BRANCH IN GOOD STANDING POLICY

AAAIC BRANCH IN GOOD STANDING

1. Preamble and Purpose

ARISE AFRIKA ARISE INDEPENDENT CONGRESS ("AAAIC" or "the Party") recognises that its strength and legitimacy depend critically on the vitality, integrity and accountability of its branches. Branches are the Party's fundamental building blocks — the primary interfaces between the Party and the people.

This policy establishes the standards, procedures and consequences associated with being recognised and maintained as a **Branch in Good Standing**.

This Policy is designed to:

- Define clearly what constitutes a Branch in Good Standing;
- Set out rights and privileges attached to that status;
- Establish obligations and compliance standards for branches;
- Create transparent procedures for monitoring, remediation, sanctions and appeals; and
- Ensure alignment with the Party Constitution, statutory requirements, and democratic norms.

This Policy is aspirational and prescriptive — it is both a benchmark and a toolkit to support branches to thrive while protecting the Party's integrity, reputation and legal compliance.

2. Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

2.1. **Vision:** A Party built from the grassroots — every branch vibrant, accountable and empowered to advance democratic change for the people.

2.2. **Mission:** To maintain a network of branches that are democratic, financially transparent, operationally effective and legally compliant; and to ensure that branches deliver service, mobilise communities, and uphold the Party's values.

2.3. Guiding Principles:

2.3.1. Accountability: Branches shall be accountable to their members and the Party.

2.3.2. Transparency: Financial, electoral and governance activities must be transparent and auditable.

2.3.3. Democratic Participation: Respect for internal democracy and member rights.

2.3.4. Rule of Law: Compliance with national laws, the Electoral Commission regulations and the Party Constitution.

2.3.5. Inclusivity: Non-discrimination and promotion of equal participation.

2.3.6. Effectiveness: Branches must be active and deliver on political, civic, and organisational tasks.

2.3.7. Supportive Oversight: Use compliance tools to support and uplift branches rather than to punish unduly.

3. Scope and Application

3.1. This Policy applies to all formally constituted branches of AAAIC across all spheres (local, ward, municipal, provincial, and national research/liaison branches), their office-bearers, members, and to the Party's provincial/regional structures and NEC.

3.2. This Policy applies to:

- The process of establishing and recognising branches;
- The ongoing obligations for maintaining good standing;
- The processes for warning, remediation, sanction and appeal;
- The management of branch assets and records where a branch ceases to be in good standing.

3.3. This Policy complements and must be read in conjunction with the AAAIC Constitution, the Party's Financial Manual, the Code of Conduct and applicable

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national laws and regulations. Where there is inconsistency, the Constitution shall prevail.

4. Definitions and Interpretations

For the purposes of this Policy, unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply. Words importing the singular include the plural and vice versa.

4.1. **AAAIC / Party** — ARISE AFRIKA ARISE INDEPENDENT CONGRESS.

4.2. **Branch** — A local organisational unit of the Party formally constituted and recognised in accordance with the Party Constitution and this Policy.

4.3. **Branch in Good Standing** — A Branch that meets the criteria set out in Section 6 of this Policy and remains compliant with its obligations under this Policy and the Party Constitution.

4.4. **"Suspension"** means a temporary withdrawal of branch recognition pending corrective measures.

4.5. **"Dissolution"** means permanent termination of branch recognition.

4.6. **"Corrective Action Plan (CAP)"** means a structured remedial framework imposed to restore compliance.

4.7. **"Interim Administrative Team (IAT)"** means a temporary oversight body appointed during suspension.

4.8. **"Oversight Structure"** means the REC, PEC, or NEC exercising supervisory authority.

4.9. **"Financial Compliance"** means adherence to AAAIC financial policies and reporting standards.

4.10. **"Quorum"** means minimum attendance required to validate proceedings.

4.11. **"Non-Compliance"** means failure to meet mandatory policy standards.

4.12. **NEC** — National Executive Committee of AAAIC.

4.13. **PEC / REC / Regional Structure / Provincial Structure** — Provincial or Regional Executive Committee, being the intermediate structure between branches and the NEC.

4.14. **Officer-Bearer** — A member elected or appointed to hold an office at branch, regional or national level (e.g., Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Organiser).

4.15. **Dues / Subscriptions** — Financial contributions required of members and/or branches for the running of the branch and the Party.

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4.16. Financial Year — The Party's financial reporting period.

4.17. Recognition — Formal endorsement by the Party of a branch's compliance and entitlement to exercise rights including delegate representation and funding.

4.18. Derecognition — Formal removal or suspension of recognition of a branch as an organisational unit of the Party on account of persistent non-compliance or other specified grounds.

4.19. Suspension — Temporary removal of some or all rights and privileges pending investigation or remediation.

4.20. Forfeiture — Permanent loss of certain rights and/or assets as a sanction for breach of the Policy or Constitution.

4.21. Appeal Tribunal — A Party-established body empowered to hear and decide appeals arising from the application of this Policy.

GLOSSARY NOTE: Words and phrases not defined in this Policy shall have their ordinary meaning or, if context requires, the meaning given in the AAAIC Constitution.

5. Principles of a Branch in Good Standing

A Branch in Good Standing is:

5.1. *Democratically Constituted* — Constituted through transparent, democratic processes, with up-to-date membership registers and minutes of founding and succeeding meetings.

5.2. *Financially Transparent* — Maintains accurate books, submits timely financial reports, remits dues, and complies with fundraising rules.

5.3. *Operationally Active* — Holds regular meetings, participates in Party activities, conducts outreach, and meets minimum participation thresholds.

5.4. *Legally Compliant* — Abides by national laws, including but not limited to electoral laws, political funding legislation, labour, health and safety regulations where applicable.

5.5. *Ethically Upright* — Adheres to the Party Code of Conduct, avoids corruption, respects member rights and rejects discrimination.

5.6. *Accountable to Membership and Party Structures* — Cooperates with audits, monitors and reporting requirements, and engages constructively with higher Party structures.

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6. Criteria for Recognition as a Branch in Good Standing

To be recognised as a Branch in Good Standing, a branch must satisfy the following minimum criteria:

6.1. Formal Constitution and Registration:

6.1.1. Submit an application to the relevant PEC/REC with:

- A completed Branch Registration Form (see Annexure A);
- A copy of Branch Constitution / Terms of Reference (if adopted);
- Minutes of the founding meeting, showing duly elected office-bearers;
- An up-to-date membership register with signed membership forms.

6.1.2. The PEC/REC will verify the application and recommend recognition to the NEC or authorised body within 30 working days.

6.2. Membership Minimum and Diversity:

6.2.1. Minimum membership for recognition: The minimum membership recognition is **FIFTY (50) members** in a branch, with recommended baseline of **THIRTY (30) active** members with a commitment to grow and maintain membership.

6.2.2. Demonstrate representivity and inclusion (gender balance, youth representation, and non-discrimination) as far as the local context allows.

6.3. Regular Meetings and Governance:

6.3.1. Hold at least 10 branch meetings per annum (or 8 if geographically dispersed), including an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

6.3.2. Maintain proper minutes for all meetings and submit AGM minutes and the Annual Report to PEC/REC within 30 days of the AGM.

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6.3.3. Election of office-bearers must be conducted in terms of the Party Constitution and documented.

6.4. Financial Health and Transparency:

6.4.1. Maintain a separate branch bank account (or an approved alternative) in the branch's name or in the Party's endorsed format.

6.4.2. Submit quarterly financial statements to the PEC/REC and annual audited/independently reviewed statements to the NEC as per the Party Financial Manual.

6.4.3. Evidence of compliance with political funding disclosure rules and the Political Party Funding Act if applicable.

6.5. Compliance & Legal Requirements:

6.5.1. No pending criminal convictions for corruption, fraud or offences that materially affect the branch's functioning among the office-bearers as established by credible information or court records.

6.5.2. Compliance with local by-laws, municipal requirements (when operating community interventions), and other statutory obligations.

6.6. Active Participation in Party Processes:

6.6.1. Attendance and participation in PEC/REC meetings and Party elections;

6.6.2. Representation at Provincial and National conferences as prescribed.

6.7. Operational Capacity and Planning:

6.7.1. Submit a Branch Development Plan annually (Annexure B template) setting out political and organisational priorities.

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6.7.2. Demonstrate basic administrative capacity: functional communication channels, outreach activities, and a schedule of branch programs.

6.8. Membership Dues / Subscriptions:

Branches must ensure members are informed of dues and manage collection in a transparent manner; the branch must forward remittances to PEC/REC/NEC as per the Financial Manual.

7. Rights and Privileges of Branches in Good Standing

7.1. Delegated representation at Provincial, Regional and National Conferences.

7.2. Eligibility to nominate and elect branch members for internal Party processes and public offices where relevant.

7.3. Access to official Party communications, trainings, logistical support and limited financial assistance as per the Party Funding Prioritisation Framework.

7.4. Priority for Project Funding and Capacity Building initiatives administered by the Party.

7.5. Protection of branch property and access to Party legal support in disputes linked to official branch activities.

7.6. Eligibility to deploy trained branch organisers and access to the Party's volunteers database.

7.7. The right to raise motions and to participate in policy discussions and internal consultations.

7.8. A right to due process: prior notice of any proposed derecognition action and the right to be heard and appeal.

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8. Obligations and Maintenance of Good Standing

8.1. **Regular Meetings & Records:** Maintain minutes, attendance registers and copies of branch decisions.

8.2. **Financial Compliance:** Timely remittance of dues, transparent fundraising, adherence to donation acceptance rules, and submission of financial statements.

8.3. **Membership Management:** Keep accurate membership lists and update the PEC/REC within 14 days of significant changes (e.g., membership of 10% or more within a quarter).

8.4. **Programs & Outreach:** Implement at least [X] community-facing activities per quarter (e.g., voter education, community meetings, service interventions) and report on outcomes.

8.5. **Internal Democracy:** Ensure mechanisms for fair nomination processes and for resolving intra-branch disputes.

8.6. **Compliance with Party Standards:** Adhere strictly to the Party Code of Conduct, anti-corruption protocols, media and public statements policies.

8.7. **Cooperation with Audits & Monitors:** Provide access to books, records and premises when mandated by the PEC/REC or NEC for compliance checks.

8.8. **Training & Capacity Building:** Ensure at least 2 office-bearers attend Party training annually, where reasonably practicable.

8.9. **Reporting:** Submit required reports (financial, programmatic, membership) on schedule to enable periodic risk assessments.

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9. Financial Requirements and Fundraising Standards

9.1. **Banking & Accounts:** Branches must operate bank accounts in an approved manner and keep records of all transactions, supported by receipts and oversight by at least two authorised signatories (not related by blood or marriage where possible).

9.2. **Fundraising Rules:** Branch fundraising must comply with Party rules and national laws. No anonymous donations above the threshold established by Party policy and statutory law may be accepted.

9.3. **Donor Disclosure:** Branches must log donor information and value of donations, and submit disclosure returns in line with the Political Party Funding Act and Party Financial Manual.

9.4. **Prohibited Sources:** Branches shall reject donations from prohibited sources as defined in national law and Party policy (e.g., foreign government-linked donors if prohibited).

9.5. **Use of Funds:** Branch funds must be used in line with approved budgets and recorded activities. Personal use or diversion is grounds for immediate suspension and disciplinary action.

9.6. **Audit & Review:** Branches will be subject to random and structured audits. Failure to cooperate is an aggravating factor.

9.7. **Reserve and Liability Management:** Branches must maintain a minimum cash reserve equivalent to basic operating costs where feasible; liabilities must be approved and recorded.

10. Meetings, Governance and Internal Democracy

10.1. **Quorum and Decision-making:** Unless the Party Constitution provides otherwise, quorum for general branch meetings shall be 50% +1 of the registered members who are in good standing.

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10.2. Meeting Frequency: Branch committees meet monthly. The branch shall hold no fewer than [10] ordinary meetings per annum.

10.3. AGM Requirements: AGMs must include financial reporting, election or confirmation of office-bearers (where due), and approval of the Branch Development Plan.

10.4. Record Keeping: Branch secretaries must maintain an electronic and handwritten set of minutes, membership registers and supporting documentation for at least seven (7) years.

10.5. Elections: Internal elections must be free, fair and secret ballot. Observers from the PEC/REC may be present.

10.6. Rotation and Tenure: Office-bearers may serve for the terms prescribed by the Party Constitution. Re-election is subject to the constitution and tenure rules.

10.7. Conflict of Interest: Office-bearers must declare conflicts of interest, and recuse themselves from decisions where personal interests conflict.

11. Record-Keeping, Reporting and Transparency

11.1. Minimum Records: Minutes, membership register, bank statements, receipts, invoices, donor logs, asset registers, meeting attendance, disciplinary records.

11.2. Reporting Cadence: Quarterly financial reports, annual audited accounts, quarterly programmatic reports, immediate incident reports for significant events.

11.3. Public Disclosure: Non-sensitive aggregated branch-level data (e.g., membership numbers, basic financial health indicators) shall be published annually for transparency.

11.4. Data Retention: All records retained for a minimum of seven (7) years, unless law requires a longer period.

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12. Compliance with Laws, Party Constitution and Codes of Conduct

12.1. Branches must at all times act in compliance with national law, the AAAIC Constitution, and Party Codes. In case of conflict, the Constitution and national law override this Policy.

12.2. Any branch or office-bearer charged with a criminal offence must notify the PEC/REC within 14 days of being charged. Failure to do so is an offence under Party disciplinary rules.

12.3. Members convicted of corruption, fraud or other serious offences related to their office may be subject to suspension and removal.

13. Monitoring, Audits and Assessments

13.1. **Risk-Based Monitoring:** PEC/REC and NEC will implement a risk-based monitoring system — high-risk branches receive priority monitoring and support.

13.2. **Scheduled and Random Audits:** Branches are subject to scheduled audits (annual) and random audits. Audits may be financial, governance, or programmatic.

13.3. **Assessment Scores & Ratings:** The Party will maintain a Branch Health Index (BHI) scoring system based on criteria such as governance, finances, activities and membership engagement; tiers include Green (Good Standing), Amber (At Risk) and Red (Not in Good Standing).

13.4. **Publication of Scores:** Aggregate regional data will be published internally; individual branch scores communicated confidentially with recommendations.

14. Early Warning Indicators and Support Mechanisms

14.1. **Early Warning Indicators (EWIs):** Examples include missed remittances, two consecutive missed meetings, failure to submit financial reports, unexplained decreases in membership, adverse media coverage, or disputes unresolved for more than 90 days.

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14.2. Support Mechanisms: On identification of EWIs, the PEC/REC will provide:

- Targeted capacity building;
- Financial management training;
- Temporary administrative support (e.g., help with banking, bookkeeping);
- Mediation and conflict resolution services.

14.3. Time-bound Remediation Plans: Branches will be placed on a remedial plan with clear deliverables, milestones and deadlines (no less than 30 days and no more than 180 days depending on the issue).

15. Failure to be in Good Standing — Notice, Correction and Remediation

15.1. Classification: Failure to meet criteria will result in classification as:

- **Amber (At Risk):** Serious but remediable deficits.
- **Red (Not in Good Standing):** Material failures requiring urgent intervention.

15.2. Notice: The PEC/REC shall issue a written Notice of Non-Compliance detailing findings, the classification, and a remedial plan within 14 working days of decision.

15.3. Remedial Window: Branches have an initial remedial period (30–90 days) to implement corrective measures. The period is determined by the PEC/REC depending on the severity.

15.4. Interim Measures: During remediation, limited privileges may be suspended (e.g., eligibility to receive discretionary funds, or to send delegates) but fundamental member rights shall be preserved.

15.5. Failure to Comply: If the branch fails to meet the remedial conditions within the agreed timeframe, the PEC/REC may escalate to suspension or derecognition.

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16. Sanctions and Consequences for Persistent Non-Compliance

16.1. Range of Sanctions:

- Official Warning / Censure;
- Suspension of certain rights (e.g., delegate voting, access to party funds or training);
- Imposition of a corrective oversight team or administrator;
- Temporary takeover of financial administration;
- Derecognition (loss of official status);
- Forfeiture of branch-held funds only in extreme cases after due process and where consistent with law;
- Referral for criminal investigation where evidence suggests offences.

16.2. Proportionality: Sanctions must be proportionate to the breach, consistent and non-arbitrary. Mitigating and aggravating factors will be considered.

16.3. Public Statement: Any public communication about sanctions will be measured, compliant with member privacy rights, and avoid prejudicial statements.

16.4. Special Sanctions for Financial Misconduct: Where misappropriation is evident, the PEC/REC may: freeze accounts, require independent forensic audit, suspend office-bearers pending investigation, and refer matters to law enforcement.

17. Appeals, Review and Reinstatement Procedures

17.1. Right to Appeal: Branches may appeal decisions (classification, sanction, derecognition) to the Appeal Tribunal within 21 days of receipt of the Notice.

17.2. Composition of Appeal Tribunal: Independent of the PEC/REC, constituted in line with Party rules. Members must be impartial and may include national-level office-bearers not involved in the original decision.

17.3. Appeal Process: Appeals must be lodged in writing, include grounds and supporting evidence. The Tribunal shall hear the appeal within 30 days and issue a reasoned decision.

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17.4. Interim Relief: An appellant may request that sanctions be stayed pending determination; the Tribunal will consider such requests on urgency and merits.

17.5. Reinstatement Criteria: Following remediation and successful appeal, a branch may be reinstated upon satisfying all outstanding requirements, fully addressing any financial deficits and completing a probationary period of 6–12 months.

17.6. Conditions on Reinstatement: The PEC/REC may impose conditions such as probationary reporting, oversight appointments, or capacity-building milestones.

18. Special Circumstances: Emergency Measures and Suspension

18.1. Grounds for Immediate Suspension: Acts that pose immediate risk to the Party (e.g., violent conduct, proven large-scale fraud, public advocacy for unlawful activity) justify immediate suspension pending inquiry.

18.2. Temporary Administrators: The NEC may appoint a Temporary Administrator to manage branch affairs for a defined period (no more than 180 days unless extended with due process).

18.3. Human Rights Safeguards: All emergency measures shall be consistent with constitutional rights, including the right to just administrative action, to be heard, and to fair process.

19. Interaction with External Stakeholders and Regulators

19.1. Compliance with Statutory Reporting: Branches and the Party must comply with statutory reporting obligations including those under the Political Party Funding Act, electoral regulations, and tax laws.

19.2. Cooperation with Law Enforcement: Where criminality is suspected, the Party will cooperate with investigators while ensuring due process for individuals.

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19.3. Media and Public Communications: Only authorised Party spokespeople may make public statements regarding a branch's status; branches must refrain from unilateral public comments about disciplinary or derecognition processes.

20. Dispute Resolution and Mediation at the Branch Level

20.1. Encouraging Internal Mediation: Branches are required to attempt internal dispute resolution mechanisms before escalation, including mediation by PEC/REC-appointed mediators.

20.2. Escalation Timeline: Unresolved disputes beyond 60 days may be escalated to PEC/REC for intervention.

20.3. Confidentiality: Mediation proceedings are confidential and without prejudice to formal disciplinary actions if mediation fails.

21. Role of the Provincial/Regional and National Structures

21.1. PEC/REC Responsibility: Monitor branch health, verify applications for recognition, implement remedial plans, and recommend derecognition where necessary.

21.2. NEC Responsibility: Final approval for major sanctions including derecognition and appointment of temporary administrators; policy oversight and resource allocation for branch support.

21.3. Delegation of Powers: The NEC may delegate administrative powers to PECs/RECs for routine recognition and supervision but must reserve strategic actions.

21.4. Capacity Support: PEC/REC must provide training, toolkits, and resource packs to assist branches to comply with policy standards.

22. Protection of Assets, Records and Member Rights During Processes

22.1. Asset Safeguards: When a branch is under review, steps must be taken to preserve assets and records. Temporary trusteeship over funds may be instituted with clear reporting requirements.

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22.2. Member Rights Preserved: Ordinary membership rights (e.g., freedom of expression within the Party, access to basic services) shall be preserved unless legitimately restricted through due process.

22.3. No Prejudicial Transfers: Transfer of branch assets or substitution of signatories requires transparent approval and documentation.

23. Confidentiality, Privacy and Data Protection

23.1. Personal Data: Branches must handle member data in compliance with national privacy laws and Party data policies.

23.2. Sensitive Investigative Material: Investigative records and personal information gained during audits and disciplinary processes must be stored securely and disclosed only on a need-to-know basis.

24. Transitional Provisions and Grandfathering

24.1. Existing Branches: Branches in existence at the time of adoption of this Policy shall have 12 months to align with new requirements unless otherwise specified for critical compliance items (e.g., financial reporting) where 6 months may apply.

24.2. Grandfathering: Where existing constitutional or structural features conflict with this Policy, the NEC may grant time-limited grandfathering arrangements subject to a remedial plan.

25. Implementation, Review and Amendment Procedures

25.1. Implementation: NEC to issue an Implementation Directive within 30 days of policy adoption, including forms, templates and training schedules.

25.2. Review Cycle: Formal policy review every 24 months; minor amendments as required by the NEC.

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25.3. Amendments: Changes to this Policy must be approved by the NEC and ratified at the next National Council or National Conference where required by the Constitution.

25.4. Monitoring of Effectiveness: Annual implementation report from the PECs/RECs to the NEC summarising branch health and systemic challenges.

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ANNEXURE A

BRANCH REGISTRATION APPLICATION FORM

(To be submitted to the Regional Executive Council (REC), where established;
or to the Provincial Executive Council (PEC), where no REC exists;
or to the National Executive Council (NEC), where no PEC exists.)

SECTION 1:

1. ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

1.1. Proposed Branch Name: _____

1.2. Ward Number: _____

1.3. Municipality: _____

1.4. District (if applicable): _____

1.5. Province: _____

1.6. Physical Area and Address of Operation (geographical description):

_____

_____

_____

1.7. Branch Contact Details:

Primary Contact Person: _____

Cellphone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

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SECTION 2:

2. FOUNDING MEETING DETAILS

2.1. Date of Founding Meeting:_____

2.2. Venue of Founding Meeting:_____

2.3. Total Members Present at Founding Meeting: (No less than TEN (10) _____

2.4. Confirmation of Quorum Achieved (Yes/No):

2.5. Was the AAAIC Branch Constitution adopted at the founding meeting? (Yes/No):

2.6 Certified copy of founding meeting minutes attached? (Yes/No):

☐ Yes

☐ No

SECTION 3:

3. ELECTED OFFICE BEARERS

(All office bearers must attach certified copies of their ID documents and sign below.)

3.1. Chairperson

Full Names:_____

ID Number: _____

Residential Address: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____

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3.2. Deputy Chairperson

Full Names: _____

ID Number: _____

Contact Number: _____

Signature: _____

3.3. Secretary

Full Names: _____

ID Number: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____

3.4. Deputy Secretary

Full Names: _____

ID Number: _____

Signature: _____

3.5. Treasurer

Full Names: _____

ID Number: _____

Contact Number: _____

Signature: _____

3.6. Additional Committee Members (if applicable)

(Attach additional pages if necessary.)

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SECTION 4:

4. MEMBERSHIP REGISTER

The branch must attach:

- A **signed membership register** containing:
    - Full Names
    - ID Numbers
    - Physical Addresses
    - Contact Numbers
    - Signatures

Minimum membership threshold as prescribed in the AAAIC Constitution must be met.

Certification by Branch Secretary:

I hereby certify that the attached membership register is accurate and reflects active members who have voluntarily joined AAAIC.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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