability

43.(1) Every national officer shall submit quarterly reports to the National Secretariat.

(2) The Treasurer shall prepare quarterly financial statements, subject to review by the Director of Legal and Governance Affairs.

(3) The National Executive Council shall publish an annual report summarizing its activities, material decisions and audited accounts.

(4) A national officer who has a conflict of interest in a matter before the National Executive Council shall declare it and recuse himself or herself from deliberations on that matter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

Power to Amend

44.(1) Subject to the provisions of this Chapter, this Constitution may be amended by The Ascend Network (TAN) in accordance with the procedures herein prescribed.

(2) The power to amend this Constitution shall be exercised by the National Executive Council and the National Congress in the manner set out in this Chapter.

Initiation of Amendments

45.(1) A Bill for the amendment of this Constitution may be introduced by—

- a) the National Executive Council; or
- b) not less than one-third of all recognized Chapters of TAN acting jointly; or
- c) a petition signed by not less than one-tenth of the total registered membership of TAN.

(2) A proposal for amendment shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General, who shall, within fourteen days, circulate the proposal to all Chapters and members of the National Executive Council.

Consideration by the National Executive Council

46.(1) The National Executive Council shall, within thirty days after receipt of a proposal for amendment, consider the proposal at a meeting convened for that purpose.

(2) A proposal for amendment shall be deemed to have been approved by the National Executive Council if supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds of all its members.

(3) Where the National Executive Council rejects a proposal for amendment, it shall state the reasons for the rejection in writing to the proponents.

Approval by the National Congress

47.(1) A proposal for amendment which has been approved by the National Executive Council shall be submitted to the National Congress for consideration.

(2) The National Congress may approve the proposed amendment by a resolution supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the delegates present and voting.

(3) Notwithstanding clause (2) of this article, a proposed amendment which relates to—

- a) the Vision and Objectives of TAN;
- b) the Fundamental Values of TAN;
- c) the organizational structure of TAN; or
- d) the autonomy of Chapter governance;

shall be approved by the votes of not less than three-quarters of all Chapter Heads in addition to the Congress vote.

Publication and Coming into Force

48. (1) A constitutional amendment which has been approved in accordance with this Chapter shall be published by the Secretary-General within fourteen days after its approval.

(2)A published amendment shall come into force thirty days after the date of publication unless the amendment itself provides for a later date.

(3) The Secretary-General shall cause every amendment to be entered into the Register of Constitutional Instruments of TAN.

Prohibited Amendments

49. No amendment shall be made to this Constitution which—

- a) abolishes the democratic character of TAN;
- b) restricts the rights of members to participate in the activities or leadership structures of TAN;
- c) removes the accountability mechanisms provided in this Constitution;
- or
- d) contradicts the foundational Pan-African and youth-development principles of TAN.

Constitutional Harmonization

50. The Legal and Compliance Committee shall, within twenty-one days following the coming into force of any amendment, review the Constitution to ensure consistency and shall submit a report to the National Executive Council.

CHAPTER NINE

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

1. Purpose of Transitional Provisions

The transitional provisions in this Chapter shall ensure the orderly transfer from the previous governance arrangements of TAN to the structures established under this Constitution.

2. Commencement

- 1) This Constitution shall come into force immediately upon its adoption by the competent authority of TAN.
- 2) From the date of its coming into force, the governance and operations of TAN shall be conducted in accordance with this Constitution.

3. Continuation of Existing Officers

- 1) The officers of TAN holding office immediately before the coming into force of this Constitution shall continue in office for the remainder of their unexpired terms.
- 2) The National Executive Council shall, where necessary, align existing officers with their corresponding positions under this Constitution.

4. Establishment of the First National Executive Council

- 1) Within thirty days after the coming into force of this Constitution, the existing leadership shall convene for the purpose of constituting the National Executive Council in accordance with the new structure.
- 2) Where any position is vacant, the National Executive Council may appoint an interim officer to act until elections are conducted.

5. Reorganization of Chapters

- 1) Each chapter shall, within ninety days, adopt or amend its constitution to conform to this Constitution.
- 2) Chapters that lack duly elected executives shall conduct interim appointments within sixty days of the coming into force of this Constitution.

6. Transfer of Assets and Records

- 1) All persons in possession of documents, records, funds or property belonging to TAN shall, within thirty days, hand them over to the appropriate national officers designated under this Constitution.
- 2) A formal handover report shall be prepared jointly by the Treasurer and the Director of Legal and Governance Affairs.

7. Continuity of Existing Agreements

- 1) All existing programme, contracts, partnerships and agreements in force immediately before the coming into force of this Constitution shall continue to be valid unless reviewed or revoked by the National Executive Council.
- 2) Any policy not inconsistent with this Constitution shall remain operational until replaced.

8. Transitional Dispute Resolution

Any dispute arising out of the transition to the new constitutional order shall be referred to the National Executive Council for determination, and where necessary, the Advisory Board may provide interpretive guidance.

9. First Elections

The first elections under this Constitution shall be conducted at the next Annual General Meeting following its adoption, and any interim officer shall be eligible to contest.

10. Expiry of Transitional Provisions

The provisions of this Chapter shall cease to have effect twelve months after the coming into force of this Constitution, except where any part of it is expressly preserved.