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1. NAME AND PURPOSE

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (abbreviated as GOPIO) is a secular, non-political nonpartisan, non-sectarian, not-for-profit global organization engaged in promoting the wellbeing of PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN and NON-RESIDENT INDIANS, enhancing interaction and communication between these groups living in different countries and in furthering their linkage with India.


2. OBJECTIVES

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) shall have the following specific objectives:

- a. To promote legitimate interests of the People of Indian Origin (PIOs)/Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) as a resident in countries outside India.
- b. To promote the common cultural heritage of PIOs/NRIs.
- c. To mobilize professional, financial and intellectual resources of the community of PIOs/NRIs for their mutual advancement and for the development of their country of origin and the country of their residence.
- d. To organize interaction between PIOs/NRIs on a global level to deliberate and decide on common issues and problems facing them, including assimilation and adaptation within the host society.
- e. To provide a forum at periodical intervals to discuss, debate and decide on common problems and issues facing groups of PIOs/NRIs and initiate measures to redress their grievances.
- f. To disseminate regularly information on global, regional and national developments affecting PIOs/NRIs as a whole or substantial parts thereof.
- g. To further the interaction between PIOs/NRIs and other communities at global level in promoting world peace, progress and ecological harmony.
- h. To develop channels of communication between groups of PIOs/NRIs in different countries and between them and India.
- i. To raise funds through contributions and other means on regular basis and at special occasions for promoting social, cultural and developmental activities in India and at a global level as well for the relief and rehabilitation of PIOs/NRIs affected by natural and other calamities.
- j. To constitute Think Tanks and Task Forces of PIOs/NRIs on particular issues of interest to the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) or to India.

3. DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES PERMEATING GOPIO

The directive principles which should permeate all structures and work of GOPIO are:

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- a. GOPIO should address problems and issues of the community and refrain from involvement with individual complaints and/or political parties.
- b. Besides GOPIO Chapters and Councils, other organizations should be provided access to bring common problems and issues of mutual interest before GOPIO.
- c. There is a need for flexibility and an experimental approach in view of different status of development of organizations of Indians in various countries.
- d. GOPIO organizational structure should encourage wider participation while ensuring responsible decision-making by representative institutions where possible.
- e. The principles of GOPIO shall be applied uniformly and universally.
- f. Books and financial records of GOPIO, including those of Councils, shall be kept for up to seven years. They shall be made available to members of GOPIO upon request and on payment of expenses for photocopying, handling and postage.

4. ACTIVITIES OF GOPIO

In realization of objectives of GOPIO, GOPIO will engage in the following types of activities:


- a. Conduct campaigns in media and with other organizations to focus attention on specific problems affecting PIOs/NRIs.
- b. Act as an advocacy group in support of causes and concerns of PIOs/NRIs.
- c. Undertake regular and periodical publication activity.
- d. Raise funds for specific activities of GOPIO.
- e. Undertake studies or commission studies on specific problems and issues affecting PIOs/NRIs.
- f. Act as a liaison between PIOs/NRIs in specific countries and national governments, Government of India and international organizations in realization of the objectives of GOPIO.

5. GOPIO INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP: GOPIO membership shall be divided into four classes as follows:

- I. Life Members
- II. Associate Members
- III. Affiliates – Associations/Organizations
- IV. Honorary Members


I. LIFE MEMBERS: Chapters are encouraged to enroll Life Members for GOPIO International.

- a. If the life membership is originated by the chapter, GOPIO International shall pay 25% of life membership fee to the chapter in good standing chosen by the life member and 25% to the region.

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If the life membership is not originated by the chapter, GOPIO International shall pay 15% of life membership fee to the chapter of good standing chosen by the life member and 15% to the region. Same rule applies to Associate Membership. Life membership from India can be only by returned PIOs/NRIs, parents and siblings of PIOs/NRIs.

- b.** Life membership fee is decided by the Executive Council. The current rate is:
- i.** US\$1500 (Silver);
 - ii.** US\$2500 (Gold) - Free registration at GOPIO Int'l conferences for 10 years;
 - iii.** US\$5000 (Platinum) - Privileges as per Gold member plus preferred seating at GOPIO Int'l events for 10 years and
 - iv.** US\$10,000 (Corporate) - Privileges as per Gold plus preferred seating at GOPIO Int'l events for 10 years.
 - v.** Life membership for developed countries is from i to iv and two-thirds for developing countries (Refer Form G/FRM/307 for GOPIO International Membership Application Form).
 - vi.** At its annual convention or as otherwise deemed necessary, the Executive Council shall determine those countries with persons of Indian origin which are classified as developing.
- c.** GOPIO Life membership is subject to review and approval of GOPIO Executive Council. GOPIO Life membership privileges and voting rights to be effective 60 days after approval of application and receipt of payment. If no written approval is issued, the Life membership shall be considered automatically approved by default within 90 days of the payment.
- d.** A life member will be deemed active if he or she has completed any of the below listed activities:
- i.** Any life member who has participated in any scheduled GOPIO activity during the preceding three (3) years, at any function or event organized at the international level.
 - ii.** Attended two GOPIO chapter meetings anywhere in the world during the preceding 12 months.
 - iii.** Attended two major functions organized by any GOPIO chapter during the preceding 12 months.
- II. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:** GOPIO chapter members who accept positions at international level either have to be life member of GOPIO International or become Associate International Members. Associate Members shall be entitled to all the privileges of life membership except voting rights as long as they continue to pay annual membership fee of US\$150. An associate member who has not paid his/her membership fee shall be deemed to have relinquished his/her position.
- III. Affiliation means and includes any overseas Indian Association/Organization that satisfies all of the following criteria:**
- a.** The organization has been in operation for at least one year;
 - b.** Has adopted and functions under a duly written constitution and/or Bylaws;
 - c.** Elects its officers at regularly held meetings as laid down in its Constitution/Bylaws;
 - d.** Is a "Not for Profit" organization;
 - e.** Subscribes to the objectives of the GOPIO Bylaws;
 - f.** Has a minimum of 15 members;
 - g.** Agrees to pay annual GOPIO affiliation fee of US\$100 as required from GOPIO chapters,
 - h.** Annual affiliation fee payable at the beginning of the affiliation;

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- i. Affiliation is subject to approval by the GOPIO International Executive Council.

IV. HONORARY MEMBERSHIP: An individual who has distinguished himself/herself in any artistic, scientific, educational or humanitarian activities by rendering outstanding services to the Indian Diaspora shall be invited to join GOPIO as an Honorary Member if there is a unanimous decision of the Executive Council. Honorary Members shall be exempt from all dues, but shall be entitled to all privileges of membership except the right to hold elected office or vote in an election of officers.

6. STRUCTURE


A. GOPIO shall have a five tier structure:

- i. General Body
- ii. Executive Council
- iii. Board of Advisors
- iv. National Council
- v. GOPIO Foundation


B. GENERAL BODY: It shall be the main policy making body of GOPIO. It is the organ which will elect the International President, Executive and Vice Presidents. It will also ratify the recommendations of the Executive Council for the positions in Board of Advisors, GOPIO Philanthropic Foundation and the chairpersons of all other Councils.

- i. The General Body shall be chaired by the International Chairperson. The General Body will discuss and approve annual budget and accounts prepared by the Executive Council.
- ii. It will be responsible for giving shape to the guidelines given by the Global Convention and will direct the Executive Council to take appropriate action to implement various resolutions passed by the Global Convention.
- iii. It will meet once annually and at other times as and when decided by the Executive Council in consultation with the International Chairperson.
- iv. General Body meeting can also be called by GOPIO Chairperson if 20% or more of the GOPIO International delegates, as determined at the last convention election within 120 days, send a request in writing for such a meeting.
- v. **Quorum:** Quorum for taking decisions by the General Body shall be 20% of its registered delegates and active life members.


C. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: The Executive Council (EC) shall be responsible for the ongoing work of GOPIO between the meetings of the Global Conventions. It will execute all decisions of the Global Convention and prepare for all meetings of the Global Convention.

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- a.** The Executive Council shall consist of the International President, Executive Vice-President, Vice President and ten International Coordinators, one from each of the following regions:
- i. Oceania and the Pacific
 - ii. North America
 - iii. Central and South America
 - iv. The Caribbean
 - v. Europe
 - vi. Africa
 - vii. Middle East
 - viii. South Asia
 - ix. South East Asia
 - x. Francophone countries
- b.** The International Chairperson, Executive Trustee of GOPIO Foundation and Chief of Board of Advisors shall be ex-officio (voting) members of the Executive Council.
- c.** The candidates for the Executive Council, such as President, Executive Vice President, Vice President and International Coordinators shall be Permanent Residents of their respective countries of domicile except India for at least five years or citizen of a country other than India (except for International Coordinator for South Asia). The candidate must have resident status of his/her respective country of domicile except India and must be living in that country for preceding three consecutive years and maintain it during his/her tenure as Executive Council member.
- d.** All members of the Executive Council shall be elected as per GOPIO Bylaws. However, candidates for the position of International President must have held an elected position at the international level for at least one full term.
- e.** Individuals cannot be elected or appointed to the same position more than two (2) times.
- f.** In the composition of the Executive Council, countries with NRI/PIO population exceeding 3,000,000 may have up to 3 positions, all others only one position.
- g.** The Executive Council shall report to the General Body at the Global Convention on the activities of GOPIO International.
- h.** The Executive Council shall prepare annual budgets and accounts and present to the General Body for approval.
- i.** The Executive Council shall meet as and when needed either in person or via teleconference/videoconference. The meeting may be initiated in writing either by the International President or by the International Chairperson or at the request of five or more members of the EC.

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- j. The Executive Council must ensure that all candidates for the positions of National Coordinators and above are Life Members of the GOPIO International and are qualified to hold office under the legal stipulations of “non-profit organizations,” Tax Regulations and Banking Laws as applicable.
 - k. **Quorum:** Quorum for Executive Council shall be 50% plus one.
 - l. If a member is absent in three consecutive meetings without reasonable cause, he/she shall forfeit voting rights for three months. After show cause notice, he/she may exercise voting rights six months after resuming attendance.
- D. BOARD OF ADVISORS:** It shall have an advisory role and its membership shall represent “Who’s Who” of the Indian Diaspora who are committed to the ideals of GOPIO. It will have members nominated and approved by the Executive Council from among the GOPIO members and eminent political and civic leaders, diplomats, persons of art & letters, and philanthropists, etc. The Chief, Board of Advisors shall coordinate its activities.
- a. **Chief of Board of Advisors:** To ensure stability and continuity within the organization, the outgoing International Chairperson of GOPIO, shall become the Chief Advisor of the Board of Advisors, subject to endorsement of majority of Executive Council present and voting.
 - b. **Executive Trustee of GOPIO Foundation:** The Chief, Board of Advisors after one or two terms shall become the Executive Trustee of the GOPIO Foundation subject to a majority of assenting vote by the Executive Council members present and voting.
- E. GOPIO COUNCILS:** GOPIO Councils shall be established by GOPIO General Body at the recommendation of the Executive Council to serve the diverse interests of the global Indian community. Refer to Appendix II: “GOPIO Councils”. Council Chair shall be a life member and Co-chair shall be at least an Associate and become Life Member within two months of appointment.
- F. GOPIO INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION**
- a. The GOPIO Foundation shall be responsible for the coordination of raising, managing and disbursing funds collected for charitable and educational causes in India as well as in other parts of the world.
 - b. The Foundation shall be composed of 8 voting members, called Trustees excluding the GOPIO President, Chairperson and Treasurer who will be ex-officio members. Every two year, the executive council will appoint Foundation members for a term of two years. The Trustees will be responsible for all the Foundation activities and will provide a yearly report to the Executive Council of all its activities.

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- c. Except for ex-officio members, a voting member of executive council shall not be a voting member of the Foundation and vice versa. If a person is elected or appointed as a voting member of both these bodies, he/she shall have to relinquish one of the positions.
- d. The Foundation shall meet as deemed necessary. The notice of the Foundation meeting and the quorum required shall be the same as that of the Executive Council. The Foundation Trustees can make a decision to distribute up to \$5,000 to a charity. However, any amount above \$5,000 to the same or any other charity must be approved by the Executive Council. The limit of disbursement by the Foundation Trustees can be raised by a decision of Executive Council.
- e. An annual report of its activities and a financial report of the Foundation shall be submitted by the Executive Trustee to the Executive Council.
- f. The Executive Trustee of the Foundation: The immediate past Chief of the Board of Advisors shall become the Executive Trustee after due ratification by the Executive Council.
- g. The Executive Trustee shall perform any other duties as assigned by the Executive Council.

7 GOPIO OFFICERS: Officers of the Organization shall be:

- a. International Chairperson shall be the head of the organization. He/she will preside over the meetings of the Global Convention and General Body. He/she will provide overall leadership to GOPIO Conventions, General Body, and help the Executive Council in convening GOPIO Conventions and meetings of the General Body. He/she will be an ex-officio member of the Executive Council. He/she will be consulted by the President of GOPIO on all important matters.
- b. The outgoing International President shall assume the office of International Chairperson of GOPIO subject to endorsement by the majority of General Body members present and voting.
- c. International President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the organization. He/she will be responsible for planning and execution of programs and activities of GOPIO and liaison with other organizations engaged in similar activities. He/she will present state of the organization reports to the Global Convention and the General Body. He/she will represent GOPIO to the third parties in accordance with GOPIO policies. He/she will lead all deputations and delegations of which he/she is a member. In the absence of the Chairperson, he/she will preside over the meetings of the Global Convention. He/she will consult the Chairperson on all important matters and keep the Chairperson fully informed about the activities of GOPIO. The president shall have the authority to change and/or further assign responsibilities as required of his/her reporting personnel in consultation with the Chairperson. The candidate for the position of president must have served for at least one full term in the Executive Council.
- d. The Executive Vice President will perform all functions of the President in his/her absence. He/She shall have administrative duties such as supervision of GOPIO Councils and other duties as per the decision of the Executive Council. The Executive Vice President shall be elected by the General Body. The candidates for the position of Executive Vice President must have served for at least one full term in the Executive Council or National/Area Coordinator,


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Chapter President or as a Convener/Co-Convener/Chairperson of a GOPIO Convention or Conference or as a Chairperson of GOPIO Council.

- e. Vice President shall be elected by the General Body. At the discretion of the Executive Council, he/she shall be in charge of Chapters and other responsibilities assigned by the International President. The candidates for the position of Vice President must have served for at least one full term in the Executive Council as Regional Vice President or–International/National/Area Coordinator, Chapter President or as a Convener/Co-Convener/Chairperson of a GOPIO Convention or Conference or as a Chairperson of GOPIO Council.
- f. International (Regional) Coordinators are elected by the delegates in the region provided there are ten or more delegates with five chapters delegates with five or more representing five chapters in “good standing”, otherwise, shall be appointed by the Executive Council. The candidate for the position of International (Regional) Coordinator must have served for at least one full term as International/National/Area Coordinator or president of a GOPIO chapter in “good standing” or as a Convener/Co-Convener/Chairperson of a GOPIO Convention or Conference or as a Chairperson of GOPIO Council.
- g. **International Coordinators At-Large:** Life Members will be represented by two Members-at-Large in the Executive Council elected from the body of active Life Members of the General Body. They will also be given additional responsibility as and when needed by the Executive Council and the President. To be elected as a Member-at-Large, one has to be a Life Member for at least two years.
- h. **Political Affiliation:** Officials at chapter, council, regional or international level shall not be elected or appointed to political office. GOPIO shall not appoint any person who is holding or contesting a political position.

8 NATIONAL/AREA COORDINATOR

- a. **National Coordinators:** For each country having at least ten (10) chapters in good standing there shall be a National Coordinator appointed by the International Coordinator in consultation with the Chapter Presidents and Life Members for that region. He/She has to be Life Member/Associate of GOPIO International.
- b. **Area Coordinators:** Area Coordinators can be appointed by the International Coordinator in a Country for three to nine chapters to coordinate and facilitate joint programs of the area chapters. He/She will be appointed in consultation with the Chapter Presidents and Life Members from that region. He/She has to be at least an Associate Member of GOPIO International. This is intended to encourage the Area and National Coordinators to expand GOPIO’s reach among the Diaspora.
- c. **Chapter Presidents:** Each Chapter shall elect its own Executive Committee consisting of President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant/Joint Secretary and Treasurer, in accordance with GOPIO chapter policies in Appendix I.

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9 GENERAL

a. Headquarters of GOPIO

- i. GOPIO International is a US registered non-profit organization, subject to US laws, with headquarters in New York.
- ii. The headquarters and the location of the other organs of GOPIO will be decided by the Executive Council in consultation with the GOPIO Chairperson.

b. **Seal:** The Executive Council shall provide a seal for the purpose of the Council and shall determine the manner in which it shall be used.

c. **Official Year:** The official year of GOPIO shall be the same as the calendar year.

d. **Official Language:** English will be the official language of GOPIO.

e. **Legal Team:** GOPIO International shall have legal team with representation in all regions, if feasible.

f. **Intellectual Property:** All intellectual property belongs to GOPIO International that includes all documents, database, photographs, assets, websites, newsletters, contents, financial statements, minutes of meetings, records etc. Such GOPIO property can be retrieved or accessed by GOPIO at any time, with no access or use by official upon expiration of term or termination.


g. **Financial Accounting of Major Events:** Financial accounting of all major events to be completed by the convener or coordinator within 90 days of the event. Those who did not comply will not be eligible to contest election or for appointment for any position at GOPIO International.

h. **Requirement for Members of Executive Council:** If an elected or appointed voting member of Executive Council does not bring two Life Members or initiate two GOPIO chapters during the term of two years, that person will not be qualified to run for an office or re-appointed in the Executive Council.

10 APPOINTED OFFICERS


a. **Secretary:** There can be more than one secretary to serve the needs of the organization at the discretion of the Executive Council depending upon various functions. The Executive Council shall design a Job Description for each position. These appointments shall be duly ratified by the two-thirds of the majority of the Executive Council present & voting.

- i. The Secretary shall record and distribute minutes of the meetings to the appropriate members within one month of the date of the meeting to which the minutes pertain; shall mail or e-mail agenda and all other types of communication to the appropriate members; shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the president for the functioning

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of GOPIO. The number of secretaries shall be determined by the president of GOPIO International in consultation with the Executive Council. One of the secretaries shall be the historian of GOPIO.

- b. Treasurer:** There can be more than one Treasurer to serve the needs of the organization at the discretion of the Executive Council depending upon various functions. The Executive Council shall design a Job Description for each position. These appointments shall be duly ratified by the two-thirds of the majority of the Executive Council present & voting.
- i. The Treasurer shall have the care and custody of all funds belonging to the organization and shall be solely responsible for such funds or securities of the organization. The Treasurer shall cause to be deposited in a regular business bank or trust company all the funds of the organization except that the Executive Council may cause such funds to be invested in such investments as shall be legal for a non-profit corporation.
 - ii. The treasurer shall maintain full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements of funds, and shall give quarterly or as required render written reports of the finances of the organization and such reports shall be physically affixed to the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Council/General body. The Treasurer shall exercise all duties incident to the office of Treasurer. The Treasurer shall prepare quarterly financial reports and make available to members on request.
 - iii. All payments from \$200 to \$1,500 can be made only with the approval of the President. Any amount above \$1,500 has to be approved by the Executive Council.
 - iv. President can be reimbursed expenses incurred by him/her, within preceding 120 days, with the approval of GOPIO International Chairperson, if the amount is below \$1,500. If the amount is \$1,500 or more, then the Executive Council approval is required.
- c. Internal Auditor:** There can be more than one Internal Auditors to serve the needs of the organization at the discretion of the International President depending upon various functions. Executive Council shall design a Job Description for each position. These appointments shall be duly ratified by the two-thirds of the majority of the Executive Council present & voting.
- d. External Auditor:** A certified public accountant shall examine the financial records and business transactions of GOPIO International that he/she is not affiliated with and shall (publish) provide an annual financial report. An independent auditor shall be used to avoid conflicts of interest and to ensure the integrity of the auditing process.
- e. Chapter Review Committee:** The compliance of the chapter will be reviewed and confirmed by a committee appointed by the Executive Council within six months before the election, so as to qualify the number of delegates for a chapter.
- f. Council Chairs & Co-Chairs:** Each Council Chair shall be appointed by the International President in consultation with the International Chairperson and International Vice President in-charge of the Councils' responsibility and after duly ratified by the Executive Council by the majority of the Executive Council present & voting. Co-chairs shall be appointed by International President at the recommendation of Chapter Presidents/Area/National/International

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Coordinators and the respective Council Chair. Chair and Co-Chair of the same council shall be from different countries as far as feasible.

- g. Membership Requirement of Appointees:** Appointees for the position of Secretary, Treasurer or Internal Auditor has to be a Life Member of GOPIO International.
- h. Committees:** Each new committee and its committee members shall be appointed by the International President in consultation with the International Chairperson and for specific purpose, with assigned responsibilities and for duration as appropriate. President shall also consult the International Coordinator before appointing a committee chair from his/her region. The appointments, before being made, shall be duly ratified by the two-thirds of the majority of the Executive Council present by voting. The Committee chair has to be an Associate or Life Member of GOPIO International.
- i. Patrons:** Persons who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of GOPIO may be honored as Patrons. All patrons will be invited to Global Conventions and will be kept informed about the activities of GOPIO.

11 TERM: The term of all officials shall be a maximum of two (2) years duration with re-election or re-appointment to the same office for a maximum of one (1) more term. The term of all appointees shall terminate with the election of the new Executive Council, but the members will continue to hold their office until new ones are elected to replace them.

12 GLOBAL CONVENTION: GOPIO will organize once in every two years, a Global Convention of People of Indian Origin, at a place and time decided by the Executive Council in consultation with the Chairperson of GOPIO International.


- a.** Person of Indian Origin (PIO) shall be a person who is a citizen of a country other than India, born in India or outside India of Indian ancestry. Non-Resident Indian (NRI) is a citizen of India residing in another country as defined by the Government of India.
- b.** The Global Convention will provide a platform for exchange of ideas and experiences for People of Indian Origin from different parts of the world. It may adopt resolutions expressing support or concern of People of Indian origin on issues which interest them. It will make recommendations to the Executive Council of GOPIO on issues which require further study, action or GOPIO commitment.
- c.** It will be GOPIO policy to encourage broad participation in GOPIO Conventions. All organizations of people of Indian origin whose objectives and principles are consistent with objectives and principles of GOPIO will be eligible for participation in GOPIO Conventions.
- d.** The meetings of the Global Convention will be presided over by the International Chairperson of GOPIO and in his/her absence by the President of GOPIO. The Agenda for the Global Convention will be prepared by the Executive Council in consultation with the International Chairperson of GOPIO. It will be open to any participating member organization to suggest items on the agenda for discussion at Global Conventions.

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- e. All participants of the Global convention will pay their own travel and other expenses, save in exceptional cases where the Executive Council may decide otherwise.
- f. Elections shall be held in accordance with Clause 13 of these Bylaws.

13 ELECTION COMMITTEE AND ELECTION PROCEDURE

- a. The election of the GOPIO Executive Council shall be conducted before the biennial meeting of the General Body in accordance with the GOPIO Bylaws.
- b. The Executive Council shall appoint a nomination/election committee consisting of three members of the General Body or any other individuals of outstanding merit. They must not be candidates for any elective position for the current election or member of the Executive Council. These three members shall elect a chairperson of the committee.
- c. The nomination/election committee shall invite nominations by electronic mail from eligible delegates.
- d. An eligible delegate is either an active life member of GOPIO International or an authorized representative of a GOPIO chapter in good standing.
- e. All nominations shall be submitted in writing on the prescribed form duly signed and accepted by the nominee at least 40 days prior to the biennial meeting of the General Body. The nomination/election committee shall compile a list of all nominations and announce at least 30 days prior to the biennial election.
- f. Withdrawal of nominations must be received in writing at least 20 days prior to the biennial meeting of the General Body.
- g. The nomination/election committee shall compile a list of all eligible candidates (nominations) and announce at least 15 days prior to the biennial election to the General Body.
- h. A nominee shall contest election for only one elected office in this election.
- i. The nomination/election committee shall be responsible for conducting the elections by electronic voting. If for any reason, the election could not be conducted as planned, the Election committee must complete the election by e-mail voting within two months of the announced date.
- j. The person receiving the majority of votes for a designated position shall be declared winner. However, in terms of President and Executive Vice President, the persons cannot be from the same country or a region. Therefore, if both President and Executive VP candidates elected are from the same region, the Election Committee will invalidate the election of the Executive Vice President and the person getting the next highest votes from another region will be declared as elected.
- k. In the event no candidate receives majority vote (50% plus one of those present for voting), the top two candidates shall face a run-off election on the same day.

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- l. The name of the chapter delegate(s) shall be submitted by the chapter president through the National Coordinator 30 days prior to the election.
- m. In the absence of any designated chapter delegate at the time of elections, only the chapter president shall be eligible to vote in place of the designated delegate.
- n. The elections shall be conducted according to the Protocol approved by the Executive Council before each election. The protocol shall be in accord with these Bylaws.
- o. Electronic mail shall be the preferred mode for communication.
- p. The decision of the nomination/election committee shall be final and binding. Any such decision can be challenged within 60 days at the General Body meeting after the end of the convention at which the elections were conducted. The General Body is empowered to overrule the decision of the nomination/election committee, provided at least half of its total members vote to do so by e-mail or in person.

14 AWARDS: Awards shall be in compliance with GOPIO International Community Service Awards (CSA) criteria and shall be approved by the Executive Council/Awards Committee in advance. The Community Service Awards (CSA) criteria can be modified by the Executive Council as becomes necessary. In addition, special awards may be given as per the approval of Executive Council.

15 DISSOLUTION: The GOPIO may be dissolved with the approval of the three-fourths majority of the Executive Council members present and voting at an extra-ordinary meeting specially called for this purpose. In the case of dissolution, the Executive Council shall donate the net assets of the GOPIO to an organization whose objectives are similar to the objectives of GOPIO. In case of dissolution of any defunct GOPIO chapter, all assets and funds in the bank account shall be transferred to a nearest GOPIO chapter of good standing in consultation with Immediate Reporting Officer (Area/National/International Coordinator).

16 LIABILITY & INDEMNITY INSURANCE: The Executive Council of GOPIO International and all GOPIO chapters shall have liability and indemnity insurance cover. Executive Council of GOPIO International shall have indemnity insurance specifically against error, omission or decision making by GOPIO Executive Council member in regular conduct of official duties.

17 IMPEACHMENT: The officials of the GOPIO can be impeached by the General Body for felony or misdemeanor and for gross and willful violation of GOPIO Bylaws. Impeachment proceedings can be initiated by the Executive Council or at least fifteen members of the General Body. The office-bearer concerned will be provided a written statement of the charges against him/her and given thirty days to reply to the charges. The impeachment charges and replies from the person charged will be circulated to all members of the International Executive Council at least 30 days before the meeting of the International Executive Council at which they are to be discussed. Impeachment decision can be made only with the three-fourth (3/4) majority of the International Executive Council present and voting in a meeting with prior notice concerning this agenda item. An impeached official will lose the right to hold any more position in GOPIO Executive Council.

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18 AMENDMENTS: Amendments to these Bylaws shall be made only with the approval of the two-third (2/3) majority of the members of the General Body present and voting. The amendments may be initiated by the Executive Council or by five voting members of the Executive Council acting together. If the amendments are initiated by five voting members, then the members concerned shall send them in writing to the Executive Committee Council at least 30 days in advance of the Council meeting at which they are to be considered. Whether the amendments originate with the voting members or the Executive Council, the Executive Council shall circulate them to the members of the General Body along with their own recommendations at least 15 days in advance of the General Body meeting at which they are to be considered.

APPENDIX – I

GOPIO CHAPTERS


GOPIO would facilitate city, regional and national chapter development for a global network of all PIOs/NRIs. To achieve that objective, GOPIO would encourage opening of chapters everywhere, instilling a culture of service among the PIOs/NRIs worldwide and making GOPIO as an international service organization.

STARTING A CHAPTER

There must not be a GOPIO Chapter within a 10 mile radius of your local area unless it is in another state, or the NRI/PIO population demographics dictate otherwise. Area Coordinator, National Coordinator or the International Coordinator shall guide the new chapter as per documented Bylaws, Policies and Procedures.

A. THE PROCESS OF STARTING A CHAPTER

- i. Any five people of Indian Origin (PIOs/NRIs) of like-minded nature can initiate formation of a GOPIO Chapter by submitting a Letter of Intent (Form G/FRM/304) to the Area Coordinator/National Coordinator/International Coordinator or GOPIO International.
- ii. On receipt of Letter of Intent (LOI), the Area Coordinator/National Coordinator/International Coordinator or GOPIO International shall officially authorize the formation of the Chapter.
- iii. The Chapter shall be fully functional after the authorization and should strive to expand its membership to 10 members in six months after formation and 15 members in 1st year after formation (minimum number of members for a chapter).
- iv. Use GOPIO Bylaws, policies and procedures on chapter functioning to elect officers.
- v. Chapter incorporation, under the laws of the country, if needed. Also, obtain tax exempt status, if needed.
- vi. Chapter progress is formally reviewed by the International Coordinator and Executive Council approximately 3 months after organization of “start-up chapter”. Approximately 6


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months from submitting LOI; if voted in, and on receipt of annual dues, “start-up chapter” becomes an official chapter with voting rights in the GOPIO Executive Council. Chapters have to be voted in by the Executive Council to become an official chapter of GOPIO and they have to wait at least six months to be voted in.

- vii. For the sake of uniformity, the chapter will be named with a city and area only after the word “GOPIO,” e.g., GOPIO Los Angeles South-West. In cases of a large metropolitan area, there can be multiple chapters within that metropolitan area with chapter names of that city identified with suffix of specific areas such as North, South, South-East, or West. There shall be clearly defined areas of operation for each such chapter even within ten (10) mile radius without territorial conflicts.
- viii. Chapter in India can be started only by returned PIOs/NRIs, parents and siblings of PIOs/NRIs.

B. CHAPTER OFFICIALS AND WORKING DETAILS

- i. Each GOPIO Chapter shall elect an Executive Committee consisting of President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer and other committee members for a term of two years. No individual can hold the same office for more than two terms. National Coordinator is allowed to make exceptions on terms of Chapter Officers in the interest of the organization with the approval of International Coordinator and International President.
- ii. GOPIO chapters need to maintain change, continuity and challenge as a hallmark for GOPIO chapter formation.
- iii. **Change:** Change should bring in new volunteers into position of organizational responsibility. Encourage people to move up the ladder in the organization.
- iv. **Continuity:** Experience gained at one position is used at the next level.
- v. **Challenge:** The new position should present leadership challenge to the holder, particularly when one moves to the position of president. Also, it should be a challenge for the new and less experienced in the organization to learn more and take more challenging volunteering responsibilities.
- vi. No two (2) members of the chapter Executive Committee shall be blood relatives that include spouses. The spouse of a chapter or council executive, or area/national/International Coordinator shall not qualify for the appointment or election to chapter executive committee, council chair or co-chair, or area/national/Coordinator or International Coordinator position for at least one full term after blood relative's completion of his/her term.
- vii. **Chapter Membership Fee:** Individual members in a chapter will pay an annual fee prescribed by the chapter Executive Committee.

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- viii. If there are multiple chapters in a country, the fee should be decided by the chapter presidents in consultation with the National Coordinator.
- ix. Membership fees shall be uniform for all chapters in a country.
- x. **Financial Accounting of Major Events:** Financial accounting of all major events of the chapter to be completed by the convener or coordinator within 90 days of the event. Those who did not comply will not be eligible to contest election or appointment for any position in the chapter.

C. A GOOD STANDING CHAPTER

- a. A chapter is deemed to be in Good Standing, if it:
 - i. Follows GOPIO International Bylaws, Policies and Procedures as they relate to chapters.
 - ii. Participates in all GOPIO wide projects, committee(s) and Councils.
 - iii. Communicates all community issues/concerns to GOPIO International through the Area/National Coordinator/International Coordinator.
 - iv. Has an elected and structured Executive Committee and holds regular meetings at least quarterly. The GOPIO chapters may have different starting dates for their respective terms as per chapter's commencement dates. If the Executive Committee has failed to conduct election of new officers at the expiration of the two year term. National Coordinator/International Coordinator in consultation with GOPIO International President can appoint an ad-hoc president for up to three months during which new executive committee shall be elected.
 - v. Pays annual dues to GOPIO International and sends Activity Report to Immediate Reporting Officer/GOPIO Int'l, as applicable regularly every 3 months, i.e., February 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1 each year.
 - vi. The Chapters under compliance shall receive a designation of “Certified GOPIO Chapter” and shall accrue all privileges authorized by GOPIO International.
 - vii. Chapter(s) not in compliance for “Good Standing Chapter” shall be notified by the Immediate Reporting Officer/GOPIO Int'l as applicable. GOPIO International retains the right to “Decertify” that Chapters that are found to be non-compliant of these Bylaws after a 30-day warning of rectification.
 - viii. No chapter member shall conduct activities detrimental to the good standing of GOPIO in writing to news media or correspondence otherwise.

D. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL CHAPTERS & GOPIO INTERNATIONAL

- i. Local chapter has its own officers and is run and managed at the local level.

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- ii. A chapter in “good standing” will have the voting rights in the GOPIO General Body according to the following sliding scale:
 - 15 members or more - 1 delegate
 - 31 members or more - 2 delegates
 - 51 members or more - 3 delegates
 - 101 members or more - 4 delegates
 - 201 members or more - 5 delegates
- iii. The chapter shall remit US\$100 per delegate on an annual basis to GOPIO International as per the above delegate chart at the beginning of the financial year, i.e., 1st July of the calendar year. For a chapter to be in good standing, the chapter will have to pay all arrears, if due.
- iv. **Whom to Contact:** Area Coordinator / National Coordinator / International Coordinator and/or GOPIO International President.
- v. All changes to officers by election or otherwise must be provided to Immediate Reporting Officer with contact details within 30 days of changes.


APPENDIX – II

GOPIO COUNCILS

GOPIO International has ten Councils, namely, Human Rights, Business, Cultural, Academic, Media, Health & Wellness, Youth, Women, Science & Technology and GOPIO Senior’s Council to serve the diverse interests of the global Indian community.

Each GOPIO Council shall conform to the following guidelines:

- i. Each Council shall consist of a chairperson and a number of co-chairpersons with regional representation as deemed necessary.
- ii. The chairperson shall be appointed by the International President of GOPIO in consultation with the Executive Council.
- iii. The co-chairpersons shall be appointed by the President of GOPIO in consultation with the Council Chairperson.
- iv. The term of all appointees shall coincide with the term of the Executive Council.
- v. The chairperson shall provide plan of activities and periodic reports to the International President and Executive Vice President and to other appropriate bodies within GOPIO.
- vi. Chairperson shall obtain prior approval of the Executive Council for holding conferences, seminars and symposium.

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- vii. Each council shall report to the Executive Vice President, in the absence of the Executive Vice President Chairman, shall report to the Vice President.
- viii. Banking and handling of finances of each council shall be integral to GOPIO and shall be consolidated for the calendar year for accounting and tax purposes.
- ix. Each council shall file all financial accounting to the Treasurer.
- x. All press statements and reports of each council shall be provided to the Secretary General (alternatively Executive Vice President) for GOPIO records.
- xi. Each member of a council must be a member of a GOPIO chapter and/or GOPIO International Life member.
- xii. Awards given by each council shall be in compliance with GOPIO International Community Service Award (CSA) criteria and shall be approved by the Executive Council in advance.


The following are the GOPIO Councils:

A. GOPIO HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

- i. To actively monitor all aspects of human rights conditions and treatment of persons of Indian origin (PIOs) and non-resident Indians (NRIs), and to seek prompt and full remedy and redress from the respective governments, the United Nations, the Government of India, human rights agencies operating locally and globally, and forums of local and international jurisprudence, using “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948 and all subsequent amendments and changes as the basis for fair and equitable treatment for all peoples.
- ii. To monitor and address human rights conditions including, but not limited to, physical, social, economic, cultural, political, religious, and artistic conditions affecting PIOs and NRIs in various countries.
- iii. To engage the participation and to support efforts of any and all local Indian and non-Indian organizations and groups, where possible, without compromising their safety and well-being, to compile and report all human rights abuses perpetrated against PIOs and NRIs.
- iv. To recognize those among NRI/PIO human rights advocates who have made notable achievements and for their community service.

B. GOPIO BUSINESS COUNCIL

- i. To encourage and promote increasing levels of business investments by and among NRIs/PIOs in various parts of the world.

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- ii. To develop and conduct business and investment seminars, forums, symposia, trade exhibitions and conferences at regional and global levels to facilitate networking among investors and potential investment countries and selected industries.
- iii. To facilitate more awareness among non-Indians of the potentials and benefits of investments and trade with India and PIO countries.
- iv. To recognize those among NRIs/PIOs in the business community who have made notable achievements and for their community service.

C. GOPIO CULTURAL COUNCIL


- i. To develop, enhance and encourage continued promotion and preservation of the Indian culture and heritage among NRIs/PIOs on community, regional and global levels.
- ii. To facilitate increased communications, dialogue, exchanges and travel among individuals, groups and institutions involved in teaching, performing and promoting the Indian culture and heritage.
- iii. To actively promote the richness and value of the Indian culture and heritage by holding events in collaboration with other cultural organizations worldwide.
- iv. To recognize those among NRIs/PIOs who are actively involved in cultural activities and have made notable achievements, and for their community service.

D. GOPIO ACADEMIC COUNCIL

- i. To identify, recognize and link persons involved in Indian Diaspora studies and writings, and by identifying and linking academic institutions actively engaged in such studies, as a means of promoting and furthering Indian Diaspora studies and establishing a global network beneficial to NRIs/PIOs.
- ii. To develop, maintain and enhance respective directory of academic institutions, scholars, writers by category of works, and those who are the recipients of internationally recognized awards for their respective work on the Indian Diaspora.
- iii. To plan, coordinate and hold conferences, seminars, symposia and forums on issues related to the Indian Diaspora, both regional and international levels, including global conferences on behalf of GOPIO International as become necessary.
- iv. To recognize those among NRIs/PIOs academicians who have made notable achievements and for their community service.

E. GOPIO HEALTH & WELLNESS COUNCIL

- i. To cater to the increasing health & wellness needs of the growing population of non-resident Indian (NRI) and persons of Indian Origin (PIO) community by monitoring the health trends, statistics and reports among this group and encouraging community involvement in seeking such services for improving health conditions in the community.

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- ii. To foster collaborative health & wellness seminars for the benefit of the non-resident Indian (NRIs) and persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) on health & wellness related issues that are of current interest and concern.
- iii. To provide, where possible and expedient, guidance and referrals on health & wellness based on categories, region and other pertinent factors.
- iv. To recognize those among NRI/PIO health & wellness providers, who have made notable achievements and for their community service.

F. GOPIO YOUTH COUNCIL


- i. To cater to the growing population and needs of the non-resident Indian (NRI) and persons of Indian Origin (PIO) youths by providing community service programs that addresses the pertinent issues and interest of the NRI/PIO youth.
- ii. To foster collaborative forums for dialogue and exchanges among non-resident Indian (NRI) and persons of Indian Origin (PIO) youths to maintain their interest and participation in the Indian Diaspora, now and in the future.
- iii. To encourage inter-group relations among non-resident Indian (NRI) and persons of Indian Origin (PIO) youths on local, regional and global levels for better understanding, cooperation and community service.
- iv. To recognize those among NRI/PIO youth who have made notable achievements in their respective fields of work and for their community service.

G. GOPIO WOMEN COUNCIL

- i. To cater to the growing population and needs of the resident Indian (NRI) and persons of Indian Origin (PIO) women by providing community service programs that addresses the pertinent issues and interest of the NRI/PIO woman.
- ii. To foster collaborative forums for dialogue and exchanges among resident Indian (NRI) and persons of Indian Origin (PIO) women to maintain their interest and participation in the Indian Diaspora, now and in the future.
- iii. To encourage inter-group relations among non-resident Indian (NRI) and persons of Indian Origin (PIO) women on local, regional and global levels for better understanding, cooperation and community service.
- iv. To recognize those among NRI/PIO women who have made notable achievements in their respective fields of work and for their community service.

H. GOPIO MEDIA COUNCIL

- i. To actively monitor local, regional and global news of the growing population and needs of the non-resident Indian (NRIs) and persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and provide items

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of interest and concern to GOPIO Executive Committee for deliberations and action where necessary.

- ii. To provide timely news releases on instructions from GOPIO Executive Committee on current events that affect non-resident Indian (NRIs) and persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).
- iii. To collaborate with local, regional and global GOPIO officers, chapters and committees for news conferences and other media activities to promote GOPIO and its efforts.
- iv. To recognize those among NRI/PIO media who have made notable achievements in media and journalism, and for their community service.

I. GOPIO SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

- i. To create awareness among NRIs/PIOs on latest developments in Science & Technology.
- ii. To develop and conduct Science & Technology forums, seminars and conferences at regional and global levels.
- iii. To maintain links and collaborate with Government of India, Ministries of Science & Technology and Heavy Industries etc. for the purpose of Science & Technology.
- iv. To maintain links and collaborate with governments and agencies of other countries for the purpose of Science & Technology.
- v. To maintain links and collaborate with international institutions and research organizations, academia and individuals for the purpose of Science & Technology.
- vi. To recognize those among NRIs/PIOs who have made notable achievements in Science & Technology and for their community service.


J. GOPIO SENIOR'S COUNCIL

APPENDIX – III

CRITERIA FOR GOPIO SERVICE AWARDS


Preamble: The **GOPIO Community Service Awards (GOPIO CSA)** would be given for outstanding community service, public service and/or significant charitable or philanthropic contributions of benefit to the community.

The GOPIO Community Service Awards (GOPIO CSA) are neither in conflict nor in competition with any international, regional or country awards.

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The GOPIO Community Service Awards are given in recognition of outstanding services to the community, society and humanity. The acquisition of wealth, business achievements and positions, academic scholarship, or achievements in any other field of human endeavor is not part of the selection criteria.

- A. Recognition:** For outstanding community service, public service and/or significant charitable or philanthropic contributions of benefit to the community.
- i. The award recipient must have a broad-based, continuing commitment to community service, public service and/or significant charitable or philanthropic contributions of benefit to the community, as reflected in a variety of activities, programs and initiatives which have served the needs of the Non-Resident Indian (NRI) / People of Indian Origin (PIO) community. The recipient must show evidence of a true partnership with the NRI/PIO community.
- B. Eligibility:** Non Resident Indian/Person of Indian Origin.
- i. Members of the Executive Committee, Executive Council or task committee, councils of GOPIO International, and members of GOPIO chapter Executive Committees are not eligible.
- C. Geography:** One or two recommended candidates per region as determined by GOPIO International.
- D. Selection:** A GOPIO chapter and/or the GOPIO Regional coordinator/Vice President can recommend up to one candidate each, with one alternate recommendation. The selected candidate must agree to attend the award ceremony to personally receive the award.
- i. GOPIO International can also seek nominations from NRIs/PIOs through GOPIO newsletter, E-mail promotions, press releases in the media, and by other promotional means. However, the Regional Vice President and/or the Chapter President would be involved in the selection process as applicable to all other candidates.
 - ii. Recommendation must be in written form, using the prescribed format/form, and must include a full resume, bio information, photograph and suitable references or supporting documents.
 - iii. GOPIO Community Service Awards Selection Committee would make the final selection out of the list of recommended nominees. The Committee would include the Vice President/ Regional Coordinator for the selection of awardees from a particular region.
 - iv. Nominations do not guarantee selection for the awards, and nominees should not be promised otherwise.
 - v. Cut-off date for receipt of recommendations to be set by GOPIO Int'l.
- E. Character:** The recommended candidate must have earned the recognition, respect and trust of the NRI/PIO community, and be above and beyond reproach.

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F. Notification: The recommended candidates, if selected, would be notified in writing by GOPIO International. Should the selected candidate decline or cannot attend the award ceremony, then the second recommended candidate could be considered.

- i. The recommended candidates not selected for the awards would be notified by GOPIO International with a copy of the notification to the recommending GOPIO chapter and the Regional Coordinator/Vice President in writing, and would be done in an expedient manner.

G. Acceptance: The recipient must be present at the awards ceremony to receive the award.

- i. The awards are to be given in an appropriate, commemorative form, such as a plaque or certificate, with GOPIO logo and the names of the issuing officers.

H. Time Schedule: Cut-off dates are to be based on the following:

- Selection
- Approvals
- Notification
- Acceptance
- Confirmation

The various awards to be given by GOPIO shall be decided by the Executive Council (EC). EC shall also decide the criteria. Councils and Chapters giving any awards must confer with EC before making any commitments. Refer appropriate GOPIO policies for various awards.

END