

Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of the United Nations

Rule Numbers Reference the Official Rules Adopted by Resolution 173(II) of the General Assembly on November 17, 1947

I. SESSIONS

Regular Sessions

Date of Meeting

Rule 1

The General Assembly shall meet every year in the regular session date established by the Secretary-General.

Duration of Session

Rule 2

On the recommendation of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly shall, at the beginning of each session, fix a closing date for this session.

Place of Meeting

Rule 3

Sessions shall be held at the Headquarters of the United Nations unless convened in the pursuance of a decision of the Secretary-General.

Rule 4

Any member of the United Nations may, at least one hundred and twenty days before the date fixed for the opening of a regular session, request that the session be

held elsewhere than at the Headquarters of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall

immediately communicate the request to the other members of the United Nations. If within thirty days of this communication the Secretary-General approves this request, the session shall be held accordingly.

Notification of Session

Rule 5

The Secretary-General shall notify the members of the United Nations at least sixty days in advance of the opening of a regular session.

Adjournment of Session

Rule 6

The General Assembly may decide at any session to adjourn temporarily and resume its meeting at a later date.

Special Sessions

Summoning by the General Assembly

Rule 7

The General Assembly may fix a date for a special session.

Summoning on Request from the Security Council or Members

Rule 8

(a) Special Sessions of the General Assembly shall be held within fifteen days of the receipt by the Secretary-General of a request for such a session from the Security Council, or a request from a majority of the Members of the

United Nations, or of the concurrence of a majority of Members as provided in rule 9.

(b) Emergency special sessions pursuant to General Assembly resolution 377 A (V) shall be convened within two hours of the receipt by the Secretary-General of a request for such a session from the Security Council, on the vote of any nine members thereof, or a request from a majority of the Members of the United Nations expressed by vote in the Interim Committee or otherwise, or of the concurrence of a majority of Members as provided in rule 9.

Request by Members

Rule 9

(a) Any Member of the United Nations may request the Secretary-General to summon a Special Session. The Secretary-General shall immediately inform the other Members of the United Nations of the request and inquire as to whether they concur in it. If within thirty days of the communications of the Secretary-General a majority of members concur in the request, a Special Session of the General Assembly shall be summoned in accordance with rule 8.

(b) This rule shall apply to a request by any Member for an emergency Special Session pursuant to resolution 377 A (V). In such case the Secretary-General shall communicate with the other Members by the most expeditious means of communication available.

Notification of Session

Rule 10

The Secretary-General shall notify the Members of the United Nations, at least three hours in advance, of the opening of a Special Session summoned at the request of the Security Council, and, at least two hours in advance, in the case of a request of a majority of the Members or the concurrence of the majority in the request of any Member. In the case of an emergency session convened pursuant to rule 9 (b), the Secretary-General shall notify the members of the United Nations at least one hour in advance of the opening session.

Regular and Special Sessions

Notification to Other Bodies

Rule 11

Copies of the notice summoning each session shall be address to all the other principle organs of the United nations and to the specialized agencies referred to in Article 57, paragraph 2, of the Charter.

II. AGENDA

Regular Sessions

Provisional Agenda

Rule 12

The provisional agenda for the regular session shall be draw up by the Secretary-General and communicated to the Members of the United Nations at least six days before the opening of the session.

Rule 13

The provisional agenda of a regular session shall include:

(a) The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization;

(b) Reports form the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, specialized agencies (where such reports are called for under agreements entered into);

(c) All items the inclusion of which has been ordered by the General Assembly at a previous session;

(d) All items proposed by the other principle organs of the United Nations;

(e) All items proposed by any member of the United Nations pursuant to rule 4;

(f) All items pertaining to the budget for the next financial year and the report on the accounts for the last financial year;

(g) All items which the Secretary General deems necessary to put before the General Assembly;

(h) All items proposed under Article 35, paragraph 2, or the Charter by States not Members of the United Nations.

Special Sessions

Provisional Agenda

Rule 16

The provisional agenda of a special session summoned at the request of the Secretary-General shall be communicated to the Members of the United Nations at least three hours before the opening of the session. The provisional agenda of a special session summoned at the request of a majority of the Members, or the concurrence of the Majority at the request of any Member, shall be communicated at least two hours before the opening of the session. The provisional agenda of an emergency special session shall be communicated to the Members of the United Nations simultaneously with the communication summoning the session.

Rule 17

The provisional agenda for a special session shall consist only of those items proposed for consideration in the request for the holding of the session,

Supplementary Items

Rule 18

Any Member of principal organ of the United Nations or the Secretary-General may, at least one hour before the time fixed for the opening of a special session, request the inclusion of supplementary items in the agenda. Such items shall be placed on the supplementary list which shall be communicated to the Members of the United Nations as soon as possible

Additional Items

Rule 19

During a special session, items on the supplementary list and additional items may be added to the agenda by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. During an

emergency special session additional items concerning the matters dealt with in resolution 377 A (v) may be added to the agenda by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting.

Regular and Special Sessions

Explanatory Memoranda

Rule 20

All items proposed for inclusion in the agenda shall be accompanied by an explanatory memorandum and, if possible, by basic documents or by a draft resolution.

Approval of the Agenda

Rule 21

At each session the provisional agenda and the supplementary list shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval as soon as possible after the opening session.

Amendment and Deletion of Items

Rule 22

Items on the agenda may be amended or deleted by the General Assembly by a majority of the members present and voting.

III. DELEGATIONS

Composition

Rule 25

The delegation of a Member shall consist of not more than five representatives and five alternate representatives, and as many advisors, experts and persons of similar status as may be required by the delegation.

Alternates

Rule 26

An alternate representative may act as a representative upon designation by the Chairman of the Delegation.

IV. CREDENTIALS

Submission of Credentials

Rule 27

The credential of representatives and the names of members of the delegation shall be submitted to the Secretary-General if possible not less than one week before the date fixed for the opening of the session. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Credentials Committee

Rule 28

A credentials Committee shall be appointed at the beginning of each session. It shall consist of three members: the Secretary-General, Undersecretary General, and the President of the General Assembly. The committee shall elect its own officers. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report without delay.

Provisional Admission to a Session

Rule 29

Any representative to whose admission a Member has made objection shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other representatives, until the Credentials Committee has reported its decision.

V. PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

Appointment

Rule 31

The Secretary-General shall appoint a president who shall hold office until the close of a session at which they are appointed. *Acting President*

Rule 32

If the President finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting or any part thereof, he shall appoint a Vice-President to take his place.

Rule 33

A Vice-President acting as President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

Replacement of the President

Rule 34

If the President is unable to perform his functions, a new President shall be appointed for the unexpired term.

General Powers of the President

Rule 35

In addition to exercising the powers which are conferred upon him elsewhere by these rules, the President shall declare the opening and closing of each plenary meeting, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions and announce decisions. He shall rule on points of order, and subject to those rules, shall have complete control at any meeting and over the maintenance of order thereat. The President may, in the course of the discussion of an item, propose to the General Assembly the limitation of time to be allowed to the speaker, the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak on any question, the closure of the list of speaker or the closure of debate. He may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting or the adjournment of debate on the item under discussion.

Rule 36

The President, in the exercise of his functions, remains under the authority of the General Assembly.

The President Shall Not Vote

Rule 37

The President, or Vice-President acting as President, shall not vote.

VI. SECRETARIAT

Duties of the Secretary-General

Rule 38

The Secretary-General shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the General Assembly, its committees and sub-committees. He may designate a member of the staff to act in his place at these meetings.

Rule 39

The Secretary-General shall provide and direct the staff required by the General Assembly and committees or subsidiary organs which it may establish.

Duties of the Secretariat

Rule 47

The secretariat shall receive, translate, print, and distribute documents, reports and resolutions of the General Assembly, its committees and organs; interpret speeches made at the meetings, prepare, print and circulate the summary records of the session; have the custody and proper preservation of the documents in the archives of the General Assembly; publish the report of the meetings; distribute all documents of the General Assembly to the Members of the United Nations, and, generally, perform all other work which the General Assembly may require.

Annual Report of the Secretary-General

Rule 48

The Secretary-General shall make an annual report, and such supplementary reports as are required, to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization. He shall communicate the annual report to the Members of the United Nations at least fourteen days before the opening of the session.

Notification Under Article 12 of the Charter

Rule 49

The Secretary-General, with the consent of the Security Council, shall notify the General Assembly at each session of any matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security which are being dealt with by the Security Council, and shall similarly notify the General Assembly, or the Members of the United Nations if the General Assembly is not in session, immediately when the Security Council ceases to deal with such matters.

VIII. LANGUAGES

Official and Working Languages

Rule 51

English shall be the official language of the General Assembly, its committees and subcommittees. English shall be the working language.

Interpretation in Other Languages

Rule 54

Any representative may make a speech in a language other than the official language. In this case, he shall himself provide for interpretation into the working language.

Language of Summary Records

Rule 56

Summary record shall be drawn up as soon as possible in the official language.

Language of Journal

Rule 58

The Journal of the General Assembly shall be issued in the working language.

Language of Resolutions and Important Documents

IX. RECORDS

Resolutions

XII. PLENARY MEETINGS

Rule 61

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly shall be communicated by the Secretary-General to the Members of the United Nations within sixty days after the termination of the session.

X. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ITS COMMITTEES, AND SUBCOMMITTEES

General Principles

Rule 62

The meetings of the General Assembly and its main committees shall be held in public unless the body concerned decides that exceptional circumstances require the meeting to be held in private. Meetings of other committees and subcommittees shall also be held in public unless the body concerned decides otherwise.

Private Meetings

Rule 63

All decisions that the General Assembly makes at a private meeting shall be announced at an early public meeting of the General Assembly. At the close of each private meeting of the Main Committees, other committees and subcommittees, the chairman may issue a communiqué through the Secretary-General

XI. MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION

Invitation of Silent Prayer or Meditation

Rule 64

Immediately after the opening of the first plenary meeting and immediately preceding the closing of the final plenary meeting of each session of the General Assembly, the president shall invite the representative to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

Conduct of Business

Emergency Special Sessions

Rule 65

Notwithstanding the provisions of any other rule and unless the Secretary-General decides otherwise, the Assembly, in case of an emergency special session, shall convene in plenary session only and proceed directly to consider the item proposed for consideration in request for holding the session.

Report of the Secretary-General

Rule 66

Proposals to refer any portion of the report of the Secretary-General to one of the Main Committees without debate shall be decided on by the General Assembly.

Reference to Committees

Rule 67

The General Assembly shall not, unless it decides otherwise, make a decision upon any item on the agenda until it has received the report of a committee on that item.

Discussion of Committee Reports

Rule 68

Discussion of a report of a Main Committee in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly shall take place if at least one third of the members present and voting at the plenary meeting consider such a discussion to be necessary. Any proposal to this effect shall not be debated, but shall immediately be put to a vote.

Quorum

Rule 69

At the beginning of the opening session, the President of the General Assembly shall call

the role. A majority of the Members present at the opening session shall constitute a quorum.

Speeches

Rule 70

No representative may address the General Assembly without having previously obtained permission of the President. The President may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relative to the subject under discussion. At the end of a representatives remarks, he may yield the remainder of his time to another delegate.

Precedence

Rule 71

The Chairman and the Rapporteur of a committee may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusion arrived at by their committee.

Statements by the Secretariat

Rule 72

The Secretary-General, or a member of the Secretariat designated to represent him, may at any time, make either oral or written statements to the General Assembly concerning any question under consideration by it.

Points of Order

Rule 73

During discussion of any matter, a representative may, at any time, rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately be decided by the President in accordance with the rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of a President. The appeal shall immediately be put to a vote and the President's ruling shall stand unless over-ruled by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Time Limit on Speeches

Rule 74

The General Assembly may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on any question. When debate is limited and a representative has spoken his allotted time, the President shall call him to order without delay.

Closing of List of Speakers

Rule 75

During the course of debate the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the General Assembly, declare the list closed. He may however, accord the right of reply to any Member if a speech delivered after he has declared the list closed makes this desirable.

Adjournment of Debate

Rule 76

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one representative may speak in favor of, and one against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to a vote. The President may limit the time allowed to speakers under this rule.

Closure of Debate

Rule 77

A representative may at any time move the closure of debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified his wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of debate shall be accorded to only two speakers opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be put immediately to a vote. If the General Assembly is in favor of the closure, the President shall declare the closure of debate. The President may limit the time allowed to speakers under this rule.

Suspension or Adjournment of the Meeting

Rule 78

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the suspension or adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated, but shall immediately be put to the vote. The president may limit the time to be allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment of the meeting.

Order of Procedural Motions

Rule 79

Subject to rule 73, the following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting:

- (a) To suspend the meeting;
- (b) To adjourn the meeting;
- (c) To adjourn the debate on the item under discussion;
- (d) For the closure of debate on the item under discussion.

Proposals and Amendments

Rule 80

Proposals and amendments shall normally be introduced in writing and handed to the Secretary-General or his representatives, who shall circulate copies to the delegations. As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting. The President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments or as of motions as to the procedure even though these amendments and motions have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

Decisions on Competence

Rule 81

Subject to rule 79, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the General

Assembly to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a vote is taken on the proposal in question.

Withdrawal of Motions

Rule 82

A motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has commenced, provided that the motion has not been amended. A motion which has thus been withdrawn may be reintroduced by any Member.

Reconsideration of Proposals

Rule 83

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the motion, after which it shall be immediately put to the vote.

Voting

Voting Rights

Rule 84

Each Member of the General Assembly shall have one vote.

Two-Thirds Majority

Rule 85

Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of Members to the Economic and Social Council, the election of Members to the Trusteeship Council in accordance with paragraph 1 c of Article 86 of the Charter, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of rights and privileges of Membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relation to the operation of

the Trusteeship System, and budgetary questions.

Rule 86

Decisions of the General Assembly on amendments to proposals related to important questions, and on parts of such proposals put to vote separately, shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting.

Simple Majority

Rule 87

Decisions of the General Assembly on questions other than those provided for in rule 85, including determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the Members present and voting.

Meaning of the Expression "Members Present and Voting"

Rule 88

For the purpose of these rules, the phrase "Members present and voting" means members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members which abstain from voting are considered as not voting.

Method of Voting

Rule 89

(a) The General Assembly shall normally vote by show of hands or by standing, but any Member may request a recorded vote. A roll-call vote may be requested only if electronic means for recording votes is not available. The roll-call shall be taken in English alphabetical order of the names of the Members, beginning with the name of the Member whose name is drawn by the President. The name of each Member shall be called in any roll-call and one of its representatives shall reply "yes", "no", or "abstention." The result of voting shall be inserted in the record in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members.

(b) When the General Assembly votes by electronic means, a non-recorded vote shall

replace a vote by show of hands or by standing and a recorded vote shall replace a roll-call vote. Any representative may request a recorded vote. In the case of a recorded vote, the General Assembly shall, unless a representative requests otherwise, dispense with the procedure of calling out the names of the Members; nevertheless, the result of voting shall be inserted into the record in the same manner as that of a roll-call vote.

(c) The President shall establish a reasonable time period during which delegations must cast their vote. Delegations failing to cast votes will be deemed absent.

Conduct During Voting

Rule 90

After the President has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual voting. The President may permit Members to explain their votes, either before or after voting except when the vote is taken by secret ballot. The president may limit the time allowed for such explanations. The President shall not permit the proposer of a proposal or amendment to explain his vote on his own proposal or amendment.

Division of Proposal or Amendments

Rule 91

A representative may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment shall be voted on separately. If objection is made to the request for division, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion for division shall be given to only one speaker in favor and one against. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or amendments which are subsequently approved shall be put to a vote as a whole. If all operative parts of a proposal or of the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment will be considered to be rejected as a whole. The President may rule out of order any attempt to divide a proposal or amendment which he deems to be a tactic to delay the progress of the General Assembly. This ruling is not subject to appeal.

Voting on Amendments

Rule 92

When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the General Assembly will first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on to the amendment next furthest removed therefrom, and so on, until all amendments have been put to the vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter amendment shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon. A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of the proposal.

Voting on Proposals

Rule 93

If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the General Assembly shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the proposals in the order in which they were submitted. The General Assembly may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

Equally Divided Votes

Rule 94

If a vote is equally divided, a second vote shall be taken at a subsequent meeting which shall be held within two hours of the first vote, and it shall be expressly mentioned in the agenda that a second vote will be taken on the matter in question. If this vote also results in equality, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

XIII. COMMITTEES

Creation, Officers, Etc.

Creation

Rule 98

The General Assembly may set up such committees as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

Categories of Subjects

Rule 99

Items relating to the same category of subjects shall be referred to the committee or committees dealing with that category of subjects. Committees shall not introduce new items on their own initiative.

Priorities

Rule 100

Each Main Committee, taking into account the closing date for the session fixed by the General Assembly, shall adopt its own priorities and meet as may be necessary to complete the consideration of items referred to it.

Main Committees

Rule 101

The Main Committees of the General Assembly are:

- (a) Political and Security Committee (including the regulation of armaments);
- (b) Special Political Committee;
- (c) Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee;
- (d) Science and Technology Committee.

Representation of Members

Rule 102

Each Member may be represented by one person on each Main Committee and on any other committee that may be constituted upon which all Members have the right to be represented. It may also assign to these committees advisors, technical advisors, experts or persons of similar status.

Rule 103

Upon designation by the Chairman of the Delegation, advisors, technical advisors, experts or persons of similar status may act as members of the committees. Persons of this status shall not, however, unless designated as alternative representatives, be eligible for appointment as Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen, or Rapporteurs of committees or for seats in the General Assembly.

Subcommittees

Rule 104

Each committee may set up its subcommittees, which shall elect their own officers.

Officers

Rule 105

The Secretary-General shall appoint Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen, and Rapporteurs for all committees and subcommittees.

XIV. ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Applications

Rule 135

Any State which desires to become a Member of the United Nations shall submit an application to the Secretary-General. This application shall contain a declaration, made in formal instrument, that it accepts the obligations contained in the Charter.

Notification of Applications

Rule 136

The Secretary-General shall send, for information, a copy of the application to the General Assembly, or the Members of the United Nations if the General Assembly is not in session.

Consideration and Decision by The General Assembly

Rule 137

If the Security Council recommends the applicant State for membership, the General Assembly shall consider whether the applicant is a peace-loving State and is able and willing to carry out the obligations contained in the Charter, and shall decide, by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting, upon its application for membership.

Rule 138

If the Security Council does not recommend the applicant State for membership or postpones the consideration of the application, the General Assembly may, after full consideration of the special report of the Security Council, send back the application to the Security Council, together with a full record of the discussion in the General Assembly, for further consideration and recommendation or report.

Notification of Decision and Effective Date of Membership

Rule 139

The Secretary-General shall inform the applicant State of the decision of the General Assembly. If the application is approved, membership will become effective on the date on which the General Assembly makes its decision on the application.

XVII. SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Creation and Rules of Procedure

Rule 162

The General Assembly may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions. The rule relating to the procedure of committees of the General Assembly, as well as rules 45 and 62, shall apply to the procedure of any subsidiary organ unless the General Assembly or the subsidiary organ decides otherwise.

XVII. INTERPRETATION AND AMENDMENTS

Method of Amendment

Rule 164

These Rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the General Assembly taken by a majority of the Members present and voting, after a committee has reported on the proposed amendment. The said committee will consist of the Secretary-General, Undersecretary-General, and the President of the General Assembly.

XVIII. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Point of Inquiry

Rule 165

If a representative wishes to obtain a clarification of procedure or a statement of the matter before the committee, the delegate may address a point of inquiry to the Chair. During debate, if a delegate wishes to ask a question of the speaker, a request to question the speaker may be made in the form of a point of inquiry directed to the Chair after the speaker has concluded their remarks. If the speaker consents to be questioned, all questions and replies are

made through the Chair. Delegates may not interrupt a speaker on a point of inquiry.

Point of Personal Privilege

Rule 166

If a delegate wishes to raise a question or make a request relating to the organization of the meeting, personal comfort, or the conduct of fellow delegates or staff, they may rise to a point of personal privilege. When a delegate rises on privilege, the Chair shall take such action as is necessary. A point of privilege may not interrupt a speaker.

Application of Rules of Committees

Rule 167

General Assembly rules 31 through 37 and 51 through 89 will also apply to Main Committee sessions, with the exception of rules 85 and 86.

Rule 168

Discussion of a proposal in a Main Committee shall take place if at least one-third of the Members present and voting at the meeting consider such a discussion to be necessary. Any proposal to this effect will not be debated, but shall immediately be put to a vote.

I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain.

-- John Adams