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Official Rules of Procedure



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Adapted from Harvard Model United Nations's Guide to Delegate Preparation

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All United Nations Committees follow a protocol called Rules of Procedure. These are divided in two main groups, called Points and Motions. Before explaining each of these mechanisms, the flow of debate will be described to better understand the dynamics of a UN Committee. Finally, the documents used in sessions will be explained. This material was adapted from Harvard Model United Nations, which follows the United Nations Association of the United States of America's (UNA-USA¹) Rules of Procedure standards, used in most Model UN.

Flow of Debate

As the first session starts, the General Speakers' List will be automatically opened and will be used throughout the end of debate. The dais will then request delegates wishing to add their names to the General Speakers' List to raise their placards and will yield the floor to the first delegate. The initial speaking time is set to one minute and it can be modified as will be seen afterwards. If a delegate wishes to add its name in another moment or add it again, he/she should raise its placard in proper time. In case a delegate wishes to remove its name from the General Speakers' List, he/she should require so by sending a note to the dais. The normal flow of debate (the Speakers' List) will only be interrupted in two occasions: with the Introduction of a Draft Amendment or in a Crisis Situation. Such scenarios will be explained further ahead in this document.

Between each speech, the dais will ask if there are Points or Motions, moment in which delegates can raise their placards to ask for the floor and then raise a Point or a Motion. If a Motion is approved, the chair will ask, in due cases, if there are Points on the floor, since there can be no Motion requests while another motion is in force.

¹ Source: <http://www.unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un/how-to-participate/model-un-preparation>



During debate, delegates may send and receive Diplomatic Notes. These are an unofficial method and informal method of communication between delegates. Using a sheet or part of it, a delegate writes a message, folds it, writes the name of the sender and the receiver, then asks for the closest delegate to forward it until it reaches its receiver.

It is important to highlight that the dress code of the conference is Western Business Attire. Countries whose culture admit other garments as official and formal may dress accordingly.

Finally, the Quorum to initiate a Session is of a simple majority, which is half plus one of the total number of representatives in the committee. For the Session to follow its normal flow of debate it is also necessary to have a simple majority present. A qualified majority equals two thirds of the representations in a committee or, in the case of voting, “yes” should have twice the number of “no”.

Points

Points should be raised only when the dais yields the floor to a delegate. Points are a punctual question, request or clarification. There are three types of Points:

Point of Personal Privilege: whenever a delegate experiences personal or physical discomfort which impairs his or her ability to participate in the proceedings, he or she may raise a point of personal privilege to request that the discomfort be corrected. While a point of personal privilege may interrupt a speaker, delegates should use this power with the utmost discretion.

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: when the floor is open, a delegate may raise a point of parliamentary inquiry to ask the Moderator a question regarding the Rules of Procedure. A point of parliamentary inquiry may never interrupt a speaker. Delegates with questions related to substance, schedule or logistics should not raise this point, but should rather approach the committee staff at an appropriate time.



Point of Order: during the discussion of any matter, a delegate may raise a point of order to indicate an instance of improper use of parliamentary procedure. The point of order will be immediately ruled upon by the Moderator in accordance with these Rules of Procedure. The Moderator may rule out of order those points that are dilatory or improper; such a decision cannot be appealed. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. A point of order may only interrupt a speaker when the speech itself is not following proper parliamentary procedure or in case a procedure should be corrected immediately.

Motions related to the Flow of Debate

The word motion is related to movement, dynamics. Thus, it is used to modify the flow of debate. The normal flow of debate is the General Speakers' List. Motions are raised to change the dynamics of the debate for a limited time.

Unmoderated Caucus: an Unmoderated Caucus temporarily suspends formal debate and allows members to discuss ideas informally in the committee room. A motion for an Unmoderated Caucus is in order at any time when the floor is open, prior to Closure of Debate. The delegate making the motion must briefly explain the purpose² of the motion and specify a time limit for the caucus, not to exceed twenty minutes. The motion will be put to a vote immediately, and a simple majority is required for passage. The Moderator may rule the motion dilatory and his or her decision is not subject to appeal. The Moderator may prematurely end an Unmoderated Caucus if the Moderator feels that the caucus has ceased to be productive, and this decision is not subject to appeal. A motion to extend the Unmoderated Caucus is in order immediately after the end of such Caucus. The dais can accept the motion or not based on the productivity of the previous debate and its decision is non-appealable. Asking for the extension of a debate means that it will be reproduced for the same time and for the same reason. A

² The productivity of the debate will be judged by the delegates capacity to discuss only the topic at hand, as well as their capacity to substantively discuss such topic.



simple majority is required for its approval. No extensions to debate already extended shall be accepted.

Moderated Caucus: the purpose of the Moderated Caucus is to facilitate substantive debate at critical junctures in the discussion. Such procedure also puts the General Speakers' List on hold. A motion for a Moderated Caucus is in order at any time when the floor is open, prior to closure of debate. The delegate making the motion must briefly specify a topic³, a speaking time, and an overall time limit, not to exceed twenty minutes, for the caucus. Once raised, the motion will be voted on immediately, with a simple majority required for passage. The Moderator may rule the motion dilatory and his or her decision is not subject to appeal. There being no point or motion that may take precedence over the motion for a Moderated Caucus, the latter will be voted upon immediately, requiring simple majority to be approved. If it passes, the delegate who raised the motion can choose to be the first speaker in the motion or the last and all delegates who wish to speak can only debate about the proposed topic for the motion. Furthermore, the Moderator will call on delegates to speak at his or her discretion for the stipulated time. Only speeches will be counted against the overall time of the caucus, and each speech will be counted as taking up the full duration of the speaking time. If no delegates wish to speak, the Moderated Caucus will immediately conclude, even if time remains in the caucus. The moderator may also decide, subject to appeal, to suspend the caucus early. A delegate can also raise a motion to extend the Moderated Caucus. If the dais judges that the previous debate was productive, it may accept the motion. Otherwise, its decision cannot be appealed. A simple majority is required for the motion to pass. Upon asking for the Extension of the Moderated Caucus, the overall time limit, the speaking time and the topic discussed will remain the same as previously. There will be no extensions to debates already extended.

Closure of Debate: when the floor is open, a delegate may move to close debate on the substantive or procedural matter under discussion. The Moderator may, subject to

³ The specific topic for a Moderated Caucus will be the focus of the discussion for its duration. Matters that do not involve such topic must be discussed in a proper moment. The dais can end the Moderated caucus if delegates are not respecting the topic for which the Moderated Caucus was proposed.



appeal, rule such a motion dilatory. When closure of debate is moved, the Moderator may recognize up to two speakers against the motion. No speaker in favor of the motion will be recognized. Closure of debate requires a two-thirds majority to pass. If the committee is in favor of closure, the Moderator will declare the closure of debate, and the resolutions or amendment on the floor will be brought to an immediate vote. If the speakers' list is exhausted and no delegations wish to add their name to the list, debate on the topic at hand is immediately closed.

Adjournment of the Session: when given the floor, a delegate may move for the Adjournment of the Session. This motion can only be raised if there are, at least, 10 minutes left before the end of the Session according to the official schedule of the conference. If approved, the committee shall suspend its activities until the next Session. A simple majority is required for its approval.

Suspension of the Session: this motion will not be recognized until three quarters of the last session have elapsed. The dais can accept or not this motion and its decision is not subject to appeal. Upon requesting this motion, there will be no debate about such and, if accepted by the dais, it shall be immediately put to a vote. If accepted, the committee suspends all functions until the next meeting.

Motions and Procedure related to Speeches

Speeches: no delegate may address a session without having previously obtained the permission of the Moderator, even to raise points or motions. The Moderator may call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion, or offensive to committee members or staff. Delegates who are absent when recognized by the dais automatically forfeit their time, and debate will continue.

Speaking Time: as previously mentioned, the initial speaking time is set to one minute. Delegates may also make a motion to set a new speaking time at any time when points or motions are in order during formal debate. This motion requires a simple majority to



pass. A delegate granted the right to speak from a speakers' list may, after speaking and having more than 10 seconds left, yield in one of three ways: to another delegate, to questions, or to the dais.

- **Yield to another delegate:** any remaining time will be given to that delegate, who may not, however, then yield any remaining time to a third delegate. To turn the floor over to a co-delegate is not considered a yield.
- **Yield to questions:** questioners will be selected by the Moderator and limited to one question each. Only the speaker's answers to questions will be deducted from the speaker's remaining time.
- **Yield to the chair:** Such a yield should be made if the delegate has finished speaking and does not wish to yield to another delegate or to questions. The Moderator will then move to the next speaker. The chair will then proceed with debate.

Yields are in order only on substantive speeches and not during Moderated Caucus. If a delegate has less than 10 seconds of speaking time, these shall not be yielded and it is considered that a speech is concluded after a delegate finishes his/her speech.

Comments: If a relevant speech is followed by no yields, the Moderator may recognize two delegations, other than the initial speaker, to comment for thirty seconds each on the specific content of the speech just completed. The Moderator will ask for delegations willing to comment and will then select one at a time. Delegates who make comments may not yield. No comments will be in order during debate on procedural motions, Moderated Caucus, or debate on amendments.

Right of Reply: A delegate whose personal or national integrity has been impugned by another delegate may request in writing a Right of Reply. The Reply, if granted, will take the form of a thirty-second speech and shall use such time for personal defense, not provoking further conflict. The Moderator's decision whether to grant the Right of Reply cannot be appealed, and a delegate granted a Right of Reply will not address the



committee until requested to do so by the Moderator. To request the Right of Reply, a delegate must address the dais in written form asking for such.

Motions, Documents and Procedure related to Substantive Matters

Official format for all documents produced in the conference: Times New Roman, 12, justified, spacing between lines 1,5. Titles shall be written in bold. Footnotes shall be written in size 10. Alterations may only be done by the chair for printing purposes.

Working Papers: delegates may propose working papers for committee consideration. Working papers are intended to aid the committee in its discussion and formulation of resolutions and it may also include news, data, statistics, excerpts from previous resolutions or conventions, images and other information in any format that may be useful for debate. To introduce such document to the committee, it shall be presented to the chair, which will approve it or ask for its review. Working papers are not official documents, thus do not require formal introduction by a motion nor have signatories. Once approved, a Working Paper will be printed or presented to the committee in digital format and the chair will provide enough time for its reading. If time allows, the dais may ask the delegate who submitted the document to read it out loud to the committee. Delegates shall not refer to working papers under analysis for approval or not yet written.

Draft Resolutions: a Draft Resolution may be introduced when the dais receives a proposal that meets the criteria for its approval. A Draft Resolution must have at least eight signatories, highlighting that only official representations of a given committee may sign a Draft Resolution. This document is divided in perambulatory and operative clauses. It must also contain a heading only in its first page pointing the number of the Draft Resolution, the committee, topic area, date and headquarters of the committee⁴, as well as the United Nations logo. Signing a Draft Resolution need not indicate support of

⁴ The headquarter is the official location of the committee. E.g.: United Nations Security Council, New York, New York, United States of America.



the document, and the signatory has no further rights or obligations and may sign more than one draft resolution. The Director's decision not to approve a Draft Resolution may not be appealed. Draft Resolutions require a simple majority to pass. More than one Draft Resolution may be on the floor at any one time, but at most one Resolution may be passed, becoming the official resolution of a committee. No reference shall be made to Draft Resolutions that have not been introduced to the committee yet.

Introducing Draft Resolutions: once a Draft Resolution has been approved as stipulated above and has been copied and distributed in printed or digital format, a delegate may make a motion to introduce the Draft Resolution. This motion requires only authorization by the Moderator and does not require a substantive vote. The dais staff, time permitting, may ask one or more signatories to read the clauses of the Draft Resolution. Immediately after a Draft Resolution has been introduced and distributed, the Moderator may entertain non-substantive clarificatory points, typically used to address typographical, spelling, or punctuation errors. Substantive alterations may only be made by Amendments once a Draft Resolution is introduced. After its correction, one of the signatories may speak about the Draft Resolution for up to two minutes and the chair will entertain no more than five questions. A Draft Resolution will remain on the floor until debate is postponed or a Draft Resolution on that topic area has been passed.

Amendments: delegates may amend any Draft Resolution that has been formally introduced to the committee. Amendments cannot alter perambulatory clauses. An amendment must have the approval of the Director and the signatures of four official representatives in the committee at least. Amendments must be presented with the title "Draft Amendment" and numbered by the dais. It must be written in the format of clauses, clearly indicating the type of amendment that is being proposed. Amendments to amendments are out of order; however, an amended part of a Draft Resolution may be further amended. All amendments on the floor must be debated and voted upon. There are three types of amendments: addition, modification and removal. A Draft



Amendment can have more than one of the types exposed above and must clearly contain which clauses are being amended in which way.

Introducing an Amendment: an approved Draft Amendment by the dais can be introduced by rising a motion for the Introduction of the Draft Amendment. Such motion requires only authorization by the Moderator. An approved amendment may be introduced when the floor is open. General debate will be suspended and two speakers' lists will be established, one for and one against the amendment. Debate will alternate between each list.

A motion to close debate will be in order after the committee has heard two speakers for the motion and two against, or when one of the speakers' lists is exhausted. In accordance with the normal procedure, the Moderator will recognize two speakers against the motion to close debate, and a two-thirds majority is required for closure of debate.

When debate is closed on the amendment, the Committee will move to an immediate vote. Votes on amendments are substantive votes, thus only official representations in the committee shall vote. After the vote, debate will return to the General Speakers' List.

Motions related to Voting

Division of the Question: after debate on a topic area or amendment has been closed, a delegate may move to divide the question on any item which is about to be voted on. Division of the question means that a specified set of operative clauses may be voted on separately from the rest. Preambulatory clauses may not be removed by division of the question. The motion may be debated to the extent of two speakers for and two speakers against. This motion requires a qualified majority to pass:



If the motion passes, the Moderator will automatically enforce a ten-minute Unmoderated Caucus and will accept proposals on how to divide the question. Such proposals may divide the question into two or more parts. After all proposals have been accepted, the Moderator will arrange them from most severe to least, and each will be voted on, in that order. If no division passes, the Draft Resolution or amendment remains intact.

If any proposal passes, all other proposals are discarded and the Draft Resolution is divided accordingly. A substantive vote must then be taken on each divided part to determine whether or not it is included in the final draft. A simple majority is required for inclusion of each part. After all divided parts have been voted on, those that were voted to be included are recombined into the final Draft Resolution, which must then be voted upon under regular Rules of Procedure. If all of the operative parts of the substantive proposal are rejected, the proposal will be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Reordering Draft Resolutions: the default order in which Draft Resolutions are voted on is the order in which they were introduced. After debate on a topic has been closed, a delegate may motion to change the order in which Draft Resolutions on the committee floor will be voted on. Once such a motion has been made, the Moderator will accept proposals for ordering. Delegates with a reordering proposal shall raise their placards and express it once they're given the floor. Proposals will be voted on in the order in which they were received and require a simple majority to pass; once a proposal has been passed, all others are discarded and Draft Resolutions will be voted on in that order.

Voting: Once committee is in voting procedure and all relevant motions have been entertained, the committee will vote on the Draft Resolutions and Amendments on the floor. Voting occurs on each Draft Resolution and Amendment in succession. In all matters, both substantive and procedural, each country will have one vote. Countries that are not official members of a committee do not vote on substantive matters.



Each vote may be a “Yes,” “No,” or “Abstain”. All matters will be voted upon by placards, except in the case of a roll call vote. After the Moderator has announced the beginning of voting, no delegate will interrupt the voting except on a point of personal privilege or on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. In procedural matters, countries shall not abstain and thus a simple majority requires more “Yes” votes than “No” votes and a two-thirds (qualified) majority vote requires at least twice as many “Yes” votes as “No” votes. Regarding substantive matters, there may be abstentions, thus the simple majority equals half of the representatives plus one (50% +1) and a qualified majority requires two thirds (2/3) of the total number of official members in the committee. Abstentions are not counted toward either total.

Roll Call Voting: After debate is closed on any topic area or amendment, any delegate may request a roll call vote. A motion for a roll call vote is in order only for voting Draft Resolutions. The Moderator’s decision whether to accept the motion for a roll call vote may not be appealed. Voting will be at the discretion of the Director in all other committees.

In a roll call vote, the Moderator will call all countries noted by the dais to be in attendance in alphabetical order starting with a randomly selected member. In the first sequence, delegates may vote “Yes,” “No,” “Abstain,” “Pass,” “Yes with rights,” or “No with rights.” A delegate who passes during the first sequence of the roll call must vote “Yes” or “No” during the second sequence. The same delegate may not request the right of explanation.

A delegate may only request the right of explanation if his or her vote appears to constitute a divergence from his or her country’s policy and if he or she votes “Yes with rights” or “No with rights” in the first round of voting. After all delegates have voted, delegates who stated their vote with rights will be granted 30 seconds each to explain their votes. The Moderator will then announce the outcome of the vote.



Crisis Situation

The chair may declare a Crisis Situation in the committee during the normal flow of debate. This scenario involves an event of international repercussion and requires the committee's immediate attention to solve it by the means of a resolution. As mentioned in the first section of this document, the Crisis Situation interrupts the normal flow of debate, temporarily suspending the Speakers' List and debate on the main topic of the committee through the opening of a Special Speakers' List, which will redirect the committee's discussions to the current problem. Motions and points are normally in order. The solution to a Crisis takes the form of a resolution, which can be introduced and amended according to the same rules presented in this document. After the closure of debate on the Crisis, Draft Resolutions about the latter will be voted upon and once they're approved or rejected the normal flow of debate will be resumed. It is stressed that declaring an Emergency Crisis is completely up to the chair's discretion.

Precedence of Points and Motions

Points and Motions will be considered in the following order of preference. If a point or motion is on the floor, points or motions lower on this list are out of order. If a motion is raised twice in the same moment, the one with greater

1. Points

- a. Personal Privilege;
- b. Order;
- c. Parliamentary Inquiry;

2. Procedural Motions that are not debatable:

- a. Adjournment of the Session;
- b. Suspension of the Session;
- c. Unmoderated Caucus;
- d. Moderated Caucus;
- e. Set a new Speaking Time;
- f. Introduction of the Draft Resolution;



g. Introduction of the Draft Amendment;

3. Procedural Motions that are Applicable to a Draft Resolution or Amendment Under Consideration:

- a. Closure of Debate;
- b. Reordering Resolutions;
- c. Division of the Question;
- d. Roll Call Vote.

Majority, Motions and Documents

1. **Motions that require simple majority:** Unmoderated Caucus, Moderated Caucus, Adjournment of the Session, Set a new Speaking Time, Reordering Draft Resolutions;
2. **Motions that require a qualified majority:** Closure of Debate, Suspension of the Session, Division of the Question;
3. **Motions that require only the authorization of the Moderator:** Introduction of the Draft Resolution, Introduction of the Draft Amendment, Roll Call Vote;
4. **Documents that require simple majority:** Draft Resolution, Draft Amendment;
5. **Procedures that involve the opening of a Special Speakers' List:** Introduction of a Draft Amendment and Crisis Situation.