

CHARTER OF ASSOCIATION  
ON INTERNATIONAL FUNCTIONING  
OF THE  
BRAHMA KUMARIS

OCTOBER 26, 2013

# CHARTER OF ASSOCIATION ON INTERNATIONAL FUNCTIONING OF THE BRAHMA KUMARIS

## PREAMBLE

We, the Brahma Kumaris, aspire to:

1. Encourage a deeper understanding of the individual's place and purpose within the broader context of life;
2. Reaffirm the spiritual identity, inherent goodness, dignity, and worth of the human being;
3. Encourage a change of awareness, attitude, vision, and behaviour within the human family;
4. Foster a spirit of human brotherhood;
5. Support the betterment of the human condition.

The Brahma Kumaris service overseas, which began in 1971, now comprises a worldwide network of centres<sup>1</sup>. To further the aspirations above, we have resolved to formulate a Charter of Association on International Functioning of the Brahma Kumaris, which caters to the functioning of the Brahma Kumaris overseas (hereafter referred to as Brahma Kumaris – BKs.)

By becoming a signatory to this Charter, BK country organizations in all countries, and the centres they represent, align themselves with these aims, beliefs, and practices and agree to comply with the charter and all of its contents, except those that may be in deviation with the constitution of their BK Country Organization.

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<sup>1</sup> As listed in Addendum C

## CHAPTER 1 – AIMS

The aims of Brahma Kumaris are as follows:

- A. To offer learning in principles, values, and spiritual and moral understanding to those who are interested; to reaffirm the spiritual identity, inherent goodness, dignity, and worth of the human being; and to foster a spirit of universal brotherhood;
- B. To encourage transformation in individual awareness, attitude, and behaviour as the foundation of the overall advancement of the human condition throughout the world;
- C. To teach BK Raja Yoga meditation and related methods of personal development and positive thinking;
- D. To promote better understanding of and within the global human family through insight into the spiritual connections among the world's religions;
- E. To clarify spiritual and moral perspectives on contemporary issues of personal, community and global concerns, and to facilitate a greater awareness of corresponding rights and responsibilities to foster long-term, human-centred development. This would include moral and spiritual dimensions of education, the support of economic, social, environmental and human well-being and the promotion of equality.
- F. To enhance the skills, arts, and talents and higher levels of attainment and quality in personal, professional, and public life;

## Chapter 2 – BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

### ARTICLE 1 -- BELIEFS

#### 2.1

- A. God, the Supreme, is the divine parent of all human beings. As such we are all brothers and sisters through this eternal relationship with God. This forms the basis of brotherhood of the human family under the Fatherhood of God.
- B. Spirituality is the realization of the “self” as a soul with the common thread of understanding of one God and one world family.
- C. *Shrimat* (literally “elevated guidance”) is the spiritual knowledge of the Brahma Kumaris especially in regard to the Creator and creation, which forms the basis of the aims, beliefs and practices.

- D. All human souls are entitled to *Shrimat* by virtue of being eternal spiritual children of God, the Supreme Soul. Those who understand, accept, and embrace a life informed by *Shrimat* are known as Brahma Kumars and Brahma Kumaris (BKs).

## ARTICLE 2 – PRACTICES

### 2.2

*Shrimat* is expressed in four areas of practice:

1. Study and inculcation of spiritual knowledge as revealed by incorporeal God;
2. Practice of the remembrance of one incorporeal Supreme Soul, God, known as BK Raja Yoga meditation;
3. Inculcation of divine virtues and application of spiritual life skills in daily living;
4. Service to others with an attitude of benevolence and the awareness of the spiritual relationship of brotherhood.

## CHAPTER 3 – ACTIVITIES

We propose to undertake together the following activities to further our aims as stated in Chapter 1:

- A. To plan and coordinate activities and services to offer *Shrimat* to every human being in all parts of the world; [all spiritual services of the Brahma Kumaris are offered free of charge.]
- B. To formulate procedures and develop course materials to share expertise in a coherent and integrated way for broad human benefit;
- C. To synchronize efforts to serve beyond national boundaries to regional, intercontinental, and global levels;
- D. To empower BK country organizations<sup>2</sup> to collaborate with each other on projects of mutual interest for furtherance of our common aims as expressed in this Charter, and to meet collectively any financial obligations for these projects with the approval of the National Boards;
- E. To ensure that all activities are conducted with regard for and in alignment with the independent organizational, financial, and legal structures in the respective countries;

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<sup>2</sup> See Definitions in Addendum A

## CHAPTER 4 – BODIES OF THE BRAHMA KUMARIS

The following are the principal bodies that support the international functioning of the Brahma Kumaris: A Council of International Coordinators (CIC) and a Council of National Coordinators (CNC).

### 4.1

#### ARTICLE 1 – COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL COORDINATORS (CIC)

##### COMPOSITION

- A. The CIC is composed of seven permanent members of the Management Committee of the PBKIVV: the Administrative Head, the Additional Administrative Head, two Joint Administrative Heads, and three Executive Directors.
- B. Additional members of the CIC, by virtue of their office, are the six Regional Coordinators (RCs). There may be up to eight additional members of the CIC appointed by the Administrative Head in consultation with the Additional Administrative Head and the Joint Administrative Heads.
- C. Chief Spokesperson for the CIC is the Administrative Head or a person designated by her.
- D. The office of the CIC is located at the Brahma Kumaris Spiritual Headquarters in Mt. Abu, India.

##### FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE CIC

As the Brahma Kumaris seek to advance their aims beyond India, they shall do so with the oversight, endorsement, and support of the CIC.

The CIC shall do the following:

- A. Have advisory, consultative, and supporting roles in relation to overseas activities in all matters relating to the Brahma Kumaris' aims, beliefs, practices and methods of functioning. The Council may be called upon to develop, clarify, and interpret the same.
- B. Have powers to form committees and delegate tasks to those committees.
- C. Convene as a complete body, chaired by the Administrative Head at least one time per year, at the Brahma Kumaris Spiritual Headquarters at Mount Abu, India. Minutes of such meetings shall be kept at the

HCO<sup>3</sup>. The Administrative Head and Additional Administrative Head may invite any person to attend the meetings of the CIC.

- D. The CIC may designate any of its members to attend the Council of National Coordinators (CNC) meeting.
- E. Review reports from National Coordinators<sup>4</sup> (NCs) and/or National Coordinating Teams<sup>5</sup> (NCTs) on events, activities, and developments since the last such meeting.
- F. The CIC may be called upon to deliberate on matters submitted by the RCs.
- G. Consider any other matters conducive to the fulfilment of the Brahma Kumaris' aims.
- H. Communicate and consult throughout the year with the BK Country Organizations as required, directly or through the individual representatives in their regions.
- I. Assign such functions to the International Coordinating Office<sup>6</sup> (ICO), which is located in London, UK, as it may deem fit.

## 4.2

### ARTICLE 2 -- REGIONAL COORDINATORS AS A SUBSET OF THE CIC

#### COMPOSITION

- A. The Regional Coordinators (RCs) are the designated representatives for the Brahma Kumaris to coordinate activities in (1) Africa, (2) the Americas and Caribbean, (3) the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Baltic States, (4) Europe, the Middle East, and (5) The Asia-Pacific.
- B. Additional RCs, beyond the current six, may be appointed if increased activities of the Brahma Kumaris warrant such additions.
- C. Sub Regional Coordinators are appointed by the RC's in their regions to assist them in their responsibilities.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE RC

Regional Coordinators shall do the following:

- A. Have responsibility for pursuing the aims of the Brahma Kumaris (for Aims, see Chapter 1) by implementing and supervising the Brahma Kumaris' activities in their respective regions (for Activities, see Chapter 3);
- B. Inspire and unify the activities of the BK country organization<sup>7</sup> in each country within their region;
- C. Oversee, coordinate, and implement the Brahma Kumaris' affairs and activities in their respective regions;
- D. The members of the RC shall have as many meetings as necessary and at least one meeting per year as a whole body. The RC may invite any persons to attend this meeting of the whole.
- E. The ICO shall record and maintain minutes of the proceedings of the meetings. The approved copies of the minutes shall be forwarded to the offices of the CIC, the ICO and the HCO. All decisions and action points shall be communicated to the CNC and all concerned parties.
- F. Establish and maintain within their regions a Regional Coordinating Office (RCO) from where the Brahma Kumaris' activities within the region shall be coordinated and which shall serve as the primary interface between the Administrative Head in India and the BK country organizations in that region. Regional Coordinating Offices shall be located at Nairobi, Kenya; New York, USA; Moscow, Russia; London, UK ; and Sydney, Australia to coordinate activities in Africa, the Americas and Caribbean, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Baltic States, Europe, the Middle East, and The Asia-Pacific respectively.
- G. Determine the areas of responsibility of each National Coordinating Office<sup>8</sup> (NCO) in consultation with the CIC;
- H. An RC shall cease to serve as such, if found by the CIC not to be acting in conformity with the aims, beliefs, practices, and methods of functioning of the Brahma Kumaris.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## 4.3

### ARTICLE 3 – THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL COORDINATORS (CNC)

#### COMPOSITION

- A. The Council of National Coordinators (CNC) shall comprise all National Coordinators (NCs) and/or representatives of National Coordinating Teams (NCTs) having responsibility for the activities and affairs of BK country organizations in the respective countries. In cases in which a country is coordinated by a team, representatives will be designated to serve on the CNC in rotation.
  
- B. NCs and / or the NCTs are the representatives of the country to the CNC.

#### FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE CNC

- A. The members of the CNC shall have as many meetings as necessary in their respective countries, and at least one combined meeting per year as a whole body. The CNC may invite members of the CIC to attend this meeting of the whole body.
  
- B. The CNC shall record and maintain minutes of the proceedings of the meetings. The approved copies of the minutes shall be forwarded to the offices of the RCs, the CIC, and the HCO. Decisions of universal interest and action points shall be communicated to all concerned.

#### FUNCTION AND POWERS OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR (NC) / NATIONAL COORDINATING TEAMS (NCT)

- A. The National Coordinator is a Brahma Kumari or Brahma Kumar who furthers the aims of the Brahma Kumaris by inspiring, unifying, and coordinating the activities in that country. The NC function may be carried out by a National Coordinating Team (NCT).
  
- B. NC/NCT shall regularly consult with and report to their respective Regional Coordinators.
  
- C. The NCs/ NCT will work with their National Boards and cooperate with them to fulfil their duties as appropriate.
  
- D. The NCs/ NCT shall establish and maintain within the country a National Coordinating Office (NCO) from where the Brahma Kumaris' activities within the country shall be coordinated and which shall serve as the primary interface between the RC and the BK Centres in the country.

E. An NC or member of the NCT shall cease to serve as such if found by the CIC not to be acting in conformity with the aims, beliefs, practices, and methods of functioning of the Brahma Kumaris.

## CHAPTER 5 – ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BRAHMA KUMARIS IN A COUNTRY

### COMPOSITION

- A. Before registering as Brahma Kumaris in any country, the RC will have received a letter of intent from local interested persons (BK Group) stating that they desire to organize to further the aims, beliefs, and practices of the Brahma Kumaris and agree to follow shrimat and to be responsible legally and financially.
- B. The RC, in consultation with the Administrative Head or the Additional Administrative Head, may then give consent for establishment of such a legal entity in accordance with the laws and practices of that country. The BK Group (Ref. A above), shall adopt this charter.
- C. The RC, in consultation with the Administrative Head or the Additional Administrative Head, shall approve the appointment of a teacher to carry out the activities of the Brahma Kumaris in that country.
- D. This teacher is designated as National Coordinator (NC) with the dual responsibility of fulfilling the aims, beliefs, and practices of the Brahma Kumaris in the manner described in this Charter and also acting in complete compliance with the laws and practices of the country.
- E. The BK Group shall legally register as the Brahma Kumaris and in so doing create a National Board. This registration shall be compliant with the laws and practices of the country in which it is located.
- F. The newly constituted BK entity is responsible for fulfilling the aims, beliefs, and practices of the Brahma Kumaris and for acting in conformity with the laws and practices of the country in which it is located.
- G. As the BK presence in a country expands, the BK entity, known as the Brahma Kumaris COUNTRY NAME organization, shall expand to include additional BK Centres, and if appropriate, a National Coordinating Team.

### FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE BRAHMA KUMARIS IN A COUNTRY

- A. The Brahma Kumaris shall exist and function autonomously within each country, having authority to make decisions and having

responsibility for the results of those decisions, and always in accordance with the aims, beliefs, and practices as described in this Charter.

- B. Each BK Country Organization shall manage its own finances, assets, running and operating costs, and other liabilities, and the regulation and administration of local activities and affairs. Neither the PBKIVV, nor any BK Organization in another country, nor the Regional Coordinator (RC), nor the National Coordinator (NC/NCT), shall be responsible for any financial or other liability in respect to the said BK Country Organization. Nor shall anyone from the PBKIVV, nor any BK organization in another country, nor the RC nor the NC carry out activities in another country without consultation with the NC/ RC of that country.
- C. No fees or charges for the operation of the BK Country Organization shall be levied by the PBKIVV, Council of International Coordinators (CIC), or Council of National Coordinators (CNC) on its BK Country Organizations, and there shall not be any financial obligations between the PBKIVV, CIC, CNC, and other BK Country Organizations, except as mentioned in Chapter 3, paragraph D.
- D. All BK Centres in a country will operate within a single legal entity called a BK Country Organization and shall take care of their own finances, assets, liabilities, and running and operating costs. The exception to this will be in countries that require state or provincial registration and will therefore operate within that legal entity. In any case all BK Centres in a country will be coordinated by the designated NC / NCT.

## CHAPTER 6 – INTERPRETATION OF THE CHARTER

- A. In case of any ambiguity or uncertainty about the interpretation of the contents of this Charter or its applicability, the parties concerned shall resolve the same through mutual consultation in a manner consistent with *Shrimat* and the aims, principles, methods detailed in this Charter.
- B. If any ambiguity, uncertainty or differences relating to interpretation of the contents of this Charter or its applicability cannot be resolved within a reasonable time, or within four weeks, it shall be referred to the appropriate RC for resolution. If necessary the RC may refer the matter to the Administrative Head whose decision shall be considered final by all concerned. The Administrative Head may nominate a person or persons to do so on her behalf.

## CHAPTER 7 – DISSOCIATION FROM THE BRAHMA KUMARIS

In situations when it is determined that an individual or a group of individuals or a BK Centre is no longer acting in accordance with this Charter, the BK Country Organization in consultation with the RC, may decide to take appropriate action including dissociation from the Brahma Kumaris. If a BK Country Organization should be found to not be acting in accordance with this charter, the CIC may take such a decision. A decision for dissociation will take effect immediately.

## CHAPTER 8 – USE OF THE BRAHMA KUMARIS NAME AND LOGO

In order to distinguish ourselves and clearly identify our activities and materials in a coherent manner, we authorize and require that all of those conducting activities or creating materials in the name of the Brahma Kumaris use the Brahma Kumaris name and logo or the logo alone to indicate alignment with the aims, beliefs, and practices detailed in this Charter.

Anyone acting on behalf of a BK Country Organization shall do the following:

- A. Register at its own cost the Brahma Kumaris Network Branding as trademark(s) in the jurisdiction in which it operates;
- B. Protect Brahma Kumaris Intellectual Property Rights arising from its activities;
- C. Use the Network Branding only on materials produced in furtherance of the aims of Brahma Kumaris and not in any manner or context which could be detrimental to the reputation of the Brahma Kumaris;
- D. Design and produce all materials in ways consistent with the Network Branding Guidelines<sup>9</sup> and include the Network Branding;
- E. Protect the Network Branding, agreeing that it will not assign, licence, or otherwise dispose of its interest in the Network Branding unless it dissociates from the Brahma Kumaris;
- F. At such time as a BK Country Organization might disassociate from the Brahma Kumaris, it shall do the following:

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<sup>9</sup> See Addendum B, Network Branding Guidelines

- i. Immediately discontinue its use of the Network Branding;
- ii. Within 28 days return all materials bearing the Network Branding to the relevant RC or dispose of them in a way acceptable to the RC;
- iii. Within 28 days transfer all registered Local Marks and other Intellectual Property Rights incorporating Network Branding to the Brahma Kumaris via such BK Country Organization as may be nominated by the Administrative Head.<sup>10</sup>
- iv. In a similar way, should an individual, a group of individuals or a BK Centre dissociate from the Brahma Kumaris, they shall do the following:
  - v. Immediately discontinue its use of the Network Branding;
  - vi. Within 28 days return all materials bearing the Network Branding to the relevant NC/ NTC or dispose of them in a way acceptable to the NC/NCT;

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

## CHAPTER 9 – NON-INFRINGEMENT

Nothing in this Charter will impose on any BK Country Organization any obligation or restriction which is inconsistent or incompatible with any of the following:

- A. Their statutory duties, powers, or functions as outlined in their local governing documents;
- B. Laws of their respective countries.

## CHAPTER 10 – AMENDMENTS

This Charter may be amended by a resolution passed by the CIC with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority. Any amendment requires a 28 days notice to the members of the CIC. The resolution will be circulated to all concerned.

## Signatories to the Charter

We, the following members of the current Management Committee of the PBKIVV and Regional Coordinators of Brahma Kumaris overseas services hereby put below our signatures to formally adopt this Charter:

Brahma Kumari Janki, Administrative Head,

Brahma Kumari Hirdaya Mohini, Additional Administrative Head,

Brahma Kumari Ratan Mohini, Joint Administrative Head,

Brahma Kumar Nirwair, Executive Director,

Brahma Kumar Ramesh Shah, Executive Director,

Brahma Kumar Brij Mohan, Executive Director,

Brahma Kumari Chakradhari, Regional Coordinator, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Baltic States

Brahma Kumari Vedanti, Regional Coordinator, Africa

Brahma Kumari Mohini, Regional Coordinator, the Americas and Caribbean

Brahma Kumari Nirmala, Regional Coordinator, The Asia Pacific

Brahma Kumari Sudesh, Regional Coordinator, Europe

Brahma Kumari Jayanti, Regional Coordinator, Europe and the Middle East

## ADDENDUM A – DEFINITIONS

The words and phrases in the table below have the meanings set out alongside them when used in this Charter.

Council of International Coordinators (CIC)	The CIC is the highest Council for the international functioning of the Brahma Kumaris.  Additional members of the CIC, by virtue of their office, are the six Regional Coordinators (RC's).
Administrative Head	The highest office bearer within the PBKIVV is the Administrative Head. She is a dedicated Brahma Kumari, who embodies <i>Shrimat</i> at the highest level and upholds the aims, principles, policies, and practices of the Brahma Kumaris.
Additional Administrative Head	The Additional Administrative Head of the PBKIVV is also a dedicated Brahma Kumari, who embodies <i>Shrimat</i> at the highest level. The Additional Administrative Head is the support and successor to the Administrative Head.
Joint Administrative Head	A Joint Administrative Head of the PBKIVV is also a dedicated Brahma Kumari, who embodies <i>Shrimat</i> at the highest level. Joint Administrative Heads have such authorities and duties as are requested of them by the Administrative Head.
Executive Directors	The Executive Directors of the PBKIVV are dedicated Brahma Kumars who assist the Administrative Head, the Additional Administrative Head, and the Joint Administrative Heads in administration of the affairs of the Brahma Kumaris. They are ex officio Secretary General and Assistant Secretary Generals of the PBKIVV.
Management Committee	Together the Administrative Head, the Additional Administrative Head, the Joint Administrative Heads, and the Executive Directors form the Management Committee of the Council of International Coordinators (CIC).
<i>Shrimat</i>	<u>"Shrimat" is spiritual knowledge, elevated guidance, revealed by incorporeal God through Prajapita Brahma from 1937-1969 and subsequently through Brahma Kumari Hirdaya Mohini.</u>
Spiritual Headquarters Coordinating Office (HCO)	The Spiritual Headquarters Coordinating Office (HCO) serves as the office of the CIC. The HCO is

	situated at Mount Abu, <i>PIN-307501, Rajasthan, India.</i>
International Coordinating Office (overseas) (ICO)	The International Coordinating Office (overseas) (ICO) performs such functions as are assigned to it by the CIC. This office is situated in London (UK) and functioning to assist the Administrative Head.
Regional Coordinator (RC)	The Regional Coordinators (RCs) are dedicated Brahma Kumaris appointed to their positions by the Administrative Head, in consultation with the Additional Administrative Head and the Joint Administrative Heads. They serve in different regions of the world and have such authorities and duties as are delegated to them by the Administrative Head.
Regional Coordinating Office (RCO)	An office named as such comprising the Regional Coordinator and situated in the relevant region of operation.
Council of National Coordinators (CNC)	A council named as such and comprising all National Coordinators (NCs) and/or representatives of National Coordinating Teams (NCTs).
National Coordinator (NC)	A Brahma Kumari or a Brahma Kumar appointed as such by the Regional Coordinator in consultation with the Administrative Head
National Coordinating Team (NCT)	A team of Brahma Kumaris and Brahma Kumars appointed by the Regional Coordinator, in consultation with the Administrative Head.
BK Country Organization	The BK Country Organization is formally registered and recognised as required by the laws and practices of the country in which it is located.
National Coordinating Office (NCO)	An office named as such, comprising the BK Country Organization and situated in the relevant country of operation.
National Board	The National Board is the current board of the BK Country Organization.
BK Centre	A local site created by the BK Country Organization to further the aims and principles of the Brahma Kumaris.
Teacher	One who is appointed by the NC, in consultation with the RC, to teach the knowledge of the Brahma Kumaris. In the case of the first teacher in a country, who serves as the NC, that teacher is appointed by the RC, in consultation with the Administrative Head.

Student	Those who study, understand, accept, and embrace a life informed by <i>Shrimat</i> are known as BK students.
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## ADDENDUM B – NETWORK BRANDING GUIDELINES

To be developed.

To include the following:

Network Branding	The names, trademarks, and other Intellectual Property Rights relating to the consistent branding of BK country organizations within the international network, as set out in Addendum B.
Intellectual Property Rights	All patents, rights to inventions, utility models, copyright and related rights, trademarks, service marks, trade, business and domain names, rights in trade dress or get-up, rights in goodwill or to sue for passing off, unfair competition rights, rights in designs, rights in computer software, database right, topography rights, moral rights, rights in confidential information (including know-how and trade secrets), and any other intellectual property rights, in each case whether registered or unregistered and including all applications for and renewals or extensions of such rights, and all similar or equivalent rights or forms of protection in any part of the world.
Local Marks	Trademarks registered by individual BK country organizations to protect the Intellectual Property of the Brahma Kumaris.
Network Branding Guidelines	Guidelines on the use of the Network Branding as set out in Addendum B.

**ADDENDUM C – PARTIES AND REPRESENTATIVES**

7 CIC members as signatories and a list of all regions and BK Country Organizations and Centres as of the charter date

Name of Member:

Registered Address:

Address for notices if different from address above:

Company Number:

Charity Number (if applicable):

Name of Authorised Representative:

Email Address:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

ADDENDUM D – LANGUAGE OF ADOPTION OF CHARTER BY COUNTRY ORGANIZATIONS

The following language may be used by country organizations in adopting the charter of international functioning:

“Per the adoption of the Charter of Association of international Functioning of the Brahma Kumaris discussed in our meeting,

We appreciate that the charter has attempted to cover all areas of global interest taking into account all laws and requirements in the different countries of our incorporation,

We hereby agree to align with the spirit of the charter and adopt the charter and all of its contents, except those that may be in deviation with the constitution of our BK Country Organization.”