



# General Assembly

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## Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

### Fourth session

New York, 13–17 November 2023

## Rules of procedure\*

### Rule 1

#### Annual sessions

The Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction shall meet in annual sessions for a duration of five working days, starting on the third Monday of November of each year, unless otherwise decided, at United Nations Headquarters until the Conference concludes a legally binding instrument establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

### Rule 2

#### Members to the Conference

Pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546 of 22 December 2018, and for the purpose of this Conference, the Members to the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction are exclusively the following: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen, which were all invited as the Members to the Conference at the first session of the Conference.<sup>1</sup>

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\* Document [A/CONF.236/2021/3](#) is hereby superseded owing to a technical error.

<sup>1</sup> Participation in the Conference is not meant to constitute the definition of the “Middle East”, except for the purpose of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.



### **Rule 3 Representation**

1. The delegation of each Members to the Conference shall consist of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.
2. The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

### **Rule 4 Credentials**

1. The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of the Conference, if possible, not less than one week before the date fixed for the opening of each annual session of the Conference. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
2. The Secretary-General of the Conference shall examine the credentials of representatives and submit a report to the Conference for approval.<sup>2</sup>
3. Pending a decision of the Conference on their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the Conference.

### **Rule 5 Presidency of the Conference**

1. The presidency of the Conference shall be held by each of the Members to the Conference for a period of one year, following the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members to the Conference, beginning with Jordan as the President of the first session.
2. Members to the Conference shall have the right to yield their presidency to the following Member to the Conference in the above-mentioned English alphabetical order.
3. If the head of the delegation who performs the functions of the President is absent from a meeting or any part thereof, he or she shall designate another member of his or her delegation, who shall have the same powers and duties as the President.
4. In addition to exercising the powers conferred on him or her elsewhere by these rules, the President or acting President shall preside at the plenary meetings of the Conference, declare the opening and closing of each meeting, accord the right to speak, put questions to decision-making subject to rule 21 and announce decisions. The President shall ensure the observance of these rules, rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, have complete control over the proceedings and the maintenance of order thereat. The President may propose to the Conference the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times each representative may speak on a question, the adjournment or closure of the debate and the suspension or the adjournment of a meeting.

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<sup>2</sup> Any observation raised by any delegation on the credentials report presented by the Secretary-General of the Conference shall be duly reflected in the report of each annual session of the Conference.

5. The President or acting President, in the exercise of his or her functions, remains under the authority of the Conference.
6. The President or acting President shall not participate in decision-making, but may appoint another member of his or her delegation to participate in decision-making in his or her place.

## **Rule 6**

### **Secretariat of the Conference**

1. Following the appointment of the Secretary-General of the Conference by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President shall inform the Conference of such appointment. The Secretary-General of the Conference shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Conference and its committees and shall be responsible for making all the arrangements necessary for carrying out the work of the Conference.
2. The Secretary-General of the Conference may designate a member of the secretariat to act in his or her place at such meetings.
3. The Secretary-General of the Conference shall direct the staff required by the Conference and may designate a member of the secretariat to act in his or her place at meetings of the Conference and its committees.
4. The secretariat of the Conference shall, in accordance with these rules:
  - (a) Interpret speeches made at meetings;
  - (b) Receive, translate, reproduce and circulate the documents of the Conference;
  - (c) Publish and circulate the official documents and any reports of the Conference;
  - (d) Prepare and circulate records of public meetings;
  - (e) Make and arrange for the keeping of sound recordings of meetings;
  - (f) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents of the Conference in the archives of the United Nations;
  - (g) Generally perform all other work that the Conference may require;
  - (h) Report on the proceedings of the Conference in appropriate journals.
5. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Conference or any member of the secretariat designated by either of them for that purpose may, at any time, but subject to rule 9, make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.
6. As the convener of the Conference, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, or an official designated by him or her in his or her absence, shall participate in the opening session of the Conference.

## **Rule 7**

### **Decisions concerning organization**

The Conference shall, at its annual sessions, endorse its President and elect other officers as it deems necessary; adopt its agenda, the draft of which shall, until such adoption, be the provisional agenda of the Conference; and decide on the organization of its work.

## **Rule 8**

### **Quorum**

The President of the Conference may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the Members to the Conference participating in the Conference are present. The presence of a majority of the Members to the Conference shall be required for any decision to be taken.

## **Rule 9**

### **Speeches**

1. No representative may address the Conference without having previously obtained the permission of the President. Subject to rules 10, 11 and 14 to 17, the President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The secretariat shall be in charge of drawing up a list of speakers.
2. Debate shall be confined to the question before the Conference, and the President may call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
3. The Conference may limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each participant may speak on any question. When the debate is limited by the Conference and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the President shall call him or her to order without delay.

## **Rule 10**

### **Points of order**

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with rule 21. If objection is made to the ruling, the President shall immediately conduct consultations on the matter, and, if no agreement is reached, the objection shall be put to the vote at the same meeting, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a two-thirds majority of the Members to the Conference present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

## **Rule 11**

### **Precedence**

The Chair or acting Chair of any committee may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by the committee concerned.

## **Rule 12**

### **Closing of the list of speakers**

During the course of a debate, the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Conference, declare the list closed. When the debate on an item is concluded because there are no more speakers, the President shall declare the debate closed.

### **Rule 13**

#### **Right of reply**

1. Notwithstanding rule 12, the President shall accord the right of reply to a representative of any Member to the Conference who requests it.
2. The statements made under this rule shall normally be made at the end of the last meeting of the day, or at the conclusion of the consideration of the relevant item if that is sooner.
3. The representatives of a Member to the Conference may make no more than two statements under this rule at a given meeting on any item. The first shall be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes.

### **Rule 14**

#### **Adjournment or closure of debate**

A representative may at any time move the adjournment or closure of the debate on the question under discussion, which shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with rule 21. If objection is made to the ruling by the President, the President shall immediately conduct consultations on the matter, and, if no agreement is reached, the motion shall be put to the vote at the same meeting and decided by a two-thirds majority of the Members to the Conference present and voting.

### **Rule 15**

#### **Suspension or adjournment of the meeting**

Subject to rule 21, a representative may at any time move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. If objection is made to the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting, the President shall immediately conduct consultations on the matter, and, if no agreement is reached, the motion shall be put to the vote at the same meeting and decided by a two-thirds majority of the Members to the Conference present and voting.

### **Rule 16**

#### **Order of motions**

The motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or other motions before the meeting:

- (a) To suspend the meeting;
- (b) To adjourn the meeting;
- (c) To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion;
- (d) To close the debate on the question under discussion.

### **Rule 17**

#### **Submission of proposals and substantive amendments**

Proposals and substantive amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General of the Conference, who shall circulate copies to all delegations. Unless the Conference decides otherwise, no substantive proposal shall

be considered unless copies have been circulated in all languages of the Conference to all delegations at least 24 hours before the meeting. The President may, however, permit the discussion of amendments, even when such amendments have not been circulated or have been circulated only on the same day.

## **Rule 18**

### **Withdrawal of proposals and motions**

A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before a decision on it has been taken, provided that it has not been amended. A proposal or a motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any representative.

## **Rule 19**

### **Decisions on competence**

Subject to rule 16, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Conference to discuss any matter or to adopt a proposal outside the scope of General Assembly decision 73/546 submitted to it shall be decided before the matter is discussed or a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

## **Rule 20**

### **Reconsideration of proposals**

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered unless the Conference so decides by consensus.

## **Rule 21**

### **Decisions of the Conference**

1. Consensus<sup>3</sup> shall be the only method of decision-making on procedural and substantive issues, except for the rulings by the President on procedural motions related to points of order and motions on adjournment or closure of debate and the suspension and adjournment of the meetings as referred to in rules 10, 14 and 15.
2. Participation in decision-making shall be limited to Members to the Conference as referred to in rule 2.
3. Official adoption of the text of the draft instrument on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction shall be conducted at an official meeting of the Conference wherein all Members to the Conference shall be present and participate in decision-making in favour of its adoption unless the conference decides otherwise.
4. All decisions of the Conference at its annual session shall be reflected in the report on that session.

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<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of the Conference, consensus means the absence of any formal objection by any of the Members to the Conference participating at the Conference.

**Rule 22****Meaning of the phrase “Members to the Conference present and voting”**

For the purpose of rules 10, 14 and 15, the phrase “Members to the Conference present and voting” means Members to the Conference casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members to the Conference that abstain from voting shall be regarded as not voting.

**Rule 23****Method of voting**

1. The Conference shall normally vote by show of hands, except that a representative may request a roll call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members to the Conference, beginning with the delegation whose name is drawn by lot by the President. The name of each Member to the Conference shall be called in all roll calls, and its representative shall reply “yes”, “no” or “abstention”.

2. When the Conference votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands and a recorded vote shall replace a roll call. A representative may request a recorded vote, which shall, unless a representative requests otherwise, be taken without calling out the names of the Members to the Conference.

3. The vote of each Member to the Conference participating in a roll call or a recorded vote shall be inserted in any record of or report on the Conference.

**Rule 24****Conduct during voting**

After the President has announced the commencement of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the process of voting.

**Rule 25****Explanation of position**

Representatives may make statements in connection with a decision either before or after the decision-making. The President may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations.

**Rule 26****Division of proposals**

A representative may move that parts of a proposal be decided on separately. If a representative objects, the motion for division shall be decided on. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour of and two opposing the division. If the motion is carried, those parts of the proposal that are subsequently approved shall be put to the Conference for decision as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal have been rejected, the proposal shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

## **Rule 27**

### **Amendments**

A proposal is considered an amendment to another proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal. Unless specified otherwise, the word “proposal” in these rules shall be considered as including amendments.

## **Rule 28**

### **Order of decision-making on amendments**

When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be decided on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Conference shall decide first 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 a decision by the Conference. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter shall not be decided on. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be decided on.

## **Rule 29**

### **Order of taking decisions on proposals**

1. If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Conference decides otherwise, be decided on in the order in which they were submitted. The Conference may, after each decision on a proposal, decide whether to take a decision on the next proposal.
2. Revised proposals shall be decided on in the order in which the original proposals were submitted, unless the revision substantially departs from the original proposal. In that case, the original proposal shall be considered as withdrawn and the revised proposal shall be treated as a new proposal.
3. A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal shall be decided on before a decision is taken on the proposal in question in accordance with rule 21.

## **Rule 30**

### **Committees**

1. The Conference may establish any committee that it deems necessary for the performance of its functions. The committees shall be open to all Members to the Conference.
2. The President or a member of his or her delegation will preside over the committees unless the Conference decides otherwise.
3. Rules 3 to 29 shall be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the proceedings of committees unless the Conference decides otherwise.



## **Rule 31**

### **Languages of the Conference, official documents and interpretation**

1. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the languages of the Conference.
2. Speeches made in a language of the Conference shall be interpreted into the other such languages.
3. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the Conference if the delegation concerned provides for interpretation into one such language. Interpretation into the other languages of the Conference by interpreters of the Secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first such language.
4. Official documents of the Conference shall be made available in the languages of the Conference.

## **Rule 32**

### **Sound recordings of meetings**

Sound recordings of meetings of the Conference and its committees shall be made and kept in accordance with the practice of the United Nations unless otherwise decided by the Conference or the committee concerned.

## **Rule 33**

### **Public and private meetings**

1. The plenary meetings of the Conference shall be held in public unless the Conference decides otherwise. All decisions taken by the plenary of the Conference at a private meeting shall be announced at an early public meeting of the plenary.
2. All meetings of the committees of the Conference shall be held in private unless the Conference decides otherwise.

## **Rule 34**

### **Observers**

1. The three co-sponsors of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America) and the other two nuclear-weapon States (People's Republic of China and France) shall be entitled to participate as observers in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546, without the right to participate in decision-making, in the deliberations of the Conference and, as appropriate, any committees established by the Conference.
2. The International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit shall participate as observers in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546, without the right to participate in decision-making, in the deliberations of the Conference and, as appropriate, any committees established by the Conference.

3. The Conference may invite other States to participate as observers, without the right to participate in decision-making, in the deliberations of the Conference and, as appropriate, any committees established by the Conference.

4. The Conference may also, on a case-by-case basis, invite relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations, specialized agencies and United Nations organs, as well as any other entities or individual experts, to participate as observers, without the right to participate in decision-making, in the deliberations of the Conference and its committees.

### **Rule 35**

#### **Written statements**

Written statements submitted by the designated representatives in the public meetings of the Conference referred to in rule 34 shall be distributed by the secretariat to all delegations and shall be made available to it at the site of the Conference. Such statements shall not be made available at the expense of the United Nations and shall not be issued as official documents.

### **Rule 36**

#### **Amendment or suspension of the rules of procedure**

These rules of procedure may be amended or suspended by a decision of the Conference by consensus.

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