

UNITED NATIONS

**RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**



LAKE SUCCESS, NEW YORK • JANUARY 1950

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## INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly, during its second regular session, adopted, by resolution 173 (II) of 17 November 1947, revised rules of procedure replacing the provisional rules adopted by the General Assembly at its first regular session on the basis of a text drawn up by the Preparatory Commission. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 116 (II) of 21 November 1947, adopted certain rules governing the admission of new Members for inclusion in its rules of procedure. All these rules have been in force as from 1 January 1948 (A/520).

At the third regular session of the General Assembly, the rules concerning working languages of the General Assembly were amended by resolution 262 (III) of 11 December 1948.

At its fourth regular session, the General Assembly, acting upon the report of a Special Committee on Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly,<sup>1</sup> approved, by resolution 362 (IV) of 22 October 1949, certain amendments and additions to its rules of procedure and decided that these amendments and additions should enter into force on 1 January 1950. The General Assembly, moreover, approved certain other recommendations and suggestions of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures and requested the Secretary-General to prepare a document embodying these recommendations and suggestions in a convenient form for use by the General Committee and the delegations of Member States in the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General has therefore prepared a revised edition of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly embodying the amendments approved at the third and fourth regular sessions. The text of General Assembly resolution 362 (IV) and the text of the recommendations and suggestions of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures which were approved by the General Assembly will be found in Annexes I and II.

1 January 1950

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<sup>1</sup>See *Official Records of the fourth session of the General Assembly*, Supplement No. 12 (A/937).

## **Explanatory Note**

1. Rules 49, 83, 84, 85, 143, 145 and 160, which reproduce textually provisions of the Charter, are printed in heavy type and are, in addition, provided with a footnote. A footnote has also been added in the case of other rules which, while based directly on provisions of the Charter, do not reproduce those provisions textually.

2. Figures indicated between square brackets in sections dealing with rules for plenary meetings refer to identical or corresponding rules for committee meetings, and vice versa.

3. Attention is drawn to rule 161, which provides: "The description of the rules in the table of contents and the notes in italics to these rules shall be disregarded in the interpretation of the rules".

# **RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## **I. SESSIONS**

### **REGULAR SESSIONS**

#### *Date of meeting*

##### **Rule 1**

The General Assembly shall meet every year in regular session commencing on the third Tuesday in September.

#### *Duration of session*

##### **Rule 2**

On the recommendation of the General Committee, the General Assembly shall, at the beginning of each session, fix a target date for the closing of the session.

#### *Place of meeting*

##### **Rule 3**

Sessions shall be held at the headquarters of the United Nations unless convened elsewhere in pursuance of a decision of the General Assembly at a previous session or at the request of a majority of the Members of the United Nations.

##### **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, together with his recommendations, to the other Members of the United Nations. If within thirty days of the date of the communication a majority of the Members concur in the 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 meetings 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**

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 of 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.

### *Request by Members*

#### **Rule 9**

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 whether they concur in it. If within thirty days of the date of the communication of the Secretary-General a majority of the Members concur in the request, a special session of the General Assembly shall be summoned in accordance with rule 8.

### *Notification of session*

#### **Rule 10**

The Secretary-General shall notify the Members of the United Nations, at least fourteen days in advance, of the opening of a special session summoned at the request of the Security Council, and, at least ten days in advance, in the case of a request by a majority of the Members or the concurrence of a majority in the request of any Member.

## REGULAR AND SPECIAL SESSIONS

### *Notification to other bodies*

#### **Rule 11**

Copies of the notice summoning each session shall be addressed to all other principal 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 a regular session shall be drawn up by the Secretary-General and communicated to the Members of the United Nations at least sixty days before the opening of the session.

#### **Rule 13**

The provisional agenda of a regular session shall include:

- (a) Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization;
- (b) Reports from 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 principal organs of the United Nations;
- (e) All items proposed by any Member of the United Nations;
- (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 it necessary to put before the General Assembly; and
- (h) All items proposed under Article 35, paragraph 2, of the Charter by States not Members of the United Nations.

#### *Supplementary items*

#### **Rule 14**

Any Member or principal organ of the United Nations or the Secretary-General may, at least thirty days before the date fixed for the opening of a regular session, request the inclusion of supplementary items in the agenda. These items shall be placed on a supplementary list, which shall be communicated to the Members of the United Nations at least twenty days before the date fixed for the opening of the session.

### *Additional items*

#### **Rule 15**

Additional items of an important and urgent character, proposed for inclusion in the agenda less than thirty days before the opening of a regular session or during a regular session, may be placed on the agenda, if the General Assembly so decides by a majority of the Members present and voting. No additional item may be considered until seven days have elapsed since it was placed on the agenda, unless the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting, decides otherwise, and until a committee has reported upon the question concerned.

### **SPECIAL SESSIONS**

#### *Provisional agenda*

#### **Rule 16**

The provisional agenda of a special session, summoned at the request of the Security Council, shall be communicated to the Members of the United Nations at least fourteen days 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 a majority in the request of any Member, shall be communicated at least ten days before the opening of 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 or principal organ of the United Nations or the Secretary-General may, at least four days before the date fixed for the opening of a special session, request the inclusion of supplementary items in the agenda. Such items shall be placed on a 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.

### **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, together with the report of the General Committee thereon, shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval as soon as possible after the opening of the 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.

## *Debate on inclusion of items*

### **Rule 23**

Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of and three against the inclusion. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

## *Modification of the allocation of expenses*

### **Rule 24**

No proposal for a modification of the allocation of expenses for the time being in force shall be placed on the agenda unless it has been communicated to the Members of the United Nations at least ninety days before the date fixed for the opening of the session.

## **III. DELEGATIONS**

### *Composition*

#### **Rule 25<sup>1</sup>**

The delegation of a Member shall consist of not more than five representatives and five alternate representatives, and as many advisers, technical advisers, 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.

<sup>1</sup>Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Article 9, paragraph 2).



## IV. CREDENTIALS

### *Submission of credentials*

#### **Rule 27**

The credentials of representatives, and the names of members of a 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 the State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

### *Credentials Committee*

#### **Rule 28**

A Credentials Committee shall be appointed at the beginning of each session. It shall consist of nine members, who shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the proposal of the President. 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 and the General Assembly has given its decision.

## V. PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

### *Temporary President*

#### **Rule 30**

At the opening of each session of the General Assembly the Chairman of that delegation from which the President of the previous session was elected shall preside until the General Assembly has elected a President for the session.

### *Elections*

#### **Rule 31**

The General Assembly shall elect a President and seven Vice-Presidents, who shall hold office until the close of the session at which they are elected.<sup>1</sup> The Vice-Presidents shall be elected, after the election of the Chairmen of the six Main Committees referred to in rule 99, on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the General Committee.

### *Acting President*

#### **Rule 32 [105]**

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

<sup>1</sup>Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Article 21, second sentence).

### **Rule 33 [105]**

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

#### ***Replacement of the President***

### **Rule 34 [105]**

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

#### ***General powers of the President***

### **Rule 35 [106]**

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 of the session, shall direct the discussions in 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 these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings 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 the time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak on any question, the closure of the list of speakers or the closure of the debate. He may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting or the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion.

### **Rule 36 [107]**

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

#### ***The President shall not vote***

### **Rule 37 [104]**

The President, or Vice-President acting as President, shall not vote but shall appoint another member of his delegation to vote in his place.

## **VI. GENERAL COMMITTEE**

#### ***Composition***

### **Rule 38**

The General Committee shall consist of fourteen members no two of whom shall be members of the same delegation, and shall be so constituted as to ensure its representative character. It shall comprise the President of the General Assembly, who shall preside, the seven Vice-Presidents and the Chairmen of the six Main Committees. Chairmen of other committees upon which all Members have the right to be represented and which are established by the General Assembly to meet during the session, shall be entitled to attend meetings of the General Committee and may participate without vote in the discussions.

## ***Substitute members***

### **Rule 39**

If a Vice-President of the General Assembly finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting of the General Committee he may designate a member of his delegation as his substitute. A Chairman of a Main Committee shall, in case of absence, designate the Vice-Chairman of the Committee as his substitute. A Vice-Chairman shall not have the right to vote if he is of the same delegation as another member of the Committee.

## ***Functions***

### **Rule 40**

The General Committee shall, at the beginning of each session, consider the provisional agenda, together with the supplementary list, and shall make recommendations to the General Assembly with regard to each item proposed, concerning its inclusion in the agenda, the rejection of the request for inclusion, or the inclusion of the item in the provisional agenda of a future session. It shall, in the same manner, examine requests for the inclusion of additional items in the agenda, and shall make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly. In considering matters relating to the agenda of the General Assembly, the General Committee shall not discuss the substance of any item, except in so far as this bears upon the question whether the General Committee should recommend the inclusion of the item in the agenda, the rejection of the request for inclusion, or the inclusion of the item in the provisional agenda of a future session, and what priority should be accorded to an item the inclusion of which has been recommended.

### **Rule 41**

The General Committee shall make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning the closing date of the session. It shall assist the President and the General Assembly in drawing up the agenda for each plenary meeting, in determining the priority of its items, and in the co-ordination of the proceedings of all committees of the General Assembly. It shall assist the President in the general conduct of the work of the General Assembly which falls within the competence of the President. It shall not, however, decide any political question.

### **Rule 42**

The General Committee shall meet periodically throughout each session to review the progress of the General Assembly and its committees and to make recommendations for furthering such progress. It shall also meet at such other times as the President deems necessary or upon the request of any other of its members.

*Participation by representatives of Members requesting the inclusion of items in the agenda*

### **Rule 43**

A Member of the General Assembly which has no representative on the General Committee, and which has requested the inclusion of an item in the agenda, shall be entitled to attend any meeting of the General Committee at which its request is discussed, and may participate, without vote, in the discussion of that item.

## *Formal revision of resolutions of the General Assembly*

### **Rule 44**

The General Committee may revise the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, changing their form but not their substance. Any such changes shall be reported to the General Assembly for its consideration.

## **VII. SECRETARIAT**

### *Duties of the Secretary-General*

#### **Rule 45**

The Secretary-General shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the General Assembly,<sup>1</sup> its committees and sub-committees. He may designate a member of the staff to act in his place at these meetings.

#### **Rule 46**

The Secretary-General shall provide and direct the staff required by the General Assembly and any 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 reports 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.<sup>1</sup> He shall communicate the annual report to the Members of the United Nations at least forty-five days before the opening of the session.

### *Notification under Article 12 of the Charter*

#### **Rule 49<sup>a</sup>**

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 the Security Council ceases to deal with such matters.

<sup>1</sup>Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Article 98).

<sup>a</sup>Rule reproducing textually a provision of the Charter (Article 12, paragraph 2).

## *Regulations concerning the Secretariat*

### **Rule 50<sup>1</sup>**

The General Assembly shall establish regulations concerning the staff of the Secretariat.

## **VIII. LANGUAGES**

### *Official and working languages*

#### **Rule 51**

Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the official languages of the General Assembly, its committees and sub-committees. English, French and Spanish shall be the working languages.

### *Interpretation from a working language*

#### **Rule 52**

Speeches made in any of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other two working languages.

### *Interpretation from official languages*

#### **Rule 53**

Speeches made in either of the other two official languages shall be interpreted into the three working languages.

### *Interpretation from other languages*

#### **Rule 54**

Any representative may make a speech in a language other than the official languages. In this case, he shall himself provide for interpretation into one of the working languages. Interpretation into the other working languages by the interpreters of the Secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first working language.

### *Language of verbatim records*

#### **Rule 55**

Verbatim records shall be drawn up in the working languages. A translation of the whole or part of any verbatim record into either of the other two official languages shall be furnished if requested by any delegation.

### *Language of summary records*

#### **Rule 56**

Summary records shall be drawn up as soon as possible in the official languages.

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<sup>1</sup>Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Article 101, paragraph 1).

## *Language of Journal*

### **Rule 57**

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

## *Language of resolutions and important documents*

### **Rule 58**

All resolutions and other important documents shall be made available in the official languages. Upon the request of any representative, any other document shall be made available in any or all of the official languages.

## *Publications in languages other than the official languages*

### **Rule 59**

Documents of the General Assembly, its committees and sub-committees, shall, if the General Assembly so decides, be published in any languages other than the official languages.

## **IX. RECORDS**

## *Verbatim records*

### **Rule 60**

Verbatim records of all plenary meetings shall be drawn up by the Secretariat and submitted to the General Assembly after approval by the President. Verbatim records shall also be made of the proceedings of the Main Committees established by the General Assembly. Other committees or sub-committees may decide upon the form of their records.

## *Resolutions*

### **Rule 61**

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

## **X. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS: PLENARY MEETINGS; MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

## *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 that the meeting be held in private. Meetings of other committees and sub-committees shall also be held in public unless the body concerned decides otherwise.

### *Private meetings*

#### **Rule 63**

All decisions of the General Assembly taken 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 sub-committees, the Chairman may issue a communiqué through the Secretary-General.

## **XI. MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION**

### *Invitation to 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 representatives to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

## **XII. PLENARY MEETINGS**

### **CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

### *Report of the Secretary-General*

#### **Rule 65**

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

### *Reference to committees*

#### **Rule 66**

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

### *Discussion of committee reports*

#### **Rule 67**

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 be immediately put to the vote.

### *Quorum*

#### **Rule 68 [108]**

A majority of the Members of the General Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

## *Speeches*

### **Rule 69 [109]**

No representative may address the General Assembly without having previously obtained the permission of the President. The President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The President may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

## *Precedence*

### **Rule 70 [110]**

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 71 [111]**

The Secretary-General, or a member of the Secretariat designated by him as his representative, 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 72 [112]**

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with the rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a 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 73 [113]**

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 74 [114]**

During the course of a 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 75 [115]**

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

### *Closure of debate*

#### **Rule 76 [116]**

A representative may at any time move the closure of the 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 the debate shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the General Assembly is in favour of the closure, the President shall declare the closure of the debate. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

### *Suspension or adjournment of the meeting*

#### **Rule 77 [117]**

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated, but shall be immediately 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 78 [118]**

Subject to rule 72, 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 the debate on the item under discussion.

### *Proposals and amendments*

#### **Rule 79 [119]**

Proposals and amendments shall normally be introduced in writing and handed to the Secretary-General, who shall circulate copies to the delegations. As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the 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 of motions as to procedure, even though these amendments and motions have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

## *Decisions on competence*

### **Rule 80 [120]**

Subject to rule 78, 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 81 [121]**

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 82 [122]**

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 83<sup>1</sup> [123]**

Each Member of the General Assembly shall have one vote.

## *Two-thirds majority*

### **Rule 84<sup>1</sup>**

Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, the election of members of 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 the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the Trusteeship System, and budgetary questions.

## *Simple majority*

### **Rule 85<sup>1</sup> [124]**

Decisions of the General Assembly on questions other than those provided for in rule 84, including the 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.

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<sup>1</sup>Rules 83-85 reproduce the three paragraphs of Article 18 of the Charter.

## *Meaning of the expression "Members present and voting"*

### **Rule 86 [125]**

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 87 [126]**

The General Assembly shall normally vote by show of hands or by standing, but any representative may request a roll-call. The roll-call shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members, beginning with the Member whose name is drawn by lot 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 the voting shall be inserted in the record in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members.

## *Conduct during voting*

### **Rule 88 [127]**

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

## *Division of proposals and amendments*

### **Rule 89 [128]**

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 only to two speakers in favour and two speakers against. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or of the amendment which are subsequently approved shall be put to the vote as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal or of the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

## *Voting on amendments*

### **Rule 90 [129]**

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 shall first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom, and so on, until all the 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 that proposal.

## *Voting on proposals*

### **Rule 91 [180]**

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 have been submitted. The General Assembly may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

## *Elections*

### **Rule 92 [103]**

All elections shall be held by secret ballot. There shall be no nominations.

### **Rule 93 [131]**

When only one person or Member is to be elected and no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, a second ballot shall be taken which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, and a majority is required, the President shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots. If a two-thirds majority is required, the balloting shall be continued until one candidate secures two-thirds of the votes cast; provided that, after the third inconclusive ballot, votes may be cast for any eligible person or Member. If three such unrestricted ballots are inconclusive, the next three ballots shall be restricted to the two candidates who obtained the greatest number of votes in the third of the unrestricted ballots, and the following three ballots thereafter shall be unrestricted, and so on until a person or Member is elected. These provisions shall not prejudice the application of rules 142, 143, 145 and 147.

### **Rule 94**

When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates obtaining in the first ballot the majority required shall be elected. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of persons or Members to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot, to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled; provided that, after the third inconclusive ballot, votes may be cast for any eligible person or Member. If three such unrestricted ballots are inconclusive, the next three ballots shall be restricted to the candidates who obtained the greatest number of votes in the third of the unrestricted ballots, to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled, and the following three ballots thereafter shall be unrestricted, and so on until all the places have been filled. These provisions shall not prejudice the application of rules 142, 143, 145 and 147.

## *Equally divided votes*

### **Rule 95 [132]**

If a vote is equally divided on matters other than elections, a second vote shall be taken at a subsequent meeting which shall be held within forty-eight 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 96**

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

#### *Categoriss of subjects*

##### **Rule 97**

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 98**

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

#### *Main Committees*

##### **Rule 99**

The Main Committees of the General Assembly are:

- (1) Political and Security Committee (including the regulation of armaments);
- (2) Economic and Financial Committee;
- (3) Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee;
- (4) Trusteeship Committee (including Non-Self-Governing Territories);
- (5) Administrative and Budgetary Committee; and
- (6) Legal Committee.

#### *Representation of Members*

##### **Rule 100**

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 advisers, technical advisers, experts or persons of similar status.

##### **Rule 101**

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

## *Sub-committees*

### **Rule 102**

Each committee may set up sub-committees, which shall elect their own officers.

## *Officers*

### **Rule 103 [92]**

Each committee shall elect its own Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence. These elections shall be held by secret ballot.

*The Chairman of a Main Committee shall not vote*

### **Rule 104 [37]**

The Chairman of a Main Committee shall not vote but another member of his delegation may vote in his place.

## *Absence of officers*

### **Rule 105 [32-34]**

If the Chairman finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting or any part thereof, the Vice-Chairman shall take his place. A Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairman. If any officer of the committee is unable to perform his functions, a new officer shall be elected for the unexpired term.

## *Functions of the Chairman*

### **Rule 106 [35]**

The Chairman shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the committee, shall direct its discussions, 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 these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings of the committee and over the maintenance of order at its meetings. The Chairman may, in the course of the discussion of an item, propose to the committee the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak on any question, the closure of the list of speakers or the closure of the debate. He may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting or the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion.

### **Rule 107 [36]**

The Chairman, in the exercise of his functions, remains under the authority of the committee.

## **CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

## *Quorum*

### **Rule 108 [68]**

One third of the members of a committee shall constitute a quorum. The presence of a majority of the members of the committee is, however, required for a question to be put to the vote.

## *Speeches*

### **Rule 109 [69]**

No representative may address the committee without having previously obtained the permission of the Chairman. The Chairman shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The Chairman may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

## *Precedence*

### **Rule 110 [70]**

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

## *Statements by the Secretariat*

### **Rule 111 [71]**

The Secretary-General, or a member of the Secretariat designated by him as his representative, may, at any time, make oral or written statements to any committee or sub-committee concerning any question under consideration by it.

## *Points of order*

### **Rule 112 [72]**

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the Chairman in accordance with the rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote and the Chairman's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a 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 113 [73]**

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

## *Closing of list of speakers*

### **Rule 114 [74]**

During the course of a debate the Chairman may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the committee, 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 115 [75]**

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

### *Closure of debate*

#### **Rule 116 [76]**

A representative may at any time move the closure of the 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 the debate shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the committee is in favour of the closure, the Chairman shall declare the closure of the debate. The Chairman may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

### *Suspension or adjournment of the meeting*

#### **Rule 117 [77]**

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

### *Order of procedural motions*

#### **Rule 118 [78]**

Subject to rule 112, 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 the debate on the item under discussion.

### *Proposals and amendments*

#### **Rule 119 [79]**

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



## *Decisions on competence*

### **Rule 120 [80]**

Subject to rule 118, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the General Assembly or the committee 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 121 [81]**

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 122 [82]**

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the committee, 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 123 [83]**

Each member of the committee shall have one vote.

## *Majority required*

### **Rule 124 [85]**

Decisions in the committees of the General Assembly shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.

## *Meaning of the expression "Members present and voting"*

### **Rule 125 [86]**

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

## *Method of voting*

### **Rule 126 [87]**

The committee shall normally vote by show of hands or by standing, but any representative may request a roll-call. The roll-call shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members, beginning with the member whose name is drawn by lot by the Chairman. The name of each member shall be called in any roll-call and he shall reply "Yes", "No" or "Abstention". The result of the voting shall be inserted in the record in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members.

### *Conduct during voting*

#### **Rule 127 [88]**

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

### *Division of proposals and amendments*

#### **Rule 128 [89]**

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 only to two speakers in favour and two speakers against. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or of the amendment which are subsequently approved shall be put to the vote as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal or of the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

### *Voting on amendments*

#### **Rule 129 [90]**

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 committee shall first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom, and so on, until all the 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 that proposal.

### *Voting on proposals*

#### **Rule 130 [91]**

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

### *Elections*

#### **Rule 131 [93]**

When only one person or member is to be elected and no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, a second ballot shall be taken, which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, and a majority is required, the Chairman shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

*Equally divided votes*

**Rule 132 [95]**

If a vote is equally divided on matters other than elections, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

**XIV. ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

*Applications*

**Rule 133**

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 a formal instrument, that it accepts the obligations contained in the Charter.

*Notification of applications*

**Rule 134**

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

*Consideration and decision by the General Assembly*

**Rule 135**

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 136**

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 137**

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 takes its decision on the application.

## XV. ELECTIONS TO PRINCIPAL ORGANS

### GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### *Terms of office*

##### **Rule 138**

Except as provided in rule 146, the term of office of members of Councils shall begin on 1 January following their election by the General Assembly, and shall end on 31 December following the election of their successors.

#### *By-elections*

##### **Rule 139**

Should a member cease to belong to a Council before his term of office expires, a by-election shall be held separately at the next session of the General Assembly to elect a member for the unexpired term.

### ELECTION OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

#### *Election of the Secretary-General*

##### **Rule 140**

When the Security Council has submitted its recommendation on the appointment of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly shall consider the recommendation and vote upon it by secret ballot in private meeting.

### THE SECURITY COUNCIL

#### *Annual elections*

##### **Rule 141<sup>1</sup>**

The General Assembly shall each year, in the course of its regular session, elect three non-permanent members of the Security Council for a term of two years.

#### *Qualifications for membership*

##### **Rule 142<sup>2</sup>**

In the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council, in accordance with Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter, due regard shall be specially paid, in the first instance, to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution.

<sup>1</sup>Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Article 23, paragraph 2).

<sup>2</sup>Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Article 23, paragraph 1).

### *Re-eligibility*

#### **Rule 143<sup>1</sup>**

**A retiring member of the Security Council shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.**

### **THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

### *Annual elections*

#### **Rule 144<sup>2</sup>**

**The General Assembly shall each year, in the course of its regular session, elect six members of the Economic and Social Council for a term of three years.**

### *Re-eligibility*

#### **Rule 145<sup>3</sup>**

**A retiring member of the Economic and Social Council shall be eligible for immediate re-election.**

### **THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL**

### *Occasions for elections*

#### **Rule 146**

**When a Trusteeship Agreement has been approved and a Member of the United Nations has become an Administering Authority of a Trust Territory in accordance with Article 83 or 85 of the Charter, the General Assembly shall proceed to such election or elections to the Trusteeship Council as may be necessary, in accordance with Article 86. A Member or Members elected at any such election at a regular session shall take office immediately upon their election and shall complete their terms in accordance with the provisions of rule 138, as if they had begun their terms of office on 1 January following their election.**

### *Term of office and re-eligibility*

#### **Rule 147<sup>4</sup>**

**A non-administering member of the Trusteeship Council shall be elected for a term of three years and shall be eligible for immediate re-election.**

### *Vacancies*

#### **Rule 148**

**At each session the General Assembly shall, in accordance with Article 86 of the Charter, elect members to fill any vacancies.**

<sup>1</sup>Rule reproducing textually a provision of the Charter (Article 23, paragraph 2, last sentence).

<sup>2</sup>Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Article 61, paragraph 2).

<sup>3</sup>Rule reproducing textually a provision of the Charter (Article 61, paragraph 2, last sentence).

<sup>4</sup>Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Article 86, paragraph 1c).

## THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

### *Method of election*

#### **Rule 149**

The election of the members of the International Court of Justice shall take place in accordance with the Statute of the Court.

#### **Rule 150**

Any meeting of the General Assembly held in pursuance of the Statute of the International Court of Justice for the purpose of the election of members of the Court shall continue until as many candidates as are required for all the seats to be filled have obtained in one or more ballots an absolute majority of votes.

## **XVI. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS**

### *Regulations for financial administration*

#### **Rule 151**

The General Assembly shall establish regulations for the financial administration of the United Nations.

### *Estimates of expenditure*

#### **Rule 152**

No resolution involving expenditure shall be recommended by a committee for approval by the General Assembly unless it is accompanied by an estimate of expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General. No resolution in respect of which expenditures are anticipated by the Secretary-General shall be voted by the General Assembly until the Administrative and Budgetary Committee has had an opportunity of stating the effect of the proposal upon the budget estimates of the United Nations.

### *Information on the cost of resolutions*

#### **Rule 153**

The Secretary-General shall keep all committees informed of the detailed estimated cost of all resolutions which have been recommended by the committees for approval by the General Assembly.

### *Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

#### **Rule 154**

The General Assembly shall appoint an Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (hereinafter called the "Advisory Committee"), with a membership of nine, including at least two financial experts of recognized standing.

## *Composition of the Advisory Committee*

### **Rule 155**

The members of the Advisory Committee, no two of whom shall be nationals of the same State, shall be selected on the basis of broad geographical representation, personal qualifications and experience, and shall serve for three years corresponding to three financial years, as defined in the regulations for the financial administration of the United Nations. Members shall retire by rotation and shall be eligible for reappointment. The two financial experts shall not retire simultaneously. The General Assembly shall appoint the members of the Advisory Committee at the regular session immediately preceding the expiration of the term of office of the members, or, in case of vacancies, at the next session.

## *Functions of the Advisory Committee*

### **Rule 156**

The Advisory Committee shall be responsible for expert examination of the budget of the United Nations, and shall assist the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the General Assembly. At the commencement of each regular session it shall submit to the General Assembly a detailed report on the budget for the next financial year and on the accounts of the last financial year. It shall also examine on behalf of the General Assembly the administrative budgets of specialized agencies and proposals for financial and budgetary arrangements with such agencies. It shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to it under the regulations for the financial administration of the United Nations.

## *Committee on Contributions*

### **Rule 157**

The General Assembly shall appoint an expert Committee on Contributions, consisting of ten members.

## *Composition of the Committee on Contributions*

### **Rule 158**

The members of the Committee on Contributions, no two of whom shall be nationals of the same State, shall be selected on the basis of broad geographical representation, personal qualifications and experience, and shall serve for a period of three years corresponding to three financial years, as defined in the regulations for the financial administration of the United Nations. Members shall retire by rotation and shall be eligible for reappointment. The General Assembly shall appoint the members of the Committee on Contributions at the regular session immediately preceding the expiration of the term of office of the members, or, in case of vacancies, at the next session.

## *Functions of the Committee on Contributions*

### **Rule 159**

The Committee on Contributions shall advise the General Assembly concerning the apportionment, under Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Charter, of the expenses of the Organization among Members, broadly according to capacity to pay. The scale of assessments, when once fixed by the General Assembly, shall not be subject to a general revision for at least three years, unless it is clear that there have been substantial changes in relative capacities to pay. The Committee shall also advise the General Assembly on the assessments to be fixed for new Members, on appeals by Members for a change of assessments, and on the action to be taken with regard to the application of Article 19 of the Charter.

## **XVII. SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### *Creation and rules of procedure*

### **Rule 160**

The General Assembly may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.<sup>1</sup> The rules 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.

## **XVIII. INTERPRETATION AND AMENDMENTS**

### *Notes in italics*

### **Rule 161**

The description of the rules in the table of contents and the notes in italics to these rules shall be disregarded in the interpretation of the rules.

### *Method of amendment*

### **Rule 162**

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.

### **Supplementary rule of procedure on the calling of international conferences by the Economic and Social Council<sup>2</sup>**

Pending the adoption, under paragraph 4 of Article 62 of the Charter, of definite rules for the calling of international conferences, the Economic and

<sup>1</sup>Rule reproducing textually a provision of the Charter (Article 22).

<sup>2</sup>By resolution 366(IV) of 3 December 1949, the General Assembly adopted rules for the calling of international conferences of States by the Economic and Social Council. Accordingly, the supplementary rule no longer applies to these conferences. However, it continues to apply to conferences not covered by the said rules (see on this point paragraph 20 of the report of the Sixth Committee on this item (A/1165)). In this connexion, attention is drawn to resolution 367(IV) of 3 December 1949 in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, after consulting with the Council, draft rules for the calling of non-governmental conferences, with a view to their study by the General Assembly.



**Social Council may, after due consultation with Members of the United Nations, call international conferences in conformity with the spirit of Article 62 on any matter within the competence of the Council, including the following matters: international trade and employment; the equitable adjustment of prices on the international market; and health.**

## ANNEX I

### RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FOURTH REGULAR SESSION

The General Assembly, at its two hundred and thirty-sixth plenary meeting held on 22 October 1949, adopted the following resolution (362(IV)), proposed by the Sixth Committee:

*The General Assembly,*

*Having regard* to its resolution 271 (III) of 29 April 1949 relating to the appointment of a Special Committee on Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly,

*Having considered* the report of the Special Committee<sup>1</sup> and the conclusions reached therein,

*Mindful* of the importance of adapting its organization and procedures to its increasing responsibilities,

1. *Expresses* its satisfaction with the work performed by the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly;

2. *Approves* the amendments and additions to its rules of procedure, as set forth in annex I to the present resolution;

3. *Decides* that these amendments and additions shall enter into force on 1 January 1950;

4. *Approves* the recommendations and suggestions of the Special Committee, as set forth in annex II to the present resolution;

5. *Considers* these recommendations and suggestions to be useful and worthy of consideration by the General Assembly and its Committees, and requests the Secretary-General to prepare a document embodying the above-mentioned recommendations and suggestions in convenient form for use by the General Committee and the delegations of Member States in the General Assembly;

*Considering* that the study of factors affecting the duration of General Assembly sessions should be pursued by making use of the experience gained during future sessions of the General Assembly,

*Without prejudice* to any initiative which Member States may take in this respect,

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to carry out appropriate studies and to submit, at such times as he may consider appropriate, suitable proposals for the improvement of the methods and procedures of the General Assembly and its Committees, including proposals to extend the use of mechanical and technical devices;

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<sup>1</sup>Official Records of the fourth session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 12 (A/937).

7. *Requests*, in particular, the Secretary-General to make the "thorough legal analysis", suggested by the Special Committee, of the questions raised in paragraph 34 of the report of the Special Committee, taking into account the proposal submitted to the Sixth Committee by the Belgian delegation<sup>1</sup> and the discussions in the Sixth Committee and in the plenary meeting, and to submit a report to the fifth regular session of the General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup>*Official Records of the fourth session of the General Assembly, Sixth Committee, 156th meeting, paragraph 65.*

## ANNEX II

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON METHODS AND PROCEDURES APPROVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13.<sup>1</sup> The Special Committee found that in the past some of the Main Committees of the General Assembly had devoted a particularly large number of meetings to the detailed consideration, article by article, of texts of international conventions. This was even the case where the text of a convention had been drawn up by an international conference on which all Member States had been represented. It was pointed out in this connexion that experience had shown that a Main Committee, by the very fact of its size, was not particularly fitted to draft conventions, and that when it was entrusted with the detailed study of conventions, it often did not have time to deal satisfactorily with the other questions for which it was responsible.

The Special Committee recognizes the importance of the sponsorship of conventions by the General Assembly. It believes that the authority of the General Assembly and the powerful influence its debates have on public opinion should, in many cases, be used for the benefit of international co-operation. It therefore favours the retention by the General Assembly of the necessary freedom of action.

The Special Committee therefore confines itself to recommending that when conventions have been negotiated by international conferences in which all the Members of the United Nations have been invited to take part, and on which they have been represented, not only by experts acting in a personal capacity but by representatives of Governments, and when these conventions are subsequently submitted to the General Assembly for consideration, the Assembly should not undertake a further detailed examination, but should limit itself to discussing them in a broad manner and to giving its general views on the instruments submitted to it. After such a debate, the General Assembly could, if desirable, adopt the conclusions reached by the conferences and recommend to Members the acceptance or ratification of such conventions.

This procedure might be applied in particular to conventions submitted to the General Assembly as a result of conferences of all Member States convened by the Economic and Social Council under Article 62, paragraph 4, of the Charter.

14. Furthermore, when it is proposed that the General Assembly should consider conventions prepared by groups of experts not acting as governmental representatives, or by conferences in which all Members of the United Nations have not been invited to take part, it would be advisable for the General Committee and the General Assembly to determine whether one of the Main Committees, especially the Legal Committee, would have enough time during the session to examine these conventions in detail, or whether it

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<sup>1</sup>The paragraph numbers refer to the paragraphs of the report of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures. See *Official Records of the fourth session of the General Assembly*, Supplement No. 12 (A/937).

would be possible to set up an *ad hoc* committee to undertake this study during the session.

If this is not possible, the Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should decide, after or without a general debate on the fundamental principles of the proposed convention, that an *ad hoc* committee should be established to meet between sessions. Alternatively, the General Assembly might decide to convene a conference of plenipotentiaries between two of its own sessions, to study, negotiate, draft, and possibly sign, the convention. The conference of plenipotentiaries might be empowered by the General Assembly to transmit the instruments directly to Governments for acceptance or ratification. In this case too, the General Assembly might, at a subsequent session, express its general opinion on the convention resulting from the conference, and might recommend to Members its acceptance or ratification.

With regard to the drafting of legal texts, the Special Committee strongly recommends that small drafting committees should be resorted to whenever possible.

20. In order that more frequent meetings of the General Committee should not delay the work of plenary and committee meetings, the Special Committee wishes to mention that it would be desirable for the General Committee to be enabled to meet, whenever necessary, at the same time as the plenary or the Main Committees. (In such cases, one of the Vice-Presidents could take the chair at plenary meetings and the Vice-Chairman could replace the Chairman at Main Committee meetings.)

The Special Committee also considers that, in order to save time at the beginning of the session, some of the Main Committees should not wait until the end of the general debate before starting their work.

22. In the past, some of the Main Committees have been allocated more items requiring prolonged consideration than have others. This has especially been the case for the First Committee. The Special Committee noted, however, that, during the third session of the General Assembly, exception had been made to the principle laid down in rule 89<sup>1</sup>, that "items relating to the same category of subjects shall be referred to the committee or committees dealing with that category of subjects".

The Special Committee feels that the allocation of items to committees might be effected in a less rigid manner and that questions which may be considered as falling within the competence of two or more committees, should preferably be referred to the committee with the lightest agenda.

23. Another means of lightening the task of any given Main Committee would be to consider directly in the plenary meeting, without preliminary reference to committee, certain questions which fall within the terms of reference of the Main Committee. This procedure would, moreover, have the great advantage of reducing to a notable extent repetition of debate.

It is felt that the amount of time saved by this method would be considerable, especially if the Main Committee and plenary meetings could be held concurrently.

<sup>1</sup>Rule 97 of the present rules.

If the Main Committee could not meet at the same time as the plenary meeting, the fact that the Committee was not meeting would enable another Main Committee to meet in its place.

The consideration of questions in plenary meetings would have the benefit of the attendance of leaders of delegations and of greater solemnity and publicity. The slightly higher cost to the United Nations of plenary meetings, due in particular to the distribution of verbatim records of the meetings, would undoubtedly be compensated by the shorter duration of the session.

The General Committee would be responsible for suggesting to the General Assembly which items on the agenda might be dealt with in this manner. The Special Committee recommends that this method should be introduced on an experimental basis at future sessions.

The Special Committee is of the opinion that this procedure would be especially appropriate for certain questions the essential aspects of which are already familiar to Members, such as items which have been considered by the General Assembly at previous sessions and which do not require either the presence of representatives of non-member States or the hearing of testimony.

39. At this point the Special Committee desires to stress once more the importance of the role of the President of the General Assembly and of the Chairmen of committees. The satisfactory progress of the proceedings depends essentially on their competence, authority, tact and impartiality, their respect for the rights both of minorities as well as majorities, and their familiarity with the rules of procedure. The General Assembly, or the committee, as the case may be, is the master of the conduct of its own proceedings. It is, however, the special task of the Chairmen to guide the proceedings of these bodies in the best interests of all the Members.

The Special Committee considers that everything possible should be done to help Chairmen in the discharge of these important functions. The President of the General Assembly and the General Committee should assist the Chairmen of committees with their advice. The Secretary-General should place his experience and all his authority at their disposal.

The Special Committee is happy to note the Secretariat's valuable practice of holding daily meetings of the committee secretaries, under the chairmanship of the Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General, where the procedural questions arising from day to day in the General Assembly and committees are thoroughly examined. Furthermore, the Special Committee stresses the value of having, as in the past, a legal adviser from the Secretariat in attendance at meetings to give the Chairmen or the committees such advice as they may need for the conduct of their business and the interpretation of the rules of procedure.

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<sup>1</sup>Rules printed in italics refer to procedure in committees of the General Assembly.

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