

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(ABRIDGED)

I. NATURE AND COMPOSITION

Article 1. The General Assembly is the supreme organ of the Organization of American States and is composed of the delegations accredited by the governments of the member states.

II. PARTICIPANTS

Delegations

Article 2. The delegations of the member states shall be composed of the representatives, advisers, and other persons whom the governments accredit. Each delegation shall have a head of delegation, who may delegate his duties to any other member of his delegation.

General Secretariat

Article 5. The Secretary General of the Organization, or his representative, may participate with voice but without vote in the deliberations of the General Assembly.

United Nations

Article 7. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, or his representative, may attend the sessions of the General Assembly and may speak if he so desires.

Permanent observers

Article 8. Permanent observers or their respective alternates, as the case may be, may attend the public meetings of the plenary General Assembly and the General Committee. They may likewise attend any closed meetings when invited by the corresponding presiding officer. Permanent observers may also request the floor and the corresponding presiding officer will decide on the request.

III. PRESIDENT

Powers of the president

Article 15. The president shall call the plenary sessions; decide on the order of business thereof; open and close the plenary sessions; direct the discussions;

recognize speakers in the order in which they request the floor; submit points under discussion to a vote and announce the results thereof; decide on points of order in accordance with the provisions of Article 57; install the General Committee of the Assembly; and, in general, comply with and enforce the provisions of these Rules of Procedure.

Article 18. The president of the General Assembly shall establish the maximum duration of the statements of the heads of delegation.

V. COMMITTEES

Work of the General Assembly

Article 26. The president of the General Assembly shall see that the work of the General Assembly proceeds satisfactorily and, to this end, shall present such recommendations as he considers appropriate. The president, if necessary, shall coordinate the draft declarations, recommendations, and resolutions adopted by the General Committee before they are submitted to a plenary session. The president shall also perform the other duties assigned by these Rules of Procedure and any others assigned by the General Assembly itself.

VII. DRAFTS AND WORKING DOCUMENTS

A. Regular sessions

Draft treaties or conventions

Article 36. A government of a member state or an organ of the Organization that wishes to submit to the General Assembly for consideration a draft treaty or convention relating to any topic on the agenda shall transmit the text thereof to the Secretary General of the Organization.

Draft declarations, resolutions, or recommendations

Article 37. Draft declarations, resolutions, or recommendations relating to the agenda shall be presented to the Secretary General of the Organization.

Article 41. In adopting any resolution providing for a project or activity that entails expenditure by the Organization, the General Assembly shall take into account financial estimates...on the impact of such projects or activities on the budgetary calculations of the Organization...or, as the case may be, by the General Committee of the General Assembly on such financial implications.

X. DEBATES AND PROCEDURE

Quorum

Article 52. ...In the General Committee, its subcommittees, and its working groups, a quorum shall consist of one third of the delegations comprising those bodies. Nevertheless, in order for a vote to be taken, the presence of at least two thirds of such delegations at the session or meeting concerned shall be required.

Amendments

Article 54. During the consideration of a proposal a motion may be made to amend it.

A motion shall be considered to be an amendment to a proposal only when it adds to or eliminates something from that proposal or changes part of it. A motion that would totally replace the original proposal or that is not directly related to it shall not be considered to be an amendment.

Withdrawal of proposals and amendments

Article 55. A proposal or an amendment may be withdrawn by its proponent before it has been put to a vote. Any delegation may present again a proposal or amendment that has been withdrawn.

Article 56. For the reconsideration of a decision taken by the plenary General Assembly, the General Committee, a subcommittee, or a working group, the approval of the corresponding motion by the vote of two thirds of the delegations that are members of the body in question shall be required.

Points of order

Article 57. During the discussion of a topic, any delegation may raise a point of order, which shall be decided upon immediately by the president or chair. Any delegation may appeal this decision, in which case the appeal shall be put to a vote.

While raising a point of order, a delegation may not go into the substance of the matter under discussion.

Closing of debate

Article 59. The president or chair or any delegation, when he or it considers that a topic has been discussed sufficiently, may propose that debate be closed. This motion may be opposed briefly by two delegations, after which it shall be declared approved if so voted by two thirds of the delegations present at the session or meeting.

Suspension or adjournment of the session or meeting

Article 60. During the discussion of any topic, the president or chair or any representative may propose that the

session or meeting be suspended or adjourned. Such a motion shall be put to a vote immediately and without discussion.

Article 61. Decisions on the matters dealt with in Articles 57, 58, and 60 shall be taken by the vote of a majority of the delegations present.

Order of procedural motions

Article 62. Except as provided in Article 57, the following motions shall have precedence, in the order set forth below, over all other proposals or motions:

- a. Suspension of the session or meeting;
- b. Adjournment of the session or meeting;
- c. Suspension of debate on the topic under consideration;
- d. Close of debate on the topic under consideration.

XI. VOTING

Right to vote

Article 64. Each delegation shall have the right to one vote.

Majority required

Article 65. In the General Committee meetings, decisions shall be taken by the vote of a majority of the member states, except in those cases in which the Charter of the Organization or these Rules of Procedure may provide otherwise.

Article 67. Votes shall be taken by a show of hands, but any representative may request a roll-call vote, which shall be taken beginning with the delegation

whose name is drawn by lot by the president or chair and continuing in the order of precedence of the delegations.

Votes shall be taken by secret ballot only in the cases and in the manner provided for in these Rules of Procedure.

No representative may interrupt the voting, except for a point of order relating to the manner in which it is being conducted. This rule applies to the votes provided for in this article and in the following articles of this chapter.

Voting on proposals

Article 68. After discussion is closed, the proposals presented, together with any amendments thereto, shall be put to a vote immediately.

Proposals shall be voted upon in the order in which they are presented.

Voting on amendments

Article 69. An amendment shall be submitted for discussion and shall be put to a vote before the proposal that it is intended to modify is voted upon.

Article 70. When several amendments to a proposal are presented, the vote shall be taken first on the one that departs furthest from the original text. The other amendments shall be voted upon in like order. In case of doubt in this regard, they shall be considered in the order of their presentation.

Article 71. When the adoption of one amendment necessarily entails the exclusion of another, the latter shall not be put to a vote. If one or more of the amendments is adopted, the proposal as amended shall be put to a vote.

Article 72. When any delegation so requests, a proposal or amendment shall

be voted upon by parts. If any delegation opposes such a request, the opposing motion shall be put to a vote, in which case the majority called for in Article 65 or Article 66, as applicable, shall be required for approval. If voting by parts is accepted, the proposal or amendment thus approved shall be put to a final vote in its entirety. When all the operative parts of a proposal or amendment have been rejected, such proposal or amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Explanation of vote

Article 76. After voting has ended, and except when it has been by secret ballot, any representative may request the floor to give a brief explanation of his vote.

Reservations and statements

Article 81. Any delegation that wishes to make a reservation or statement with respect to a treaty or convention, or a statement regarding a resolution of the General Assembly, shall communicate the text thereof to the Secretariat... Such reservations and statements shall appear along with the treaty or convention or, in the case of a resolution, in the corresponding minutes.

XIV. AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Article 85. These Rules of Procedure may be amended by the General Assembly, acting either on its own initiative or on a proposal by the Preparatory Committee or the Permanent Council. For the adoption of a proposed amendment, the vote of a majority of the member states shall be required, except in the case of articles in which a two thirds majority has been established, for the amendment of which that same majority shall be required.

MEMBER STATES: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, The Bahamas (*Commonwealth of*), Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica (*Commonwealth of*), Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

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