

# **THE CONSTITUTION AND BYE LAWS OF THE GA-DANGME ASSOCIATION OF COLUMBUS, OHIO**

## **PREAMBLE**

THAT WE THE GA-DANGME PEOPLE OF GHANA LIVING IN THE COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN AREA HAVE COME TOGETHER TO FORM THE GA-DANGME ASSOCIATION OF COLUMBUS, OHIO INC. AS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AND HAVING RATIFIED PROVISIONS ENSHRINED IN THIS DOCUMENT ADOPT THE DOCUMENT HEREWITH AS THE CONSTITUTION AND BYE-LAWS. THE ASSOCIATION SHALL USE ONLY THE PROVISIONS OF THIS CONSTITUTION AS GUIDING PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH ITS DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONS SHALL DEPEND AND ALSO SEEK THE GUIDANCE AND BLESSINGS FROM GOD ALMIGHTY.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **NAME & SLOGAN**

- (i) The Association shall be known and called the **GA-DANGME ASSOCIATION OF COLUMBUS, OHIO (USA) Incorporated**, hereinafter referred to as 'the Association'.
- (ii) *The slogan of the Association shall be "EKOME FEEMO NO MLI HEWALE YOO"* (In unity lies strength)

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Association shall be to provide:

- (i) a platform for members to come together and to foster a harmonious relationship.
- (ii) support towards national development of Ghana, focusing mainly on the Ga-Dangme Districts as and when able.
- (iii) engage in activities that will preserve the Ga-Dangme culture.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall be open to all Ga-Dangmes by lineage and/or interest.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **REGISTRATION**

Every new Member shall pay a one-time non-refundable Registration Fee as determined by the Association.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **CONTRIBUTIONS**

- (i) Each member shall pay monthly dues of ten dollars (\$10).
- (ii) Members are also welcome to make personal voluntary contributions to the Association. Recognition shall be given as appropriate.

- (iii) The Association shall from time to time solicit assistance from individuals and organizations to support special projects.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **WAIVER OF CONTRIBUTIONS**

- (i) In the event a Member becomes physically disabled, he/she shall be exempted from payment of dues and other contributions completely during the period of the disability.
- (ii) The Mantse and Manny are exempt from monthly dues.
- (iii) Members seventy (70) years and older are also exempt.  
*The above persons will be entitled to all rights and benefits of the Association.*

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **CONTRIBUTIONS VIOLATION**

A Member shall not be in good standing after six (6) months of non-payment of dues. Such persons shall not enjoy any financial benefits from the Association.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **ELECTION OF EXECUTIVES**

- (i) The election of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be done through the ballot box at a legally constituted general meeting. Alternatively, if there are no candidates for any vacant position other than the Chairman, the Vice and the Treasurer, the elected Chairman and the Vice shall select persons to fill the vacant positions.
- (ii) No two blood related persons such as siblings, couples, parents and offspring, shall hold the positions of Treasurer and Financial Secretary at the same time.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **ETHICS & ETHIC VIOLATIONS**

- (i) All Members shall be obligated to hold this Constitution in high esteem.
- (ii) Any Member mandated to represent the Association at any event or go on any assignment or mission shall be required by the statute to act with the highest degree of ethical standards.
- (iii) Any Member of the Executive who shall abrogate, violate or abuse the power entrusted to him or her under the Constitution shall be liable for immediate removal from office.
- (iv) Any Member found in violation of Article IX (i) and (ii) or acting in any manner consistent with dereliction of duty, gross misconduct or embezzlement of Association's funds shall be suspended. The period of suspension shall be determined by a vote of at least 60% of Members present at a general meeting.
- (v) In addition to Article IX (iv) above, if the misconduct is misappropriation of funds, embezzlement or theft, the member shall be made to refund the amount involved plus interest within three (3) months or shall be liable to criminal prosecution.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **TENURE OF OFFICE**

- (i) The tenure of office of an elected Executive member shall be two (2) years.
- (ii) Another two (2) years may be served when re-elected at the expiration of the first term. Therefore, the maximum number of years to be served in an Executive position shall be four (4) years.
- (iii) Any officer who has completed two (2) terms in good faith shall still have the eligibility to stand for an election for any other office than the one previously held.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **POWER OF THE EXECUTIVE**

- (i) Only the Executive Members shall appoint ad hoc committees or sub-committees for the smooth running of the Association.
- (ii) Delegates representing the Association in any form of activity shall ensure that every aspect of their engagement is within limits of the Constitution and pursued in utmost good faith.
- (iii) In a situation where there is a tie in a vote, the Vice Chairman shall be the only one to break that tie by a cast of a vote. In the absence of the Vice Chairman, this duty defaults to the Secretary.
- (iv) Neither the entire Executive nor a member or members thereof shall have any veto power or authority to overturn any decisions made by the Members of the Association.
- (v) The Executive Members shall have the right to recommend any statesman or distinguished individual of any nationality to become a Patron of the Association. However, the appointment of such patron shall be subject to approval of the entire membership.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Conflicts or grievance mediations shall be handled by the Executive.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **BANK TRUSTEES**

- (i) A three-member bank trustee shall be formed to comprise the Vice Chairman, Treasurer and a non-Executive member to be appointed by a simple majority vote at a general meeting.
- (ii) The trustees shall be the only authorized signers to any checks or cash withdrawals and shall also monitor activities on the bank account(s).
- (iii) All checks and other forms of withdrawals on the Association's bank account(s) shall bear the signatures of two of the designated signers for the transaction to be legal. Under no circumstance shall any withdrawal be made bearing only one signature.
- (iv) All bank transactions shall first be approved in writing and signed by the Chairman and a notification copy given to the Financial Secretary for records.

- (v) A signer may refuse to append his/her signature to a check if he/she has any suspicion and shall immediately report to the Chairman.

## **ARTICLE XIV**

### **Duties of the Executive Members**

#### **CHAIRMAN**

- (i) The Chairman shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Association.
- (ii) The Chairman shall preside over all general meetings.
- (iii) Members shall be notified officially of any activities, transactions and development pursued on behalf of the Association by the Chairman at general meetings.
- (iv) The Chairman shall in consultation with the Executive Members, summon emergency general meetings as needed.
- (v) The Chairman shall have the right to call for a motion but not to make a motion.

#### **VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Vice Chairman shall assist the Chairman in the performance of his/her official duties. In the absence of the Chairman or the Secretary, the Vice assumes their roles.

#### **SECRETARY**

- (i) All records pertaining to minutes, transactions, correspondence, orders, votes, adopted resolutions, the Constitution, up to date mailing lists and telephone numbers of all Members shall be kept by the Secretary.
- (ii) The Secretary shall coordinate the activities of all Executive Members and shall be responsible for every correspondence approved by the Chairman.

#### **TREASURER**

- (i) The Treasurer shall deposit all monies received into the bank account of the Association within two business days.
- (ii) The Treasurer shall enforce the checks and balances for the financial operations of the Association.
- (iii) The Treasurer shall have the power to call for any financial document in case of an investigation and report to the appropriate committee.

#### **FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

- (i) The Financial Secretary shall be the custodian of all receipts and financial documents belonging to the Association.
- (ii) The Financial Secretary shall validate all transactions with receipts and provide them to the Chairman for record purposes.

## **ARTICLE XV**

### **VOLUNTARY SERVICES**

- (i) No Member shall receive any form of compensation for services rendered on behalf of the Association.
- (ii) The Association may however recognize a Member (s) for any outstanding performance. This recognition will be done during the celebration of the annual Homowo festival.
- (iii) The Association shall also recognize its patrons at the same function.

## **ARTICLE XVI**

### **MEETINGS**

- (i) The Association shall hold general meetings every second Sunday of each month.
- (ii) The meeting shall commence as soon as ten (10) Members are present to form a quorum.
- (iii) If the number of Members present at a meeting is not enough to form a quorum within two hours of the stipulated start time, that meeting shall be adjourned. Any agenda that may be discussed at that forum shall not be binding.
- (iv) In case of an emergency meeting, the focus shall be on the specifics of the agenda.

## **ARTICLE XVII**

### **BENEFITS**

#### **Baby Outdooring**

The Association shall donate an amount of Fifty dollars (\$50) and a box of diapers to the parents.

#### **Send Off**

The Association shall present an amount of Two Hundred dollars (\$200) and a plaque of recognition to the member.

#### **Bereavement**

In the event of death of a Member, spouse, child or parent, the Association shall present Two Hundred dollars (\$200), three (3) cases of bottled drinking water, three (3) cases of soft drinks, and one (1) liter of vodka to the family. Alternatively, if there are multiple members of the bereaved family in the Association, the Association shall present Three Hundred dollars (\$300) and the drinks as stated above.

## **ARTICLE XVIII**

### **CONDITIONS OF BENEFITS**

- (i) Only Members in good standing shall enjoy the benefits mentioned in Article XVII.
- (ii) Ex-members shall not receive any benefits whatsoever from the Association.

## **ARTICLE XIX**

### **VOTING RIGHTS**

- (i) Every member shall have the right to vote.
- (ii) All Members nominated to stand for an office shall have to win a simple majority vote.
- (iii) All Members, except the Chairman, shall have the right to vote on all issues. However, if the issue is about a particular member, then that member shall be excused and exempted from casting a vote.

## **ARTICLE XX**

### **AMENDMENTS**

- (i) The Constitution shall be amended as and when deemed necessary by Members of the Association.
- (ii) The Constitution shall only be amended by a vote of not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of Members present at a general meeting.
- (iii) This Constitution shall only be shared with Members of the Association and no other persons.