



Federation of Catholic Bishops'  
Conferences of Oceania

**STATUTES  
OF  
THE FEDERATION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCES  
OF OCEANIA**



CONGREGATIO PRO GENTIUM EVANGELIZATIONE

DECRETUM

Cum Christifidelium bonum urgeat ut sacrorum Praesules inter se procedant, communi quoque agendi ratione, quatenus fas est, in diversis orbis partibus et quidem etiam in Oceania, Antistites Australiae, sub regimine iuris communis positi, una cum Antistitibus Novae Zelandiae, Insularum Pacifici necnon Papuae Novae Guineae et Insularum Salomoniarum, sub regimine missionali agentes, ab Apostolica Sede expostulaverunt ut Statuta Foederationis praedictorum quattuor Coetuum Episcopaliurn, expleto probationis quinquennio, definitive a Sancta Sede recognoscerentur.

Quam petitionem hae Congregationes pro Episcopis, pro parte australiana, et pro Gentium Evangelizatione, pro aliis nationibus supradictis, libenter susceperunt et vigore facultatum ipsis a Summo Pontifice **IOANNE PAULO, Divina Providentia Pp. II** concessarum, praefata Statuta, prout exhibentur atque in adnexo exemplari continentur, praesenti Decreto rata habuerunt et recognoverunt.

*Datum Romae, ex Aedibus earundem Congregationum pro Episcopis et pro Gentium Evangelizatione, die XXV mensis Decembris, in Nativitate Domini, a.D. MCMXCVII.*

\* Josephus Card. Touko  
Congr. pro Evangeliz. Gentium Praef.

+ Carolus Schlek, sc  
a secretis adiunctus

+ Benigno Card. Gent  
Cong. pro Episc. Praef.

\* Minzja  
A secretis

STATUTES  
OF  
THE FEDERATION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCES  
OF OCEANIA

Approved "ad experimentum et ad quinquennium" by Decree of the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples on 28 July 1992, Prot 3987/92.

PREAMBLE

Over a long period a wide variety of social, cultural and economic relationships between the nations of Oceania have developed. In more recent times, migration and tourism have intensified these relationships.

The particular churches throughout the region have had an integral part in shaping and developing the nations of Oceania.

As well as the social, cultural and economic relationships, there have been for many years relationships between the various Particular Churches. Since 1970 the members of the Bishops Conferences of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and the Pacific (CEPAC) have met on five occasions. These meetings have deepened the collegial spirit among the members of the various Conferences and raised their awareness of each other's Particular Churches.

Whilst recognising the due autonomy of each Particular Church and the respective Bishops Conferences, the members of the four Bishops Conferences realised that "by sharing their wisdom and experience and exchanging views" they would be able to "jointly formulate a programme for the common good of the Church" (CD 37). Hence it was judged appropriate, not only to meet the above-mentioned needs but also to implement CIC Canon 459:1, to establish the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania.

NORMS

NATURE

1. The Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania is made up of independent and autonomous Bishops Conferences (hereinafter referred to as member-Conferences) each of which is of equal standing and right in the Federation.

#### MEMBERSHIP

2. The member-Conferences of the Federation are:
  - a) the Catholic Bishops Conference of Australia
  - b) the Catholic Bishops Conference of New Zealand
  - c) the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Pacific
  - d) the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

#### GOAL

3. The goal of the Federation is:
  - a) to promote and defend whatever is for the common good;
  - b) to contribute more effectively to the common good of the Universal Church;
  - c) to promote the well-being of the family of nations by drawing on the cultural riches of the peoples of Oceania;
  - d) to give visible expression to the unity in diversity with which the Holy Spirit has endowed the Particular Churches in the various nations of Oceania;
  - e) to deepen the collegial spirit and to strengthen solidarity among the members of the four member-Conferences.

#### ROLE

4. The role of the Federation is:

to provide an ecclesial structure whereby the members of the four member-Conferences can collaborate to carry out joint pastoral action for Christ's faithful of their nations.

#### FUNCTION

5. The function of the Federation is:
  - a) to provide the means where by the members of the four member-Conferences can share their interests, insights, experiences and concerns.
  - b) to enable the members of the four member-Conferences to become more aware of each other's Particular Churches and issues affecting these Churches;
  - c) to enable the members of the four member-Conferences to discuss and formulate joint pastoral action in matters of common concern.

#### PLENARY ASSEMBLY

6. The Plenary Assembly of the Federation is a meeting of the members of the four member-Conferences.
7. The ordinary Plenary Assembly is held every four years at a place determined by the previous Plenary Assembly and at a time designated by the Executive Committee.
8. An extraordinary Plenary Assembly may be convened by the President of the Federation provided that each of the four member-Conferences is in agreement.
9. To maintain ever closer ties with the Apostolic See, the Papal Representatives of the whole region are to be invited to the Plenary Assembly.
10. It is the function of the Plenary Assembly:
  - a) to define the policies of the Federation;
  - b) to establish Commissions of the Federation in accordance with Statutes 21, 22;
  - c) to designate by canonical election a President and Vice-President of the Federation who must be diocesan bishops from among the eight representatives designated in accordance with Statute 12;
11. At the Plenary Assembly the norm shall be that matters will be decided by a majority vote of those present. However the Plenary Assembly shall accede to a request by any one member-Conference through its President that an affirmative decision of the Federation shall require a majority vote within each of the four member-Conferences.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

12. The Executive Committee of the Federation comprises two representatives from each of the four member-Conferences. These representatives are to be designated in a manner determined by each member-Conference.
13.
  - (i) The President and Vice-President of the Federation elected in accordance with Statute 10 (c) are also the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee. Elected at the ordinary Plenary Assembly they hold office until the next ordinary Plenary Assembly.
  - (ii) If during the term of office the position of President becomes vacant, the Vice-President automatically succeeds to the Presidency for the remainder of the term of office.



14.
  - (i) In the event of the vacancy occurring as mentioned in Statute 13 (ii), the office of Vice-president is filled by the Executive Committee.
  - (ii) If a member of the Executive should die or resign his office as member of the Executive, the respective Bishops Conference is to designate another representative for the remainder of the term of office.
15. The members of the Executive Committee hold office from one ordinary Plenary Assembly to the next ordinary Plenary Assembly.
16. It is the function of the Executive Committee:
  - a) to prepare the agenda for the Plenary Assembly;
  - b) to present a report of its activities to the plenary Assembly;
  - c) to implement the resolutions of the Plenary Assembly in accordance with the mandate given by the Plenary Assembly;
  - d) to liaise with the Commissions of the Federation;
  - e) to ensure that there is a sharing of information between the Federation and member-Conferences;
  - f) to ensure also a sharing of information between the Federation and the Apostolic See;
  - g) to prepare, where appropriate, an annual budget of income and expenditure, and an annual Financial Statement.
17. The Executive Committee is to meet at least once a year at a time and place designated by the Executive Committee.
18. The Executive Committee is to have secretarial assistance provided by the Secretariat of the Bishops Conference of which the President of the Federation is a member.
19. The Executive Committee is to keep the Papal Representatives for the region informed of the Federation's activities, notifying agenda for its meetings and providing copies of documents and acts.
20. The regular channel for information between the Federation and the Apostolic See is to be the Papal Representative for the country where the President 'pro tempore' of the Federation resides.

#### COMMISSIONS

21. The Plenary Assembly may from time to time establish those Commissions of the Federation which are deemed necessary.
22. Each Commission is to have its own mandate approved by the Plenary Assembly in which matters such as the membership, competency and accountability of the Commission are to be stated.
23. Since each Commission will normally comprise Agencies of the four member-Conferences, the secretarial needs of each Commission, unless otherwise provided for in its mandate, is to be provided by the Agencies in turn.

#### FINANCES

24. The finances of the Federation, as determined by the Plenary Assembly, will be borne by the four member-Conferences on a pro-rata basis taking into account the Catholic population and economic considerations relating to each of the four member-Conferences.

#### AMENDMENT OF STATUTES

25. These statutes may be amended provided that each member-Conference, having been given adequate notice of any proposed amendment, has by a two-thirds majority vote accepted such amendment.

Any amendment to these statutes has effect following notification by the Apostolic See of its "recognitio".



CONGREGATIO PRO EPISCOPIS - CONGREGATIO PRO GENTIUM EVANGELIZATIONE

Prot. 3987/92

DECRETUM

Cum christifidelium bonum urgeat ut sacrorum Praesules inter se procedant, communi quoque agendi ratione, quatenus fas est, in diversis orbis partibus, et quidem etiam in Oceania, Antistites Australiae, sub regimine iuris communis positi, una cum Antistitibus Novae Zelandiae, Insularum Pacifici necnon Papuae Novae Guineae et Insularum Salomoniarum, sub regimine missionali agentes, ab Apostolica Sede exoptulaverunt ut Statuta Foederationis praedictorum quattuor Coetuum Episcopali, ab ipsis confecta et emendata, rite a Sancta Sede recognoscerentur.

Quam petitionem hae Congregationes pro Episcopis, pro parte australiana, et pro Gentium Evangelizatione, pro aliis nationibus supradictis, libenter susceperunt et vigore facultatum ipsis a Summo Pontifice IOANNE PAULO, Divina Providentia PP. II concessarum, praefata Statuta, prout exhibita et in adnexo exemplari continentur, praesenti Decreto ad experimentum et ad quinquennium rata habuerunt et recognoverunt.

Datum Romae, ex Aedibus earundem Congregationum pro Episcopis et pro Gentium Evangelizatione, die 28 mensis Iulii anno 1992.

+ B. W. Justin  
Praef.  
+ Justinus Regali  
a secretis

Jos. Card. Touko  
Praef.  
Josephus Kere  
a secretis



January 1990

OBSERVATIONS ON

ELECTIONS  
VOTING PROCEDURE  
EXECUTIVE MANDATE

I ELECTIONS

The proposed Statutes (Cf. 9(c)) make provision for the canonical election of the President and Vice-President of the Federation. In accordance with proposed Statute 9(c) the election of the President and Vice-President would be conducted in conformity with CIC canons 164-179. In view of the recent decision of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts concerning CIC canon 452:1, it is presumed that only diocesan bishops would be canonically eligible for the offices of President and Vice-President.

II VOTING PROCEDURES

The matter of voting procedures at the Plenary Assembly of the Federation has not been mentioned in the proposed Statutes. Two alternatives present themselves for consideration.

The first alternative proposes that all members of the member-Conferences present at a Plenary Assembly would have active voice. Also the matter of proxy votes would require consideration. This alternative would be in keeping with the Statutes of Episcopal Conferences.

The second alternative proposes that only each member-Conference would have active voice at a plenary assembly, even though the proposed Statutes (Cf. 6) describe a Plenary Assembly as a meeting of the members of the four member-Conferences.

If only the member Conferences have active voice, there would be two possibilities for voting: either each member-Conference has one vote or each member-Conference has one or more votes in proportion to the number of its members e.g. one vote for every seven members.

One question which arises with this second alternative is: how would each member-Conference decide whether it wanted to vote for or against a particular motion. There are two possible avenues of action: either each member-Conference would resolve how it would vote prior to the Plenary Assembly; or each member-Conference would be given time to consider its opinion after debate on a topic has concluded and once it has determined its opinion it would return to the Plenary Assembly for the formal vote.

III EXECUTIVE MANDATE

The agenda for the May 1990 Joint Meeting includes the drafting of an executive mandate. The proposed Statutes (Cf. 14) contain a description of the function of the Executive Committee. It may be the opinion of the individual Bishops Conferences that the proposed Statute 14 is adequate as an executive mandate.

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31 January 1990

## AGENDA

Wednesday 9 May to Friday 11 May 1990

- Wednesday 9.15 - 12.15 pm
- Welcome and Introduction.
  - Reports of the Synod Delegates from the respective Conferences on the different aspects of priestly and ongoing formation. It is understood that experts and members of the faithful will inform the respective Conferences at their national meetings or before, on the Synod topic, e.g. Rectors of the Seminaries of Oceania will be meeting in Sydney at this time and will be available to the Conferences.
- Wednesday 3.45 - 4.45 pm
- Report from Pacific Partnership for Human Development Committee.
- Wednesday 4.45 - 5.45 pm
- Discussion of the formal establishment and name of the Association/Federation.
  - Presentation of Statutes for submission to the Holy See. (A revised copy of these is attached and comments should be prepared by each Conference for presentation to the Joint Meeting).
- Thursday 9.15 - 12.15 pm
- Reports from the four Conferences on the topic of inculturation with a view to issuing a common statement.
  - Discussion
- Thursday afternoon
- Exposure Programme
- Friday 9.15 - 10.30 am
- Election of Office-Bearers
  - Drafting of an executive Mandate. (See enclosed observations on these issues).
- Friday 10.30 - 12.15 pm
- General Matters
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22 January 1990

PROPOSED STATUTES  
FOR  
THE FEDERATION OF PACIFIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCES

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P R E A M B L E

Over a long period a wide variety of social, cultural and economic relationships between the nations of the Pacific have developed. In more recent times, migration and tourism have intensified these relationships.

The Particular Churches throughout the Region have had an integral part in shaping and developing the nations of the Pacific.

As well as the social, cultural and economic relationships, there have been for many years relationships between the various Particular Churches. Since 1970 the members of the Bishops Conferences of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and the Pacific (CEPAC) have met on five occasions. These meetings have deepened the collegial spirit among the members of the various Conferences and raised their awareness of each other's Particular Churches.

Whilst recognising the due autonomy of each Particular Church and the respective Bishops Conference, the members of the four Bishops Conferences realised that "by sharing their wisdom and experience and exchanging views" they would be able to "jointly formulate a programme for the common good of the Church" (CD 37). Hence it was judged appropriate, not only to meet the above-mentioned needs but also to implement CIC Canon 459:1, to establish the Federation of the Pacific Bishops Conferences.

## N O R M S

### NATURE

- 1 The Federation of Pacific Bishops Conferences is made up of independent and autonomous Bishops Conferences (hereinafter referred to as member-Conferences) each of which is of equal standing and right in the Federation.

### MEMBERSHIP

- 2 The member-Conferences of the Federation are:
  - (a) the Catholic Bishops Conference of Australia;
  - (b) the Catholic Bishops Conference of New Zealand;
  - (c) the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Pacific;
  - (d) the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.



**GOAL**

- 3 The goal of the Federation is:
- (a) to promote and defend whatever is for the common good;
  - (b) to contribute more effectively to the common good of the Universal Church;
  - (c) to promote the welfare of the family of nations from what is characteristic of the peoples of the Pacific;
  - (d) to give visible expression to the unity in diversity with which the Holy Spirit has endowed the Particular Churches in the various nations of the Pacific;
  - (e) to deepen the collegial spirit and to strengthen the solidarity among the members of the four member-Conferences.

**ROLE**

- 4 The role of the Federation is:
- (a) to provide an ecclesial structure whereby the members of the four member-Conferences can collaborate together and carry out joint pastoral action for Christ's faithful of their nations.

FUNCTION

- 5 The function of the Federation is:
- (a) to provide the means whereby the members of the four member-Conferences can share their interests, insights, experiences and concerns;
  - (b) to enable the members of the four member-Conferences to become more aware of each other's Particular Churches and issues affecting these Churches;
  - (c) to enable the members of the four member-Conferences to discuss and formulate joint pastoral action in matters of common concern.

PLENARY ASSEMBLY

- 6 The Plenary Assembly of the Federation is a meeting of the members of the four member-Conferences.
- 7 The ordinary Plenary Assembly is held every four years at a time and place designated by the Executive Committee.
- 8 An extraordinary Plenary Assembly may be convened by the President of the Federation provided that each of the four member-Conferences is in agreement.

9 It is the function of the Plenary Assembly:

- (a) to define the policies of the Federation;
- (b) to establish Commissions of the Federation in accordance with Statutes 17,18;
- (c) to designate by canonical election a President and Vice-President of the Federation without prejudice to the provisions of Statute 11;
- (d) to approve and also to alter these statutes provided that each member-Conference, having been given adequate notice of such alteration, has by a two-thirds majority vote accepted any proposed alteration.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 10 (i) The Executive Committee of the Federation comprises two representatives from each of the four member-Conferences. These representatives are to be designated in a manner determined by each member-Conference.

- 11 (i) The President and Vice-President of the Federation elected in accordance with Statute 9(c) are also the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee. Elected at the ordinary Plenary Assembly they hold office until the next ordinary Plenary Assembly.
- (ii) If during the term of office the position of President becomes vacant, the Vice-President automatically succeeds to the Presidency for the remainder of the term of office.
- 12 (i) In the event of the vacancy occurring as mentioned in Statute 11(ii), the office of Vice-President is filled by the Executive Committee.
- (ii) If a member of the Executive should die or resign his office as member of the Executive, the respective Bishops Conference is to designate another representative for the remainder of the term of office.
- 13 The members of the Executive Committee hold office from one ordinary Plenary Assembly to the next ordinary Plenary Assembly.

- 14 It is the function of the Executive Committee:
- (a) to prepare the agenda for the Plenary Assembly;
  - (b) to present a report of its activities to the Plenary Assembly;
  - (c) to implement the resolutions of the Plenary Assembly in accordance with the mandate given by the Plenary Assembly;
  - (d) to liaise with the Commissions of the Federation;
  - (e) to ensure that there is a sharing of information between the Federation and member-Conferences;
  - (f) to prepare, where appropriate, an annual budget of income and expenditure, and an annual Financial Statement.
- 15 The Executive Committee is to meet at least once a year at a time and place designated by the Executive Committee.
- 16 The Executive Committee is to have secretarial assistance provided by the Secretariat of the Bishops Conference of which the President of the Federation is a member.



COMMISSIONS

- 17 The Plenary Assembly may from time to time establish those Commissions of the Federation which are deemed necessary.
- 18 Each Commission is to have its own mandate approved by the Plenary Assembly in which matters such as the membership, competency and accountability of the Commission are to be stated.
- 19 Since each Commission will normally comprise Agencies of the four member-Conferences, the secretarial needs of each Commission, unless otherwise provided for in its mandate, is to be provided by the Agencies in turn.

FINANCES

- 20 (i) If and when circumstances suggest, the Plenary Assembly may decide to impose a financial levy on each of the four member-Conferences.
- (ii) If the Plenary Assembly approves such a levy, the member-Conferences are to contribute each year a sum of money to be determined by the Plenary Assembly.
- (iii) The Plenary Assembly in determining this amount on a pro-rata basis is to take into account the Catholic population and economic considerations relating to each of the four member-Conferences.



APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE

112 QUEEN'S DRIVE,  
WELLINGTON, 3,  
NEW ZEALAND.  
P.O. Box 14044  
Telephone 875-470

Prot. N. 3272.

6 June 1985.

My Lord,

I am writing to inform you that the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, with the understanding of the Sacred Congregation of the Bishops, invites the Bishops to go ahead with the drafting of possible statutes for what could become an association of the four Episcopal Conferences of Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

The Sacred Congregation points out that the opportunity should be taken to avoid structures which would be too rigid and heavy, keeping in mind that the organization would be composed of a membership from a very heterogeneous background.

Both Sacred Congregations very willingly offer their collaboration in the preparation of the norms from which the Statutes will be composed and prepared for eventual presentation to the Holy See.

With all good wishes,

Yours fraternally in Christ,

+ *Antonio Magnoni*

+ Antonio Magnoni  
Apostolic Pro-Nuncio.

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Most Reverend Peter Cullinane, DD.,  
Secretary,  
NZ Catholic Bishops' Conference,  
P.O. Box 8003,  
PALMERSTON NORTH.