

Resolution No. 136-37 (COR)

Introduced by

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Relative to recognizing the Marianas Bahá'í Faith Community on their Forty-sixth (46th) Convention; and commending the New National Spiritual Assembly on their election and the Bahá'ís for their contributions to the spiritual wellness of the island of Guam.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES OF *I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN*:

WHEREAS, the Bahá'í Faith promotes the unity of humankind through diversity. It calls for the spiritual renewal of the individual and the community, loyalty to government, and adherence to the laws of the country. It promotes the equality of men and women and the eradication of all prejudice. It emphasizes the importance of education and wholeheartedly seeks the advancement of children and youth; and

WHEREAS, the Bahá'í Faith has no clergy; it is through the efforts of its members, in conversation with their friends and neighbors, that the message of the Faith is shared. Bahá'ís open their homes to everyone seeking information about the Faith and welcome everyone to its classes on spiritual transformation, prayer, and the meaning of life and death; to devotional meetings; and to special classes for children and youth on spiritual development; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 1954, the Bahá'í Faith was first brought to Guam by Robert Powers Jr. and Cynthia and Edgar "Olie" Olson. Cynthia R. Olson arrived in Guam on May 2, 1954, in response to the call from Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, and settled in *Inaláhan*, becoming the first permanent Bahá'í Settler in the Mariana Islands. This began the loving relationship between the Bahá'í Community and the people of the Mariana Islands. The Faith was not entirely unknown to the Mariana Islands as the Faith had only been introduced to the Manibusan family in *Sinajana* in 1936 by Mrs. Mary Sweyze, who had joined her husband, scientist Dr. Otto Herman Sweyze, doing a study of the insects of Guam. Additionally, during the closing period of World War II, around 1945, Mr. Paul Pettit, a member of a "special mission" of the United States Armed Forces, held a conference on Saipan with two (2) other young servicemen, Joseph Peter and Joseph Tierro, both based on Saipan; and

WHEREAS, in November of that same year, the first Bahá'í books were made available to island libraries. The Bahá'í Fund was also established, and contributions were soon sent to the Bahá'í International Fund in addition to a special fund to assist the persecuted Bahá'ís in Iran; and

WHEREAS, in March of 1955, a local resident made the first declaration of his belief in Bahá'u'lláh, which was followed by the first mention of the Bahá'í Faith on KUAM radio, which was made possible by Cynthia Olson as part of the "Calendars of the World" program. In 1956, Angelina Isezaki of *Humátak* prepared the first *CHamoru* translation of Bahá'í Writings, "Blessed is the Spot"; and

WHEREAS, the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Guam was formed in 1956, and was officially incorporated in April of 1957, and the first National Teaching Committee for Micronesia, appointed by the Hawaiian National Spiritual Assembly as a precursor to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the region, was subsequently formed and based in Guam; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Mariana Islands was elected for the first time. This institution exercises legislative, judiciary, and executive authority in the affairs of the Bahá'í community in the Mariana Islands, and in 1980, the Bahá'ís opened the National Bahá'í Center in *Maloloj, Inaláhan*, and the Center was later moved to *Hagátña* in 2002; and

WHEREAS, Bahá'ís have been members of the Marianas community for nearly seventy (70) years. Bahá'ís on Guam have traveled and successfully spread Bahá'u'lláh's teachings throughout the islands of Micronesia, forming four (4) Spiritual Assemblies: two (2) in Pohnpei, one (1) in Chuuk, and another in Majuro. In total, *CHamorus*, Carolinians, and other ethnic groups represented in the Marianas' population make up the Bahá'í Community today and continue the work begun by the first resident Bahá'ís on Guam; and

WHEREAS, in the presence of the Hand of the Cause, Dr. Mohajer, who represented the Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Mariana Islands consisting of Guam, Saipan, Rota and Tinian was formed in 1978. Since then, every year the Baha'is elect their National Spiritual Assembly like in every other country of the world; and

WHEREAS, there is no class of ecclesiastics or clergy in the Baha'í Faith. Instead, Baha'is use an administrative framework provided by their prophet founder Bahá'u'lláh. In his writings, he detailed a system of elected lay councils at the local, national, and international levels to oversee the Faith. Once a year in every national Bahá'í community, Baha'is who are eighteen (18) years of age and older enjoy the right to vote in Baha'í elections, although only Baha'is who are twenty-one (21) years of age or older can be elected and serve as members of Baha'í administrative institutions. All Baha'í elections are held by secret ballot and plurality vote. Baha'í elections have no candidacies, nominations, partisanship, campaigning, or electioneering; and

WHEREAS, the members of the National Assembly of Mariana Islands just returned from Holyland where they participated with over one hundred seventy-six (176) other nations to elect the members of the Universal House of Justice. The Convention that is held on June 17, 2023 marks the Forty-sixth (46th) Convention for the Mariana Islands, as well as the beginning of the second (2nd) year of the Nine (9) Year Plan, which is an important step for the Guam cluster in their endeavor to reach the third (3rd) milestone where hundreds serve thousands in building a vibrant community, growing spiritually and materially in fulfillment of the vision of Bahá'u'llah for the world; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Committee on Rules of *I Mina'trentai Siette Na Liheslaturan Guåhan* does hereby, on behalf of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* and the people of Guam, recognize the Marianas Bahá'í Faith Community on their Forty-sixth (46th) Convention, and commend the New National Spiritual Assembly on their election and the Bahá'ís for their contributions to the spiritual wellness of the island of Guam; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Speaker and the Chairperson of the Committee on Rules certify, and the Legislative Secretary attest to, the adoption hereof, and that copies of the same be thereafter transmitted to Manouchehr Sabeti, to Jenny Duenas Sarmiento, to Eliria San Nicolas Sabeti, Secretary General of the National Assembly; to members of the Marianas Bahá'í Community; and to the Honorable Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero, *I Maga'hagan Guåhan*

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES OF *I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN* ON THE 15TH DAY OF JUNE 2023.


THERESE M. TERLAJE
Speaker


CHRIS BARNETT
Chairperson, Committee on Rules


AMANDA L. SHELTON
Legislative Secretary

