

**CHARTER
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZING
COMMITTEE
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS
DAY OF VESAK**

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Foreword

In 1999, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the resolution to recognize the Vesak Day as an International Day of Recognition of Buddhists and the contribution of the Buddha to the world. Since then, the Thai Royal Government has played a crucial role to help fund the celebrations while Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University was assigned to be the organizer of the celebrations, seeing the birth to the International Organizing Committee or more affectionately known as the IOC.

From 2004 to date, we have come a long way in the celebrations and we are happy to be the host and organizer, but it is time for the celebrations to grow and evolve. The United Nations Day of Vesak celebrations is coming to maturity, with four celebrations under our belt, much experience gained, it is time now to share this with others. So, we are formulating this charter as a guideline for all future celebrations. There will always be room for growth and development and we are elated to see it grow.

The teachings of the Buddha sees no boundaries, the minds of all are alike, the sufferings of all are similar and truly, the liberation of all is the same. We are happy to initiate the process, develop the scope and now it is time for others to follow in footsteps similar, evolve the celebrations into a truly international event that can be shared with the Buddhists and Non-Buddhists alike.

We like to thank all those who have contribute to the success of previous celebrations and wish all the future celebrations be successful. Let the Dhamma of the Buddha be the beacon to the world, shredding away the ignorance of our hearts, bringing development into sustainable capacity for humanity and more importantly, peace and harmony to the world.

May all beings be blessed!

Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Dhammakosajarn

Chapter 1 – Establishment of the Organization

1.1 Name of Organization

1.1.1 This international Buddhist community celebrating the United Nations Day of Vesak shall be known as the International Organizing Committee hereinafter is to be referred to as ‘the IOC’ or ‘the organization’.

1.2 Establishment of the IOC

1.2.1 The IOC comprises of representatives from all Buddhist traditions from different countries aiming at observing and celebrating the United Nations Day of Vesak (hereinafter to be referred to as “UNDV”), annually in accordance to the resolution approved on 15th December 1999 at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Session No.54, Agenda Item 174.

1.2.2 The United Nations Day of Vesak is to recognize the Thrice Sacred Event of Vesak, celebrating the Birth, Enlightenment and Passing Away of the Buddha, as the International Day of Recognition of religion and culture.

1.3 The Organizational Seat

1.3.1 The headquarters of the IOC shall be located wherever the Chairman of the IOC resides.

1.3.2 The Office of the IS shall be permanently situated at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

1.4 Use of the Name

1.4.1 The use of the name shall be limited to the members of the committee whose affiliations are duly recorded by the IOC.

1.5 Affiliation Rules

1.5.1 All members who are affiliated to the IOC are required to use only the words ‘International Organizing Committee’ or ‘IOC’, followed by the name of the region or country in their names.

1.6 Forfeiture

1.6.1 The right to use of the name shall be automatically and forthwith forfeited on termination of any member’s affiliation or any such group’s formal recognition.

Chapter 2 – Definitions

- 2.1 The following words and expressions have the following meanings unless contrary to the context:
- 2.1.1 ‘Committee’ shall mean the International Organizing Committee of the United Nations Day of Vesak;
 - 2.1.2 ‘Chairman shall mean the Chairman of the International Organizing Committee of the United Nations Day of Vesak;
 - 2.1.3 ‘Member’ shall mean a member of the International Organizing Committee of the United Nations Day of Vesak;
 - 2.1.4 ‘Rules’ shall mean these Rules and all amendments, additions, deletions or replacements from time to time in force and effect;
 - 2.1.5 ‘Regulation’ shall mean the regulation of the International Organizing Committee of the UN Day of Vesak as made and amended from time to time;
 - 2.1.6 ‘IS’ shall mean International Secretariat;
 - 2.1.7 ‘IOC’ shall mean the International Organizing Committee;
 - 2.1.8 ‘UNDV’ shall mean the United Nations Day of Vesak.
 - 2.1.9 ‘IBC’ shall mean the International Buddhist Conference.

Chapter 3 – Declaration of Principles and Purpose

3.1 Declaration of Principles

3.1.1 The Principles of International Organizing Committee are based upon a belief in:

3.1.1.1 Faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, or the Triple Gem.

3.2 Purpose of the IOC

3.2.1 To internationally recognize and observe the Day of Vesak, the thrice sacred day commemorating the birth, the enlightenment and the passing away of the Buddha, as the day of religion and culture.

3.2.2 To promote, foster and maintain collaborations between the different Buddhists traditions and schools, in order to foster and support Buddhist Culture, Philosophy and Practice for the well being and happiness of humanity.

3.2.3 To organize conferences, workshops and forums to discuss academic, social and religious issues.

3.2.4 To encourage Buddhist academics and scholars to dialogue and contribute to promotion of Buddhist studies and philosophy.

3.2.5 To encourage the practice of Buddha-Dhamma and to meet the challenges of the world that is faced by humanity.

3.2.6 To discuss matters relating to the general welfare of the World Buddhist Community and to deliberate on the issues which may arise from time to time.

3.2.7 The IOC in affirming its Joint Communiqué recognizes the fundamental goals of the founding members commits itself to strive for peace in the world.

Chapter 4 – United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations

4.1 Program

4.1.1 The celebrations and conference shall include:

4.1.1.1 Meetings and discussion groups of the IOC.

4.1.1.2 Meetings of the outgoing and incoming members of the IOC (inclusive of handling over and reporting).

4.1.1.3 Meetings of the outgoing and incoming members of the IS (inclusive of handling over and reporting).

4.1.1.4 Conferences, forums and other activities centered around the United Nations, Buddhism and especially Vesak Day (which shall be the focal point of the celebrations).

4.1.1.5 Others like symposiums, workshops and meetings of direct interest to observers attending the celebrations and to encourage maximum participation from all delegates.

4.2 Date and Place

4.2.1 The UNDV Celebrations should be held every year in the month of May. The date and place of each celebration shall be decided upon by a simple majority vote by the members of the IOC.

4.3 Handling and Taking Over

4.3.1 The government of the intended-host-country shall write a formal letter to the appropriate authorities to express their willingness to host the next UNDV Celebrations.

4.3.2 The original copy of the letter shall be couriered to the Government of the current host, to the liaison in charge of the current UNDV Celebrations. Another copy shall be couriered to the Chairman of the current IOC.

4.3.3 The Chairman of the current IOC must submit the application to the IOC board for selection and endorsement. The result shall be announced and to send to the Government of the current host country for endorsement.

4.3.4 The necessary preparations shall be made, duly recorded into the Vesak Declaration and announced at the closing ceremony of the UNDV Celebrations.

4.3.5 There will be a handling over ceremony from the current host to the next host. The Vesak symbol (which may be a plaque or a Vesak Day flag), shall be handed over by the current Chairman to the representative of the next host country.

4.3.6 The representative shall be current member of the IOC who is also the representative of the next host country.

Chapter 5 – International Organizing Committee

- 5.1 Recognized Authority
 - 5.1.1 The International Organizing Committee shall continue the authority to direct the affairs of UNDV Celebrations and the IBC.
- 5.2 Exclusive Prerogatives
 - 5.2.1 The IOC shall have the exclusive prerogative to vote on any and all of the following matters:
 - 5.2.1.1 Election or appointment of new members to the IOC, unless the next host for UNDV Celebrations is a new host.
 - 5.2.1.2 Approval of appointments of persons to hold positions in the IS, unless the next host for UNDV Celebrations is a new host.
 - 5.2.1.3 Approval of preparatory meetings and working visits to be held leading up to the UNDV Celebrations.
 - 5.2.1.4 Determination of the next host country for UNDV Celebrations.
- 5.3 Specific Responsibilities
 - 5.3.1 The IOC shall:
 - 5.3.1.1 Receive and act upon reports from the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.
 - 5.3.1.2 Receive and act upon reports and general policy recommendations from the members of the IOC.
 - 5.3.1.3 Receive and act upon activities and project recommendations from the IS.
 - 5.3.1.4 Sub Committees for the Celebrations (e.g. steering committee, declaration drafting committee, events and program coordinating committee).
- 5.4 Meetings
 - 5.4.1 The meetings of the IOC shall be held at the time as when need to ensure the smooth planning of the UNDV Celebrations and IBC participation. Special meetings may be called by a majority vote of the IOC on a mail ballot or electronic mail.
 - 5.4.2 The quorum for any meeting shall be at least 1/3 of the members present.
 - 5.4.3 If the quorum is not met, then the chairman is to be given the authority to form an ad-hoc committee to conduct the function.
- 5.5 Observers
 - 5.5.1 All past members of the IOC attending an IOC meeting shall be seated as observers without voting rights except as may be provided in this Constitution.

Chapter 6 – Office Bearers

- 6.1 Selection of the Chairman
 - 6.1.1 The election of chairman must be a member of the current IOC.
 - 6.1.2 If there is more than one member from the same host country, then:
 - 6.1.2.1 The next host country members shall select amongst themselves the next Chairman and announced to the members of the IOC.
 - 6.1.2.2 Upon conflict of interest and the next host country members are unable to come to agreement, then the election of the Chairman shall be given to the members of the IOC to decide through balloting. The current Chairman shall conduct the Ballot.
 - 6.2.2 The Chairman shall have the power to restructure in consultation with the IOC and to fill any vacancy in the committees or in any other sub-committees until the next UNDV Celebration.
- 6.2 Elected Officers
 - 6.2.1 The membership of the IOC shall amongst themselves elect members capable of holding and carrying out the duties of the office to serve as officers of the IOC. The elected officers of the IOC shall be:
 - 6.2.1.1 Six (6) Deputy Chairman.
 - 6.2.2 The elected positions shall be held by the monastics.
 - 6.2.3 At least two (2) Deputy Chairman must be filled from the host country.
- 6.3 Appointed Officers
 - 6.3.1 The Chairman shall appoint from the members not holding the above office of 6.2 to the following working positions under the direction of the Chairman. These officers shall be deemed capable of holding and carrying out the duties of the office to serve as officers of the IOC. The appointed officers of the IOC shall be:
 - 6.3.1.1 One (1) Secretary General.
 - 6.3.1.2 Four (4) Assistant Secretary Generals.
 - 6.3.2 One Assistant Secretary General must be from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and at least two (2) Assistant Secretary Generals must be from other countries.
- 6.4 Immediate Past Chairman
 - 6.4.1 The Immediate Past Chairman shall be given the position of Honorary Chairman in the next host country IOC.
- 6.5 Key Duties of the Office
 - 6.5.1 The Office of the IOC shall:
 - 6.5.1.1 Carry out duties assigned by the Chairman.
 - 6.5.1.2 Make recommendations to the IOC through the Chairman with respect to their assigned duties.
 - 6.5.1.3 Attend all meetings of the IOC.
 - 6.5.1.4 Promote the purposes of the IOC.

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6.5.1.4 Conduct in a manner befitting Office of the IOC.

6.6 Elections

6.6.1 The officers named in 6.2 shall be elected by the members of the International Organizing Committee.

6.7 Majority Vote

6.7.1 A simple majority of the votes cast must be obtained by each officer to be elected.

6.8 Terms of Office

6.8.1 The term of office of each officer shall be for one (1) calendar year to commence on the day after the UNDV Celebrations following his election or appointment, and shall continue for the entire year for which he was appointed (or elected) until the completion of the next UNDV Celebrations.

6.8.2 Unless the next host country is still the same country, then the IOC shall meet only to endorse the existing officers and office they hold in 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.

6.8.3 Members are allowed to step down from office and either election of new officers must be conducted as in 6.2 or appointment of officers as in 6.3.

6.9 Emergency

6.9.1 In the event of the cancellation of an annual UNDV Celebrations, the officer may remain in office beyond the term set out in 6.8 until elections can be held as prescribed in 6.7.

6.10 Vacancies

6.10.1 Vacancies in all offices, other than that of the Chairman, may be filled by appointment by the Chairman with the approval of the IOC.

6.11 Remuneration

6.11.1 All officers shall serve without financial remuneration, except that when funds become available, the host organization shall provide financial remuneration for any officer working on the project by covering the round trip airfare, food, accommodations and transportation.

Chapter 7 – Chairman

7.1 Duties

- 7.1.1 The Chairman shall serve as Chief Executive of the IOC.
- 7.1.2 To make recommendations and appointment of new members to the IOC with the approval of the IOC.
- 7.1.3 To invite respectable Buddhist dignitaries to be Patrons of the IOC.
- 7.1.4 To ensure the funds of the IOC are utilized in the best possible manner.
- 7.1.5 To raise funds for the IOC and request for grants from the Government or any other authorities.
- 7.1.6 Other Duties of the Chairman
 - 7.1.6.1 He shall preside at all meetings of the IOC.
 - 7.1.6.2 He shall supervise the preparation of the Plan of Action for his term, shall direct the overall operations of the IOC and if may, shall travel on its behalf.
 - 7.1.6.3 He shall report to organization the progress of the UNDV Celebratory preparations.
 - 7.1.6.4 The Chairman may delegate the chairmanship of any meeting to another officer designated by him.

7.2 Qualifications

- 7.2.1 The Chairman shall have served one (1) full term as a member of the IOC.

7.3 Vacancy

- 7.3.1 Succession: Upon the death, disability, resignation or other disposition that shall prevent the Chairman from serving, the Deputy Chairman of the host country shall automatically become Chairman and shall serve until a duly qualified successor has been elected as hereinafter provided.
- 7.3.2 Effective Date: The person so elected shall assume the office of Chairman immediately.

Chapter 8 – Honorary Chairman

Selection

8.1.1 The Founder-Chairman shall be the Honorary Chairman of the IOC.

8.2 Duties

8.2.1 To act as the overall adviser to the current Chairman of the IOC.

8.2.2 To exercise authority as the executive Chairman of the IOC.

Chapter 9 – Deputy Chairman

9.1 Duties

9.1.1 The duties of a Deputy Chairman shall be to communicate with other IOC members.

9.1.2 Reporting to the members of the IOC.

9.1.3 Coordinating, supervision and chairing his assigned meetings.

9.2 Qualifications

9.2.1 Except for the host country, a Deputy Chairman shall have served for at least one (1) term as a member of the IOC.

Chapter 10 – Secretary General

10.1 Appointment

10.1.1 A Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General shall be appointed by the Chairman.

10.2 Duties

10.2.1 Administrator: The Secretary General shall be the chief administrative officer of the IOC. He shall report directly to the Chairman, and shall be responsible for the operation of the IOC and the implementation of policies according to the direction of the Chairman. The Secretary General shall chair the IS.

10.2.2 Finance: The Secretary General shall have authority to receive and disburse funds within the limits of the budget and as directed by the appropriate authority, and shall maintain complete records covering all operations of the IOC.

10.3.3 Other Duties: The Secretary General shall have other duties as follows:

10.3.3.1 Carry out duties assigned by the Chairman.

10.3.3.2 Make recommendations to the Chairman with respect to the assigned duties.

10.3.3.3 Attend all meetings of the IOC.

10.3.3.4 Promote the purpose of the IOC.

10.3.3.5 Conduct in a manner befitting the IOC.

Chapter 11 – Members

11.1 Selection

11.1.1 The selection of members of the IOC shall be predicated on the experiential capacity.

11.1.1.1 The member shall be elected into the office of a national, regional or local Buddhist organization.

11.2 Nomination and Approval

11.2.1 Process to apply to selection of new members after determination of a new host country.

11.2.1.1 Names of prospective candidates shall be submitted to the new Chairman who will personally verify credentials and capacity for performance.

11.2.1.2 IOC members will review information and without objection, shall verify selections by majority vote.

11.3 Duties

11.3.1 Members shall assume responsibility to identify Key Buddhist organizations, educational institutions, their leaders, scholars and teachers within their areas.

11.3.2 Members shall serve as a conduit for information between the respective parties as to planning and functions, including travel, accommodations and other significant data relating to IOC programs.

11.4 Termination

11.4.1 Membership to the IOC shall cease in the following events:

11.4.1.2 Members who are unable to contribute to the IOC during his tenure and suitable replacement are found capable of performing the duties as in 11.3.

Chapter 12 – Working Committee of IS

- 12.1 Selection
 - 12.1.1 The IOC shall appoint its members to the IS.
 - 12.1.2 The appointed officers of the IS shall be:
 - 12.1.2.1 Five (5) Committee Members.
 - 12.1.3 The Secretary General shall be included into the list of four committee members and to hold the IS Chair.
 - 12.1.4 The other positions are assigned by the IS Chair to committee members.
- 12.2 Duties
 - 12.2.1 The officers of the IS shall:
 - 12.2.1.1 Carry out duties assigned by the Chair.
 - 12.2.1.2 Make recommendations to the Chair with respect to their assigned duties.
 - 12.2.1.3 Attend all meetings of the IOC and IS.
 - 12.2.1.4 Promote the purposes of the IOC.
 - 12.2.1.5 Conduct in a manner befitting officers of the IOC.
- 12.3 Preparation
 - 12.3.1 The officers of the IS shall form the following portfolio, liaise and coordinate with the local planning body of the host for the UNDV Celebrations.
 - 12.3.1.1 To create a benchmark of performance list for the celebrations to be completed successfully after making an initial survey within the first three months of the successful completion of the previous UNDV Celebrations.
 - 12.3.1.2 To organize the Pre-conference planning portfolio from ninth to the sixth month before the celebrations:
 - 12.3.1.2.1 Invitation Portfolio.
 - 12.3.1.2.2 Media and Public Relations Portfolio.
 - 12.3.1.2.3 Editorial Portfolio.
 - 12.3.1.2.4 Logistic and Budgeting Portfolio.
 - 12.3.1.2.5 Celebrations and Conference Planning Portfolio.
 - 12.3.2 To establish the following sub-committees to manage the conference details from third month to the celebrations:
 - 12.3.2.1 Volunteer Training and Management
 - 12.3.2.2 Detail committee activities to manage the celebrations and conference (e.g. Transportation, Accommodations, Reception, Security, Publications, Performance, Secretariat, Destination Management, Editorial, News and Media, Technology, Crisis Response, etc.).
 - 12.3.3 To establish the following committee to manage the post conference review and establish new standards and advisories for future UNDV Celebrations.

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12.3.3.1 To set up a post-celebration review committee to evaluate the performance of the celebrations.

12.3.3.2 To establish surveys and questionnaires auditing and assessment of UNDV Celebratory performance.

12.3.3.3 To compile and publish the commemorative publication.

12.3.3.4 To follow up and hand over the duties of next host IS team, unless the individual is retained by the next host IS team.

12.4 Terms of Office

12.4.1 The term of office of each officer shall be for one (1) calendar year to commence on the day after the UNDV Celebrations following his election or appointment, and shall continue for the entire year for which he was appointed (or elected) until the completion of the next UNDV Celebrations.

12.4.2 Unless the next host country is still the same country, then the IOC shall meet only to endorse the existing officers and office they hold in 12.1.

12.4.3 Members are allowed to step down from office and new officers must be appointed.

12.4.4 Members who are not able to perform, the Chair shall exercise the right to replace the committee member with request to the Chairman of the IOC to elect new members to join the IS.

12.5 Emergency

12.5.1 In the event of the cancellation of an annual UNDV Celebrations, the officer may remain in office beyond the term set out in 12.4.

12.6 Remuneration

12.6.1 All officers shall serve without financial remuneration, except that when funds become available, the host organization shall provide financial remuneration for any officer working on the project by covering for the round trip airfare, food, accommodations and transportation.

Chapter 13 – IS Chair

13.1 Duties

- 13.1.1 The Secretary General of the IOC shall serve as Chair of the IS.
- 13.1.2 Planning: To organize the UNDV Celebrations in accordance with guidelines from the preparatory meeting.
- 13.1.3 Forecasting: Writing a performance plan and timeline of activities leading up to the celebrations.
- 13.1.4 Budgeting: Working out the budget for planning, meetings and celebrations.
- 13.1.5 Administrating: To delegate or assign portfolios to the members of the IS.
- 13.1.6 Reporting: To report on the progress of the UNDV Celebratory preparations.

13.2 Vacancy

- 13.2.1 Succession: Upon the death, disability, resignation or other disposition that shall prevent the IS Chair from serving, the assistant secretary from the host country shall automatically become IS Chair and shall serve until a duly qualified successor has been elected as hereinafter provided.
- 13.2.2 Effective Date: The person so elected shall assume the position of Chair immediately.

Chapter 14 – Amendments

- 14.1 Any proposals for amendment to these Rules and Regulations shall be presented in the IOC meeting and circulated to the members at least 15 days in advance.
- 14.2 Any amendment to these Rules and Regulations shall require two-thirds votes of members present at the meeting.
- 14.3 Amendments shall be effective when written notice of the adopted changes is sent to the IOC members. Such notice must be given within two weeks of the date the amendments have been adopted.