

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*(embodying amendments and additions
adopted by the General Assembly
up to 31 December 1984)*



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INTRODUCTION

1. At its first regular session, the General Assembly adopted provisional rules of procedure (A/71/Rev.1) based on a text contained in the report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations.¹

2. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 102 (I) of 15 December 1946, established the Committee on Procedures and Organization, consisting of 15 Member States.

3. At its second session, the General Assembly considered the report of the Committee on Procedures and Organization,² which contained draft rules of procedure proposed by the Committee,³ and, by resolution 173 (II) of 17 November 1947, adopted its rules of procedure. These rules entered into force on 1 January 1948.

4. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 116 (II) of 21 November 1947, decided to add new rules 113, 114, 116 and 117,⁴ relating to the admission of new Members.

5. At its third session, the General Assembly, by resolution 262 (III) of 11 December 1948, decided to include Spanish among its working languages and to amend accordingly rules 44 to 48.⁵

6. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 271 (III) of 29 April 1949, established the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly, consisting of 15 Member States.

7. At its fourth session, the General Assembly considered the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly⁶ and, by resolution 362 (IV) of 22 October 1949, decided:

(a) To amend rules 14, 31, 33, 35, 59, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 72, 80, 81, 82, 97, 98, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 110, 117, 118 and 119,⁷

(b) To add new rules 1A, 19, 19B, 19C, 31A, 35A, 35B, 56A, 89A and 97A.⁸

By the same resolution, the General Assembly adopted several of the recommendations and suggestions of the Special Committee and requested

¹ PC/20, chap. I, sect. 3

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Plenary Meetings*, vol. II, annex IV, document A/388.

³ *Ibid.*, document A/388, part III.

⁴ Rules 134, 135, 137 and 138 of the present rules of procedure.

⁵ Rules 51 to 55 of the present rules of procedure.

⁶ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourth Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/937).

⁷ Rules 15, 35, 38, 40, 66, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76, 79, 88, 89, 90, 106, 108, 113, 114, 116, 117, 118, 121, 128, 129 and 130 of the present rules of procedure.

⁸ Rules 2, 20, 22, 23, 36, 41, 42, 62, 99 and 107 of the present rules of procedure.

the Secretary-General to prepare a document embodying these recommendations and suggestions in a convenient form for use by the General Committee and delegations of Member States in the Assembly. The text of these recommendations and suggestions is reproduced in annex I.

8. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 366 (IV) of 3 December 1949, adopted rules for the calling by the Economic and Social Council, under Article 62, paragraph 4, of the Charter, of international conferences of States.

9. At its fifth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 377 A (V) of 3 November 1950, adopted several amendments and additions to its rules of procedure relating to the holding of emergency special sessions; by that resolution, the Assembly decided:

- (a) To add a paragraph (b) to rule 8;
- (b) To add a paragraph (b) to rule 9;
- (c) To insert a new sentence at the end of rule 10;
- (d) To insert a new sentence at the end of rule 16;
- (e) To insert a new sentence at the end of rule 19;
- (f) To insert a new rule 65.⁹

10. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 475 (V) of 1 November 1950, adopted a new rule 84A¹⁰ concerning the majority required for decisions of the Assembly on amendments to proposals relating to important questions and on parts of such proposals put to the vote separately.

11. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 479 (V) of 12 December 1950, adopted rules for the calling by the Economic and Social Council, under Article 62, paragraph 4, of the Charter, of non-governmental conferences.

12. At its sixth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 597 (VI) of 20 December 1951, established the Special Committee for the Consideration of the Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly for Dealing with Legal and Drafting Questions, consisting of 15 Member States.

13. At its seventh session, the General Assembly considered the report of the Special Committee for the Consideration of the Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly for Dealing with Legal and Drafting Questions¹¹ and, by resolution 684 (VII) of 6 November 1952, adopted certain recommendations contained in that report; the resolution also provided that:

- (a) The terms of these recommendations should be embodied as an annex to the rules of procedure;
- (b) The said annex should also reproduce paragraphs 19, 20, 29, 30 and 35 to 39 of the report of the Special Committee.

⁹ Rule 63 of the present rules of procedure.

¹⁰ Rule 84 of the present rules of procedure.

¹¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventh Session, Annexes*, agenda item 53, document A/2174.

The texts of the recommendations and the specified parts of the report of the Special Committee are reproduced in annex II.

14. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 689 A (VII) of 21 December 1952, established the Special Committee on Measures to Limit the Duration of Regular Sessions of the General Assembly, consisting of 15 Member States. By resolution 689 B (VII) of the same date, the General Assembly adopted an amendment to rule 2 whereby the Assembly would, at the beginning of each session, fix "a closing date for the session" rather than "a target date for the closing of the session"

15. At its eighth session, the General Assembly considered the report of the Special Committee on Measures to Limit the Duration of Regular Sessions of the General Assembly¹² and, by resolution 791 (VIII) of 23 October 1953, decided:

(a) To amend rules 38 and 39, relating to the composition of the General Committee;

(b) To amend rule 98,¹³ relating to priorities in the consideration of items in the Main Committees.

16. At its ninth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 844 (IX) of 11 October 1954, adopted six special rules designed to govern its procedure for the examination of reports and petitions relating to the Territory of South West Africa.¹⁴ The text of these special rules is reproduced in annex III.

17. At its eleventh session, the General Assembly, at the 577th plenary meeting on 15 November 1956, decided:

(a) To establish an eighth vice-presidency of the Assembly;

(b) To change the name of the "Ad Hoc Political Committee" to "Special Political Committee" and to confer a permanent character on that Committee.

At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 1104 (XI) of 18 December 1956, adopted consequential amendments to rules 31, 38, 39 and 101.¹⁵

18. At its twelfth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 1192 (XII) of 12 December 1957, decided to increase the number of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly from 8 to 13 and adopted consequential amendments to rules 31 and 38. In an annex to the resolution, the General Assembly approved the pattern according to which the Vice-Presidents should be elected.

19. At its sixteenth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 1659 (XVI) of 28 November 1961, decided to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from 9 to 12 and adopted consequential amendments to rules 156 and 157.¹⁶

¹² *Ibid.*, Eighth Session, Annexes, agenda item 54, document A/2402.

¹³ Rule 99 of the present rules of procedure.

¹⁴ By resolution 2372 (XXII) of 12 June 1968, the General Assembly decided that "South West Africa" would be known as "Namibia".

¹⁵ Rule 98 of the present rules of procedure.

¹⁶ Rules 155 and 156 of the present rules of procedure.

20. At its seventeenth session, the General Assembly, at the 1162nd plenary meeting on 30 October 1962, established the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly, consisting of 18 members. By resolution 1845 (XVII) of 19 December 1962, the General Assembly decided to continue the *Ad Hoc* Committee.

21. At its eighteenth session, the General Assembly considered the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly¹⁷ and, by resolution 1898 (XVIII) of 11 November 1963, took note of the observations contained in that report and approved the recommendations submitted by the Committee. The text of the resolution is reproduced in annex IV.

22. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 1990 (XVIII) of 17 December 1963, decided to increase the number of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly from 13 to 17 and adopted consequential amendments to rules 31 and 38. In an annex to the resolution, the General Assembly approved the pattern according to which the President of the Assembly, the 17 Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the 7 Chairmen of the Main Committees should be elected.

23. At its twentieth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2046 (XX) of 8 December 1965, following the entry into force of the amendments to Articles 23, 27 and 61 of the Charter, amended its rules of procedure as follows:

(a) In rule 8 (b), the word "seven" was replaced by the word "nine";

(b) In rule 143,¹⁸ the word "three" was replaced by the word "five";

(c) In rule 146,¹⁹ the word "six" was replaced by the word "nine".

The pattern for the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council is reproduced in a footnote to rule 142.

24. At its twenty-second session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2323 (XXII) of 16 December 1967, decided to amend rules 89 and 128²⁰ by adding to each of these rules a new paragraph (b) to take into account the installation of mechanical means of voting.

25. At the same session, the General Assembly, at the 1629th plenary meeting on 13 December 1967, took note of a correction to the French version of rule 15²¹ whereby the words "*caractère d'importance ou d'urgence*" in the first sentence of that rule were replaced by the words "*caractère d'importance et d'urgence*".

26. At its twenty-third session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2390 (XXIII) of 25 November 1968, decided to increase the membership

¹⁷ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

¹⁸ Rule 142 of the present rules of procedure.

¹⁹ Rule 145 of the present rules of procedure.

²⁰ Rules 87 and 127 of the present rules of procedure.

²¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-second Session, Annexes*, agenda item 8, document A/BUR/169.

of the Committee on Contributions from 10 to 12 and adopted a consequential amendment to rule 159.²²

27. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2479 (XXIII) of 21 December 1968, decided to include Russian among its working languages and to amend accordingly rule 51.

28. At its twenty-fourth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2553 (XXIV) of 12 December 1969, adopted amendments to rules 52, 53 and 55²³ consequent upon the amendment to rule 51 adopted at the twenty-third session.

29. At its twenty-fifth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2632 (XXV) of 9 November 1970, established the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly, consisting of 31 Member States.

30. At its twenty-sixth session, the General Assembly considered the report of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly²⁴ and, by resolution 2837 (XXVI) of 17 December 1971, decided:

(a) To amend rule 60²⁵ to reflect the practice of the General Assembly and its committees regarding the records and sound recordings of meetings;

(b) To amend rules 69 and 110²⁶ to authorize the presiding officer to declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the members of the General Assembly or one quarter of the members of a committee are present;

(c) To amend rules 74 and 115²⁷ to permit no more than two representatives to speak in favour, and two against, a proposal to limit the time to be allowed to each speaker or the number of times each representative may speak on any question;

(d) To amend rule 100 to include in it more detailed provisions relating to the organization of work of the Main Committees, and to renumber it rule 101²⁸ (former rule 101 became rule 100²⁹);

(e) To amend rule 105³⁰ to provide that:

(i) Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur;

(ii) Each other committee shall elect a Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur;

²² Rule 158 of the present rules of procedure.

²³ See introduction, para. 34.

²⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 26 (A/8426)*.

²⁵ Rule 58 of the present rules of procedure.

²⁶ Rules 67 and 108 of the present rules of procedure.

²⁷ Rules 72 and 114 of the present rules of procedure.

²⁸ Rule 99 of the present rules of procedure.

²⁹ Rule 98 of the present rules of procedure.

³⁰ Rule 103 of the present rules of procedure.

- (iii) Elections shall be held by secret ballot unless the committee decides otherwise in an election where only one candidate is standing;
- (iv) The nomination of each candidate shall be limited to one speaker, after which the committee shall immediately proceed to the election.

and to adopt consequential amendments to rules 39 and 107;³¹

(f) To insert a new rule 112,³² relating to congratulations to the officers of Main Committees, and to renumber accordingly the existing rules 112 to 164.³³

By resolution 2837 (XXVI), the General Assembly also approved the conclusions of the Special Committee and decided that they should be annexed to the rules of procedure; these conclusions are reproduced in annex V. In one of the recommendations,³⁴ the Secretary-General was requested to undertake a comparative study of the versions of the rules of procedure in the various official languages in order to ensure their concordance; this request was complied with and the relevant editing changes were incorporated in the rules.

31. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2798 (XXVI) of 13 December 1971, decided to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from 12 to 13 and adopted a consequential amendment to rule 157.³⁵

32. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, decided to amend Article 61 of the Charter to increase from 27 to 54 the number of members of the Economic and Social Council. By that resolution, the General Assembly also decided that, upon the entry into force of the amendment to the Charter, the word "nine" in rule 147³⁶ would be replaced by the word "eighteen". The amendment to the Charter entered into force on 24 September 1973. The pattern for the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, as set forth in resolution 2847 (XXVI), is reproduced in a footnote to rule 145.

33. At its twenty-seventh session, the General Assembly, by resolution 2913 (XXVII) of 9 November 1972, decided to increase the membership of the Committee on Contributions from 12 to 13 and adopted a consequential amendment to rule 160.³⁷

34. At its twenty-eighth session, the General Assembly, by resolutions 3189 (XXVIII) and 3190 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, decided:

(a) To include Chinese among the working languages of the General Assembly, its committees and its subcommittees;

³¹ Rule 105 of the present rules of procedure.

³² Rule 110 of the present rules of procedure.

³³ Rules 111 to 163 of the present rules of procedure.

³⁴ Resolution 2837 (XXVI), annex II, para. 128.

³⁵ Rule 155 of the present rules of procedure.

³⁶ Rule 145 of the present rules of procedure.

³⁷ Rule 158 of the present rules of procedure.

(b) To include Arabic among the official and the working languages of the General Assembly and its Main Committees.

By resolution 3191 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, the General Assembly adopted consequential amendments to its rules of procedure, whereby rules 51 to 59 were replaced by new rules 51 to 57, and rules 60 to 165 were renumbered accordingly.

35. At its thirty-first session, the General Assembly, by resolution 31/95 of 14 December 1976, decided to increase the membership of the Committee on Contributions from 13 to 18 and, by resolution 31/96 of the same date, adopted a consequential amendment to rule 158.

36. At its thirty-second session, the General Assembly, by resolution 32/103 of 14 December 1977, decided to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions from 13 to 16 and adopted a consequential amendment to rule 155. By the same resolution, the General Assembly also decided:

(a) To adopt an amendment to rule 156 whereby the members of the Advisory Committee would serve for a period of three years corresponding to "three calendar years" rather than "three financial years, as defined in the Financial Regulations of the United Nations";

(b) To amend rule 157 to take into account, *inter alia*, the biennial presentation of the budget.

37. At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly, by resolution 33/12 of 3 November 1978, adopted an amendment to rule 159 whereby the members of the Committee on Contributions would serve for a period of three years corresponding to "three calendar years" rather than "three financial years, as defined in the Financial Regulations of the United Nations".

38. At the same session, the General Assembly, by resolution 33/138 of 19 December 1978, decided to increase the number of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly from 17 to 21 and adopted consequential amendments to rules 31 and 38. In an annex to the resolution, which replaced the annex to resolution 1990 (XVIII),³⁸ the General Assembly approved the pattern according to which the President of the Assembly, the 21 Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the 7 Chairmen of the Main Committees should be elected; the text of that annex is reproduced in a footnote to rule 31.

39. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly, by decision 34/401 of 21 September, 25 October, 29 November and 12 December 1979, adopted a number of provisions concerning the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the Assembly. Sections I to V of the decision are reproduced in annex VI.

40. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly, by resolutions 35/219 A and B of 17 December 1980, decided to include Arabic among the official and working languages of the subsidiary organs of the Assembly, no later than 1 January 1982, and adopted consequential amendments to rules 51, 52, 54 and 56.

³⁸ See introduction, para. 22.

41. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly, by resolution 39/88 B of 13 December 1984, approved the conclusions of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization concerning the rationalization of the procedures of the General Assembly and decided that they should be annexed to the rules of procedure; these conclusions are reproduced in annex VII.

42. The present revised edition of the rules of procedure embodies all the amendments adopted by the General Assembly up to and including its thirty-ninth session.

43. The previous versions of the rules of procedure and of the amendments and corrigenda thereto have been issued under the following symbols:

December 1947	A/520
June 1948	A/520/Corr.1 (French only)
January 1950	A/520/Rev.1
January 1951	A/520/Rev.2
July 1954	A/520/Rev.3
March 1956	A/520/Rev.4
September 1957	A/520/Rev.5 (formerly A/3660)
January 1958	A/520/Rev.5/Corr.1 (formerly A/3660/Corr.1)
February 1961	A/520/Rev.6 (formerly A/4700)
February 1962	A/520/Rev.6/Corr.1 (formerly A/4700/Corr.1)
June 1964	A/520/Rev.7
March 1966	A/520/Rev.8
January 1968	A/520/Rev.9
April 1969	A/520/Rev.9/Corr.1
July 1970	A/520/Rev.10
May 1972	A/520/Rev.11
November 1973	A/520/Rev.11/Amend.1
February 1974	A/520/Rev.12
January 1977	A/520/Rev.12/Amend.1
March 1978	A/520/Rev.12/Amend.2
March 1979	A/520/Rev.13
March 1982	A/520/Rev.14

May 1985

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Rules 49, 82, 83, 85, 144, 146 and 161, which reproduce textually provisions of the Charter, are printed in bold type and are, in addition, provided with a footnote. A footnote has also been added to other rules which, while based directly on provisions of the Charter, do not reproduce those provisions textually.

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.

Attention is drawn to rule 162, which provides that the italicized headings of the rules, which were inserted for reference purposes only, shall be disregarded in the interpretation of the rules.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

I. SESSIONS

REGULAR SESSIONS

Opening date

Rule 1¹

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

Closing date

Rule 2²

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

Place of meeting

Rule 3

The General Assembly shall meet at the Headquarters of the United Nations unless convened elsewhere in pursuance of a decision taken 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 this 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.

¹ Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 20).

² See introduction, paras. 7 and 14; see also annex V, para. 4.

Temporary 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 7³

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

Summoning at the request of the Security Council or Members

Rule 8⁴

(a) Special sessions of the General Assembly shall be convened within fifteen days of the receipt by the Secretary-General of a request for such a session from the Security Council or from a majority of the Members of the United Nations or of the concurrence of a majority of Members as provided in rule 9.

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

Request by Members

Rule 9⁵

(a) Any Member of the United Nations may request the Secretary-General to convene a special session of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General shall immediately inform the other Members 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 convened in accordance with rule 8.

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

³ Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 20).

⁴ See introduction, paras. 9 and 23.

⁵ See introduction, para. 9.

Notification of session

Rule 10⁵

The Secretary-General shall notify the Members of the United Nations, at least fourteen days in advance, of the opening of a special session convened at the request of the Security Council, and at least ten days in advance in the case of a session convened at the request of a majority of the Members or upon the concurrence of a majority in the request of any Member. In the case of an emergency special session convened pursuant to rule 8 (b), the Secretary-General shall notify Members at least twelve hours before the opening of the session.

REGULAR AND SPECIAL SESSIONS

Notification to other bodies

Rule 11

Copies of the notice convening each session of the General Assembly 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) The 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 and the 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;⁶

⁶ See annex V, para. 18, and annex VII, para. 2.

(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;

(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.⁶ Such items shall be placed on a supplementary list, which shall be communicated to Members at least twenty days before the opening of the session.

Additional items

Rule 15⁷

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, unless the General Assembly decides otherwise by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, be considered until seven days have elapsed since it was placed on the agenda and until a committee has reported upon the question concerned.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

Provisional agenda

Rule 16⁸

The provisional agenda of a special session convened 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 convened at the request of a majority of the Members, or upon the concurrence of a majority in the request of any Member, shall be communicated at least ten days before the opening of the session. The provisional agenda of an emergency special session shall be communicated to Members simultaneously with the communication convening the session.

⁷ See introduction, paras. 7 and 25; see also annex V, paras. 18 and 24.

⁸ See introduction, para. 9.

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 Members as soon as possible.

Additional items

Rule 19⁸

During a special session, items on the supplementary list and additional items may be added to the agenda by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. During an emergency special session, additional items concerning the matters dealt with in resolution 377 A (V) may be added to the agenda by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

REGULAR AND SPECIAL SESSIONS

Explanatory memorandum

Rule 20⁹

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

Adoption of the agenda

Rule 21¹⁰

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 22¹¹

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

⁹ See introduction, para. 7; see also annex V, para. 18.

¹⁰ See annex V, paras. 19–23, and annex VII, paras. 1 and 2.

¹¹ See introduction, para. 7.

Debate on inclusion of items

Rule 23¹¹

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 opening of the session.

III. DELEGATIONS

Composition

Rule 25¹²

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.

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 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

¹² Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 9, para. 2). See annex V, para. 44.

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 Assembly has elected a President for the session.

Elections

Rule 31¹³

The General Assembly shall elect a President and twenty-one Vice-Presidents,¹⁴ who shall hold office until the close of the session at which

¹³ See introduction, paras. 17, 18, 22 and 38.

¹⁴ In the annex to resolution 33/138 of 19 December 1978, the General Assembly decided as follows:

"1. In the election of the President of the General Assembly, regard shall be had for equitable geographical rotation of this office among the regions mentioned in paragraph 4 below.

"2. The twenty-one Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly shall be elected according to the following pattern, subject to paragraph 3 below:

"(a) Six representatives from African States;

"(b) Five representatives from Asian States;

"(c) One representative from an Eastern European State;

"(d) Three representatives from Latin American States;

"(e) Two representatives from Western European or other States;

"(f) Five representatives from the permanent members of the Security Council.

"3. The election of the President of the General Assembly will, however, have the effect of reducing by one the number of vice-presidencies allocated to the region from which the President is elected.

"4. The seven Chairmen of the Main Committees shall be elected according to the following pattern:

"(a) Two representatives from African States;

"(b) One representative from an Asian State;

"(c) One representative from an Eastern European State;

"(d) One representative from a Latin American State;

"(e) One representative from a Western European or other State;

"(f) The seventh chairmanship shall rotate every alternate year among representatives of States mentioned in subparagraphs (b) and (d) above."

they are elected.¹⁵ The Vice-Presidents shall be elected, after the election of the Chairmen of the seven Main Committees referred to in rule 98, in such a way as to ensure 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 designate one of the Vice-Presidents to take his place.

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 35¹⁶ [106]

In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him elsewhere by these rules, the President shall declare the opening and closing of each plenary meeting of the session, 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, 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 36¹⁶ [107]

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

¹⁵ Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 21, second sentence).

¹⁶ See introduction, para. 7; see also annex I, para. 39, annex IV, para. (g), annex V, paras. 39 and 67, annex VI, para. 3, and annex VII, para 7.

The President shall not vote

Rule 37 [104]

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

VI. GENERAL COMMITTEE

Composition

Rule 38¹⁷

The General Committee shall comprise the President of the General Assembly, who shall preside, the twenty-one Vice-Presidents and the Chairmen of the seven Main Committees. No two members of the General Committee shall be members of the same delegation, and it shall be so constituted as to ensure its representative character. 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 39¹⁸

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 to take his place. The Chairman of a Main Committee shall, in case of absence, designate one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee to take his place. A Vice-Chairman shall not have the right to vote if he is of the same delegation as another member of the General Committee.

Functions

Rule 40¹⁹

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

¹⁷ See introduction, paras. 7, 15, 17, 18, 22 and 38.

¹⁸ See introduction, paras. 15, 17 and 30; see also annex V, para. 10.

¹⁹ See introduction, para. 7; see also annex IV, para. (f), annex V, paras. 11-14, annex VI, para. 1, and annex VII, para. 4.

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 41¹⁹

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 co-ordinating the proceedings of all committees of the 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 42²⁰

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 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.

Revision of the form of resolutions

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,²¹ its committees and its subcommittees. He may designate a member of the Secretariat to act in his place at these meetings.

²⁰ See introduction, para. 7, see also annex I, para. 20, annex IV, para. (f), annex V, paras. 13 and 14, annex VI, para. 2, and annex VII, para. 4.

²¹ Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 98).

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 its organs;²² interpret speeches made at the meetings; prepare, print and circulate the records of the session;²³ have the custody and proper preservation of the documents in the archives of the General Assembly; distribute all documents of the Assembly to the Members of the United Nations, and, generally, perform all other work which the Assembly may require.

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

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.²¹ 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 49²⁴

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.

Regulations concerning the Secretariat

Rule 50²⁵

The General Assembly shall establish regulations concerning the staff of the Secretariat.²⁶

²² See annex V, para. 107, and annex VI, paras. 25, 26 and 28-30.

²³ See annex V, para. 108.

²⁴ Rule reproducing textually a provision of the Charter (Art. 12, para. 2).

²⁵ Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 101, para. 1).

²⁶ For the Staff Regulations of the United Nations, see ST/SGB/Staff Regulations/Rev.16.

VIII. LANGUAGES

Official and working languages

Rule 51²⁷

Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be both the official and the working languages of the General Assembly, its committees and its subcommittees.

Interpretation

Rule 52²⁷

Speeches made in any of the six languages of the General Assembly shall be interpreted into the other five languages.

Rule 53²⁷

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

Languages of verbatim and summary records

Rule 54²⁷

Verbatim or summary records shall be drawn up as soon as possible in the languages of the General Assembly.

Languages of the Journal of the United Nations

Rule 55²⁷

During the sessions of the General Assembly, the *Journal of the United Nations* shall be published in the languages of the Assembly.

Languages of resolutions and other documents

Rule 56²⁷

All resolutions and other documents shall be published in the languages of the General Assembly.

Publications in languages other than the languages of the General Assembly

Rule 57²⁷

Documents of the General Assembly, its committees and its subcommittees shall, if the Assembly so decides, be published in any language other than the languages of the Assembly or of the committee concerned.

²⁷ See introduction, paras. 5, 27, 28, 34 and 40.

IX. RECORDS

Records and sound recordings of meetings

Rule 58²⁸

(a) Verbatim records of the meetings of the General Assembly and of the Political and Security Committee (First Committee) shall be drawn up by the Secretariat and submitted to those organs after approval by the presiding officer. The General Assembly shall decide upon the form of the records of the meetings of the other Main Committees and, if any, of the subsidiary organs and of special meetings and conferences. No organ of the General Assembly shall have both verbatim and summary records.

(b) Sound recordings of the meetings of the General Assembly and of the Main Committees shall be made by the Secretariat. Such recordings shall also be made of the proceedings of subsidiary organs and special meetings and conferences when they so decide.

Resolutions

Rule 59

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 close of the session.

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

General principles

Rule 60

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

Private meetings

Rule 61

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

²⁸ See introduction, para. 30; see also annex V, para. 108, and annex VI, para. 27.

XI. MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION

Invitation to silent prayer or meditation

Rule 62²⁹

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

Emergency special sessions

Rule 63³⁰

Notwithstanding the provisions of any other rule and unless the General Assembly decides otherwise, the Assembly, in case of an emergency special session, shall convene in plenary meeting only and proceed directly to consider the item proposed for consideration in the request for the holding of the session, without previous reference to the General Committee or to any other committee; the President and Vice-Presidents for such emergency special sessions shall be, respectively, the chairmen of those delegations from which were elected the President and Vice-Presidents of the previous session.

Report of the Secretary-General

Rule 64

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 65

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 reports of Main Committees

Rule 66³¹

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

²⁹ See introduction, para. 7.

³⁰ See introduction, para. 9.

³¹ See introduction, para. 7; see also annex VI, para. 15.

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 67³² [108]

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

Speeches

Rule 68³³ [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 69 [111]

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

Statements by the Secretariat

Rule 70 [112]

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 71³⁴ [113]

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

³² See introduction, para. 30; see also annex IV, para. (g) (i), annex V, para. 67, and annex VII, para. 7.

³³ See annex IV, para. (g) (ii), annex V, paras. 69-71, and annex VI, para. 17.

³⁴ See introduction, para. 7; see also annex V, para. 79.

a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Time-limit on speeches

Rule 72³⁵ [114]

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. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, a proposal to set such limits. When the debate is limited and a representative exceeds his allotted time, the President shall call him to order without delay.

Closing of list of speakers, right of reply

Rule 73³⁶ [115]

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 74³⁷ [116]

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 75³⁷ [117]

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 76³⁷ [118]

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be

³⁵ See introduction, paras. 7 and 30.

³⁶ See annex V, paras. 46, 69, 77 and 78, and annex VI, paras. 8-11.

³⁷ See introduction, para. 7.

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 77 [119]

Subject to rule 71, the motions indicated below 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) To close the debate on the item under discussion.

Proposals and amendments

Rule 78³⁸ [120]

Proposals and amendments shall normally be submitted in writing 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 such amendments and motions have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

Decisions on competence

Rule 79³⁷ [121]

Subject to rule 77, 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 80 [122]

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 thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any member.

Reconsideration of proposals

Rule 81 [123]

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

³⁸ See annex V, paras. 87 and 88.

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 82³⁹ [124]

Each member of the General Assembly shall have one vote.

Two-thirds majority

Rule 83³⁹

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.

Rule 84⁴⁰

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

Simple majority

Rule 85³⁹ [125]

Decisions of the General Assembly on questions other than those provided for in rule 83, 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.

Meaning of the phrase "members present and voting"

Rule 86 [126]

For the purposes 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.

³⁹ Rules 82, 83 and 85 reproduce the three paragraphs of Article 18 of the Charter.

⁴⁰ See introduction, para. 10; see also annex III, special rule F.

Method of voting

Rule 87⁴¹ [127]

(a) 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.

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

Conduct during voting

Rule 88⁴² [128]

After the President has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual 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 89⁴³ [129]

A representative may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment should 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 approved shall then 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.

⁴¹ See introduction, para. 24; see also annex V, para. 84.

⁴² See introduction, para. 7; see also annex V, paras. 74-76, and annex VI, paras. 6, 7 and 11.

⁴³ See introduction, para. 7.

Voting on amendments

Rule 90⁴³ [130]

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 the proposal.

Voting on proposals

Rule 91 [131]

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 92⁴⁴ [103]

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

Rule 93 [132]

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 143, 144, 146 and 148.

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 ma-

⁴⁴ See annex VI, para. 16.

jority 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 143, 144, 146 and 148.

Equally divided votes

Rule 95 [133]

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

ESTABLISHMENT, OFFICERS, ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Establishment of committees

Rule 96

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

Categories of subjects

Rule 97⁴⁵

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.

Main Committees

Rule 98⁴⁶

The Main Committees of the General Assembly are the following:

(a) Political and Security Committee (including the regulation of armaments) (First Committee);

⁴⁵ See annex I, paras. 22 and 23, annex II, paras. 1, 19 and 20, annex V, paras. 25-28, annex VI, para. 4, and annex VII, para. 3.

⁴⁶ See introduction, paras. 17 and 30; see also annex V, paras. 29-38.

- (b) Special Political Committee;
- (c) Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee);
- (d) Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (Third Committee);
- (e) Trusteeship Committee (including Non-Self-Governing Territories) (Fourth Committee);
- (f) Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee);
- (g) Legal Committee (Sixth Committee).

Organization of work

Rule 99⁴⁷

(a) All the Main Committees shall, during the first week of the session, hold the elections provided for in rule 103.

(b) Each Main Committee, taking into account the closing date for 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. It shall at the beginning of the session adopt a programme of work indicating, if possible, a target date for the conclusion of its work, the approximate dates of consideration of items and the number of meetings to be allocated to each item.

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 established 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 election as Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen or Rapporteurs of committees or for seats in the General Assembly.

Subcommittees

Rule 102⁴⁸

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

⁴⁷ See introduction, paras. 7, 15 and 30; see also annex VI, paras. 21 and 23.

⁴⁸ See annex I, para. 14, annex II, para. 29, annex IV, para. (e), and annex V, para. 66.

Election of officers

Rule 103⁴⁹ [92]

Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. In the case of other committees, each shall elect a Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence. The elections shall be held by secret ballot unless the committee decides otherwise in an election where only one candidate is standing. The nomination of each candidate shall be limited to one speaker, after which the committee shall immediately proceed to the election.

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 105⁵⁰ [32-34]

If the Chairman finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting or any part thereof, he shall designate one of the Vice-Chairmen to 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 106⁵¹ [35]

The Chairman shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the committee, 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 at any meeting and over the maintenance of order thereat. 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, 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.

⁴⁹ See introduction, para. 30; see also annex V, paras. 40 and 54-57, and annex VI, paras. 18-20.

⁵⁰ See introduction, para. 30.

⁵¹ See introduction, para. 7; see also annex I, para. 39, annex IV, para. (g), annex V, paras. 39 and 67, annex VI, paras. 3 and 22, and annex VII, paras. 6 and 7.

Rule 107⁵¹ [36]

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

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Quorum

Rule 108⁵² [67]

The Chairman may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one quarter of the members of the committee are present. The presence of a majority of the members shall be required for any decision to be taken.

Speeches

Rule 109⁵³ [68]

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.

Congratulations

Rule 110⁵⁴

Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session—or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation—after all the officers of the Committee have been elected.

Precedence

Rule 111 [69]

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

Statements by the Secretariat

Rule 112 [70]

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 any committee or subcommittee concerning any question under consideration by it.

⁵² See introduction, paras. 7 and 30.

⁵³ See annex IV, para (g), (ii), annex V, paras. 69-71, and annex VII, para. 6.

⁵⁴ See introduction, para. 30.

Points of order

Rule 113⁵⁵ [71]

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 114⁵⁶ [72]

The committee may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on any question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, a proposal to set such limits. When the debate is limited and a representative exceeds his allotted time, the Chairman shall call him to order without delay.

Closing of list of speakers, right of reply

Rule 115⁵⁷ [73]

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 116⁵⁸ [74]

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 117⁵⁸ [75]

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other representative has

⁵⁵ See introduction, para. 7; see also annex V, para. 79.

⁵⁶ See introduction, paras. 7 and 30.

⁵⁷ See annex V, paras. 69, 77 and 78, annex VI, paras. 8-10, and annex VII, para. 5.

⁵⁸ See introduction, para. 7.

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 118⁵⁸ [76]

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 119 [77]

Subject to rule 113, the motions indicated below 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) To close the debate on the item under discussion.

Proposals and amendments

Rule 120⁵⁹ [78]

Proposals and amendments shall normally be submitted in writing 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 such amendments and motions have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

Decisions on competence

Rule 121⁶⁰ [79]

Subject to rule 119, 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.

⁵⁹ See annex V, paras. 87 and 88.

⁶⁰ See annex V, para. 96.

Withdrawal of motions

Rule 122 [80]

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 thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any member.

Reconsideration of proposals

Rule 123 [81]

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 124 [82]

Each member of the committee shall have one vote.

Majority required

Rule 125 [85]

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

Meaning of the phrase "members present and voting"

Rule 126 [86]

For the purposes 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 127⁶¹ [87]

(a) 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 its representative 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.

(b) When the committee votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands or by standing and a recorded

⁶¹ See introduction, para. 24; see also annex V, para. 84.

vote shall replace a roll-call vote. Any representative may request a recorded vote. In the case of a recorded vote, the committee shall, unless a representative requests otherwise, dispense with the procedure of calling out the names of the members; nevertheless, the result of the voting shall be inserted in the record in the same manner as that of a roll-call vote.

Conduct during voting

Rule 128⁶² [88]

After the Chairman has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection 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 129⁶³ [89]

A representative may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment should 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 approved shall then 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 130⁶³ [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 the proposal.

⁶² See introduction, para. 7; see also annex V, paras. 74-76, and annex VI, paras. 6 and 7.

⁶³ See introduction, para. 7.

Voting on proposals

Rule 131 [91]

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

Elections

Rule 132 [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 133 [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 134⁶⁴

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

Notification of applications

Rule 135⁶⁴

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

Consideration of applications and decision thereon

Rule 136

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

⁶⁴ See introduction, para. 4.

in the Charter and shall decide, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, upon its application for membership.

Rule 137⁶⁴

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 the application back to the Council, together with a full record of the discussion in the Assembly, for further consideration and recommendation or report.

Notification of decision and effective date of membership

Rule 138⁶⁴

The Secretary-General shall inform the applicant State of the decision of the General Assembly. If the application is approved, membership shall 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 139

Except as provided in rule 147, 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 140

Should a member cease to belong to a Council before its 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.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Appointment of the Secretary-General

Rule 141

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.

SECURITY COUNCIL

Annual elections

Rule 142⁶⁵

The General Assembly shall each year, in the course of its regular session, elect five non-permanent members of the Security Council for a term of two years.⁶⁶

Qualifications for membership

Rule 143⁶⁷

In the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council, due regard shall, in accordance with Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter, 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.⁶⁸

Re-eligibility

Rule 144⁶⁸

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

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Annual elections

Rule 145⁶⁹

The General Assembly shall each year, in the course of its regular session, elect eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council for a term of three years.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 23, para. 2, as amended under General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII)). See introduction, para. 23.

⁶⁶ Under paragraph 3 of resolution 1991 A (XVIII) of 17 December 1963, the General Assembly decided that "the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council shall be elected according to the following pattern:

"(a) Five from African and Asian States;

"(b) One from Eastern European States;

"(c) Two from Latin American States;

"(d) Two from Western European and other States".

⁶⁷ Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 23, para. 1).

⁶⁸ Rule reproducing textually a provision of the Charter (Art. 23, para. 2, last sentence).

⁶⁹ Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 61, para. 2, as amended under General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI)). See introduction, paras. 23 and 32.

⁷⁰ Under paragraph 4 of resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, the General Assembly decided that "the members of the Economic and Social Council shall be elected according to the following pattern:

"(a) Fourteen members from African States;

"(b) Eleven members from Asian States;

"(c) Ten members from Latin American States;

"(d) Thirteen members from Western European and other States;

"(e) Six members from socialist States of Eastern Europe".

Re-eligibility

Rule 146⁷¹

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

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Occasions for elections

Rule 147

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 Article 85 of the Charter, the General Assembly shall hold 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 139 as if they had begun their terms of office on 1 January following their election.

Terms of office and re-eligibility

Rule 148⁷²

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 149

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

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

Method of election

Rule 150

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

Rule 151

Any meeting of the General Assembly held in pursuance of the Statute of the International Court of Justice for the purpose of electing 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.

⁷¹ Rule reproducing textually a provision of the Charter (Art. 61, para. 2, last sentence).

⁷² Rule based directly on a provision of the Charter (Art. 86, para. 1c).

XVI. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Regulations for financial administration

Rule 152

The General Assembly shall establish regulations for the financial administration of the United Nations.⁷³

Financial implications of resolutions

Rule 153⁷⁴

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 (Fifth Committee) has had an opportunity of stating the effect of the proposal upon the budget estimates of the United Nations.

Rule 154⁷⁴

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

Appointment

Rule 155⁷⁵

The General Assembly shall appoint an Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions consisting of sixteen members, including at least three financial experts of recognized standing.

Composition

Rule 156⁷⁶

The members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, 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 calendar years. Members shall retire by rotation

⁷³ For the Financial Regulations of the United Nations, see ST/SGB/Financial Rules/1. Rev.3.

⁷⁴ See annex V, paras. 97 and 98, and annex VI, paras. 12 and 13.

⁷⁵ See introduction, paras. 19, 31 and 36.

⁷⁶ See introduction, paras. 19 and 36.

and shall be eligible for reappointment. The three 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

Rule 157⁷⁷

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions shall be responsible for expert examination of the programme budget of the United Nations and shall assist the Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee). At the beginning of each regular session at which the proposed programme budget for the following biennium is to be considered, it shall submit to the General Assembly a detailed report on the proposed programme budget for that biennium. It shall also submit, at such times as may be specified in the applicable provisions of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations,⁷⁸ a report on the accounts of the United Nations and all United Nations entities for which the Secretary-General has administrative responsibility. It shall 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 Financial Regulations of the United Nations.

COMMITTEE ON CONTRIBUTIONS

Appointment

Rule 158⁷⁹

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

Composition

Rule 159⁸⁰

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 calendar years. 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.

⁷⁷ See introduction, para. 36.

⁷⁸ ST/SGB/Financial Rules/1/Rev.3.

⁷⁹ See introduction, paras. 26, 33 and 35.

⁸⁰ See introduction, para. 37.

Rule 160

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 capacity 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

Establishment and rules of procedure

Rule 161⁸¹

The General Assembly may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.⁸² The rules relating to the procedure of committees of the General Assembly, as well as rules 45 and 60, shall apply to the procedure of any subsidiary organ unless the Assembly or the subsidiary organ decides otherwise.

XVIII. INTERPRETATION AND AMENDMENTS

Italicized headings

Rule 162

The italicized headings of these rules, which were inserted for reference purposes only, shall be disregarded in the interpretation of the rules.

Method of amendment

Rule 163⁸³

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.

⁸¹ See annex VII, para. 11.

⁸² Sentence reproducing textually a provision of the Charter (Art. 22).

⁸³ See annex II, para. 1 (c).

ANNEX I^a

Recommendations and suggestions of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly approved by the Assembly.^b

CONSIDERATION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS
NEGOTIATED BY CONFERENCES OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL
MEMBER STATES

13. 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 connection 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.

^a By resolution 362 (IV) of 22 October 1949, the General Assembly approved various recommendations and suggestions of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly which had been established under resolution 271 (III) of 29 April 1949. The General Assembly considered these recommendations and suggestions "worthy of consideration by the General Assembly and its committees" and requested 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". In pursuance of this request, the recommendations and suggestions of the Special Committee, as set forth in annex II to resolution 362 (IV), have been reproduced in the present annex.

^b The paragraph numbers refer to paragraphs of the report of the Special Committee. The full text of the report may be found in the *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/937)*. Subtitles and footnotes have been inserted by the Secretariat for convenience of reference.

CONSIDERATION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS PREPARED
BY EXPERTS OR BY CONFERENCES IN WHICH NOT ALL MEMBER STATES TAKE PART—
DRAFTING OF LEGAL TEXTS

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 not all Members of the United Nations have 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 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.

MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE AND OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES

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.

ALLOCATION OF AGENDA ITEMS TO THE MAIN COMMITTEES

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,^c 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.

^c Rule 97 of the present rules of procedure.

CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEMS IN PLENARY MEETINGS WITHOUT PRIOR
REFERENCE TO A MAIN COMMITTEE

23. Another means of lightening the task of any given Main Committee would be to consider directly in 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.

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.

THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OF THE CHAIRMEN
OF COMMITTEES AND OF THE SECRETARIAT

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 need for the conduct of their business and the interpretation of the rules of procedure.

ANNEX II^a

Methods and procedures of the General Assembly for dealing with legal and drafting questions^b

Part I

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly.

...

1. *Recommends:*

(a) That, whenever any Committee contemplates making a recommendation to the General Assembly to request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, the matter may, at some appropriate stage of its consideration by that Committee, be referred to the Sixth Committee for advice on the legal aspects and on the drafting of the request, or the Committee concerned may propose that the matter should be considered by a joint Committee of itself and the Sixth Committee;

(b) That, whenever any Committee contemplates making a recommendation to the General Assembly to refer a matter to the International Law Commission, the Committee may, at some appropriate stage of its consideration, consult the Sixth Committee as to the advisability of such a reference and on its drafting;

(c) That, whenever any Committee contemplates making a recommendation for the adoption by the General Assembly of any amendment to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the matter shall, at some appropriate stage of its consideration by that Committee, be referred to the Sixth Committee for advice on the drafting of such amendment and of any consequential amendment;

(d) That, when a Committee considers the legal aspects of a question important, the Committee should refer it for legal advice to the Sixth Committee or propose that the question should be considered by a joint Committee of itself and the Sixth Committee.

^a By resolution 684 (VII) of 6 November 1952, the General Assembly, having examined the report of the Special Committee for the Consideration of the Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly for Dealing with Legal and Drafting Questions, established under resolution 597 (VI) of 20 December 1951, adopted certain recommendations on this subject and directed that the terms of these recommendations "shall be embodied as an annex to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly". The resolution further provided that "the said annex shall also set out, verbatim, paragraphs 19, 20, 29, 30, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 of the report of the Special Committee" (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventh Session, Annexes*, agenda item 53, document A/2174). The text of the aforementioned recommendations of the General Assembly is accordingly reproduced in part I, and that of the specified paragraphs of the report of the Special Committee in part 2, of the present annex.

^b The paragraph numbers refer to paragraphs of the report of the Special Committee. Subtitles as well as words in square brackets and footnotes have been inserted by the Secretariat for convenience of reference.

EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR DEALING WITH LEGAL AND DRAFTING QUESTIONS

Allocation of agenda items to the Main Committees

19. As to the first of those problems [namely, the allocation of agenda items to the Main Committees by the General Assembly at the outset of each session], the Special Committee recalled that rule 97 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provided that "Items relating to the same category of subjects shall be referred to the committee or committees dealing with that category of subjects . . .". It also noted that a recommendation of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures, approved by the General Assembly in resolution 362 (IV) of 22 October 1949 and annexed to the rules of procedure, provided 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".

20. In view of those provisions, the present Special Committee did not find it necessary to make any formal recommendation on the allocation of agenda items at the opening of each session. It was confident that the General Committee, in making recommendations to the General Assembly on the distribution of agenda items, would continue to bear in mind the Sixth Committee's function, laid down in rule 99^c of the rules of procedure, as the Legal Committee.

Drafting of complex legal instruments

29. During the course of the discussion [on the question of the drafting of complex legal instruments such as international agreements, statutes of tribunals, etc.] it was pointed out that the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures, in paragraphs 13 and 14 of its report, approved by General Assembly resolution 362 (IV) of 22 October 1949 and annexed to the rules of procedure,^d made certain recommendations concerning the drafting of conventions, and concluded: "With regard to the drafting of legal texts, the Special Committee strongly recommends that small drafting committees should be resorted to whenever possible".

30. The Special Committee was in complete agreement with those recommendations and, in view of their previous approval by the General Assembly, did not find it necessary to adopt a new provision on the subject. However, the Special Committee considered it desirable that that point should be reaffirmed in its report. On that understanding, the United Kingdom withdrew its draft proposal.^e

^c Rule 98 of the present rules of procedure.

^d See annex I.

^e This proposal (A/AC.60/L.18) provided:

"That, in principle, the drafting of all clauses, texts or instruments of the following kinds should be either carried out, or, at some appropriate stage, reviewed, by a body of experts legally qualified to do so:

"(a) Any regulation for adoption by the General Assembly;

"(b) The terms of reference, functions and powers of subsidiary organs or tribunals hereafter set up by the General Assembly;

"(c) Any convention, declaration, agreement or other similar international instrument drawn up under the auspices of the General Assembly, and the drafting of which is to be effected by the Assembly itself, including agreements or instruments to which the United Nations as an Organization is to be a party."

Drafting of General Assembly resolutions

35. In addition to the above proposals,^f the United Kingdom submitted a draft (A/AC.60/L.22) which provided for periodic meetings of the rapporteurs of Committees with the competent officials of the Secretariat to establish, in so far as practicable, common methods of drafting and to ensure that in general the drafting of resolutions was satisfactory from the point of view of style, form and the use of technical terms.

36. It was pointed out that there might be certain practical difficulties in arranging for periodic meetings of rapporteurs. The Special Committee decided to make no formal recommendation on the subject; nevertheless, the Committee believes that it is desirable that informal consultation should take place from time to time between the various rapporteurs and officials of the Secretariat for the purpose described in the United Kingdom proposal.

*Reports of the Secretary-General under General Assembly
resolution 362 (IV)*

37. The United Kingdom submitted a draft proposal (A/AC.60/L.23) suggesting that the Secretary-General should be requested to furnish to the General Assembly an annual report on the matters dealt with by the Special Committee, indicating to what extent the Assembly or its Committees had succeeded during the year in realizing the objectives aimed at and suggesting any appropriate adjustments or improvements in the methods and procedures involved.

38. During the discussion, the representative of the Secretary-General recalled that the General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of resolution 362 (IV) of 22 October 1949, had requested 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 . . .". It was pointed out that the Secretary-General was much concerned with improving the procedures and methods of the Assembly and that there was no need for a new resolution requesting reports on that subject.

39. The Special Committee agreed that the points covered by the United Kingdom draft could be included when advisable in reports of the Secretary-General under resolution 362 (IV); such reports should be submitted at the appropriate times, and at reasonably frequent intervals. Consequently, the United Kingdom draft was withdrawn, and the Committee made no formal recommendation on the subject.

^f Proposal by El Salvador (A/AC.60/L.20) which was withdrawn in favour of a revised text (A/AC.60/L.20/Rev.1) incorporating amendments by the United Kingdom (A/AC.60/L.21), Belgium and Egypt. This revised text, which was worded as follows, was included in the recommendations of the Special Committee to the General Assembly:

"(e) That, normally, the Chairman of a Committee shall, at the appropriate time, call upon the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur to join him for the purpose of proceeding, in consultation with the competent officials of the Secretariat, to examine the draft resolutions from the point of view of style, form and the use of technical terms, and, when appropriate, to suggest to the Committee such changes as they deem necessary."

ANNEX III^a

Procedure for the examination of reports and petitions relating to the Territory of South West Africa^b

SPECIAL RULES ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS NINTH SESSION

Procedure with regard to reports

Special rule A: The General Assembly shall receive annually from the Committee on South West Africa the report on South West Africa submitted to the Committee by the Union of South Africa (or a report on conditions in the Territory of South West Africa prepared by the Committee in accordance with paragraph 12 (c) of General Assembly resolution 749 A (VIII), together with the observations of the Committee on the report as well as the comments of the duly authorized representative of the Union of South Africa, should that Government decide to follow the General Assembly's recommendation and appoint such a representative.

Special rule B: The General Assembly shall, as a rule, be guided by the observations of the Committee on South West Africa and shall base its conclusions, as far as possible, on the Committee's observations.

Procedure with regard to petitions

Special rule C: The General Assembly shall receive annually from the Committee on South West Africa a report with regard to petitions submitted to it. The summary records of the meetings at which the petitions were discussed shall be attached.

Special rule D: The General Assembly shall, as a rule, be guided by the conclusions of the Committee on South West Africa and shall base its own conclusions, as far as possible, on the conclusions of the Committee.

Private meetings

Special rule E: Having regard to rule 62^c of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, meetings at which decisions concerning persons are considered shall be held in private.

Voting procedure

Special rule F: Decisions of the General Assembly on questions relating to reports and petitions concerning the Territory of South West Africa shall be regarded as important questions within the meaning of Article 18, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations.

^a By resolution 844 (IX) of 11 October 1954, the General Assembly, having considered the report of the Committee on South West Africa (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Supplement No. 14 (A/2666 and Corr. 1 and Add. 1)*), adopted six special rules for the examination by the Assembly of reports and petitions relating to the Territory of South West Africa. These special rules are reproduced in the present annex.

^b By resolution 2372 (XXII) of 12 June 1968, the General Assembly decided that "South West Africa" would be known as "Namibia".

^c Rule 60 of the present rules of procedure.

ANNEX IV

Resolution 1898 (XVIII) adopted on the recommendation of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly^a

The General Assembly,

Recalling with appreciation the initiative taken by the President of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly in his memorandum of 26 April 1962 on the methods of work of the Assembly,^b

Recalling its decision of 30 October 1962 establishing the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly and its resolution 1845 (XVII) of 19 December 1962, by which it decided to continue the Committee,

Having considered the report submitted by the *Ad Hoc* Committee in pursuance of the above-mentioned resolution,^c

Conscious of the need to adapt its methods of work to the changed circumstances in the General Assembly, in particular those resulting from the recent increase in the number of Member States,

Concerned however to avoid reducing in any way the possibilities for action available to the General Assembly under the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure of the Assembly,

Convinced that it is in the interests of the Organization and of Member States that the work of the General Assembly should be carried out as efficiently and expeditiously as possible and that, save in quite exceptional cases, the duration of regular sessions should not exceed thirteen weeks,

Takes note of the observations contained in the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly and approves the recommendations submitted by the Committee, in particular those which provide that:

(a) The President of the General Assembly should make every effort to ensure that the general debate proceeds in a methodical and regular manner, and should close the list of speakers, with the consent of the Assembly, as soon as he considers it feasible;

(b) All the Main Committees, except the First Committee, should begin their work not later than two working days after they have received the list of agenda items referred to them by the General Assembly;

(c) The First Committee should meet as soon as possible to organize its work, determine the order of discussion of the items allocated to it and start the systematic consideration of its agenda; at the beginning of the session, such meetings might be held when there is an interruption in the general debate; later, plenary meetings might be held during one part of the day, the other part being reserved for the First Committee, thus enabling the Committee to proceed with its regular work as soon as possible after the opening of the session;

(d) Each of the Main Committees should establish its programme of work as soon as possible, including the approximate dates on which it will consider the various items referred to it and the date on which it proposes to conclude its work, on the understanding that this

^a Adopted by the General Assembly at its 1256th plenary meeting, on 11 November 1963.

^b *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 86, document A/5123.

^c *Ibid.*, *Eighteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

programme will be transmitted to the General Committee to enable it to make such recommendations as it may deem relevant, including, when the General Committee considers it appropriate, recommendations as to the dates by which Main Committees should conclude their work;

(e) Each of the Main Committees should consider the establishment, in the circumstances referred to in paragraphs 29 to 32 of the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee,^d of subcommittees or working groups of limited size but representative of its membership, for the purpose of facilitating its work;

^d These paragraphs read as follows:

"29. The increase in the number of Members of the United Nations has created a situation in which it frequently happens that more than 100 delegations are present and most of them participate in the debates in the Main Committees. Although the presence of such a large number of delegations involves no practical difficulties when statements of the positions of Governments are being made, it makes it more difficult to discuss concrete points, to have a rapid exchange of views on subjects where ideas differ or to draft and modify texts. The Committee is of the opinion that in many cases the examination of agenda items by the committees would be greatly facilitated if, as soon as possible and especially when the main points of view have been expressed, the committee decided, on the initiative of its Chairman or of one or more of its members, to set up a subcommittee or working group, in conformity with rule 104 [now 102] of the rules of procedure (98 [now 96] in the case of the plenary Assembly). This procedure might be particularly helpful when there is general agreement on the question under discussion but disagreement on points of detail.

"30. The *Ad Hoc* Committee would recall in this connexion that in the course of the first sessions of the General Assembly frequent use was made of subcommittees and working groups and that they were of great assistance to the General Assembly in the preparation of texts which to this day govern the structures of the United Nations in the formulation of important international instruments and in the solution of difficult political problems (one example is the sub-committee which dealt with the future status of the former Italian colonies). As far back as 1947, the report of the Committee on Procedures and Organization expressed itself on this subject as follows:

"The Main Committees should consider carefully at an early stage in their work how their programmes might be expedited by the establishment of subcommittees. It is, of course, impossible to adopt fixed rules on this matter. If the debate in full committee showed that there was general agreement on the question under discussion but disagreement on points of detail, it would clearly be desirable to set up a small drafting committee to prepare a resolution for submission to the Main Committee. Technical questions on which there is no substantial disagreement should be referred to subcommittees as quickly as possible. In some cases the work of subcommittees would be facilitated by working informally, and on occasion, in private." (A/388, para. 21.)

"31. The subcommittees or working groups could, in most cases, consist of representatives of the delegations with the closest interest in the agenda item, representatives who are especially competent to deal with the problem under discussion and others chosen in such a way as to ensure that the sub-committee or working group will be broadly representative, geographically and politically.

"32. These bodies could meet either in public or in private, according to the circumstances, and could either follow formal procedures or discuss matters informally. Their function would be to make it possible for those primarily interested in an item to exchange views, thus facilitating subsequent agreement and compromise solutions; they could prepare draft resolutions or at least formulate alternative solutions; they could appoint rapporteurs to present their conclusions and to give the necessary explanations to the committee which established them. The committee itself would be entirely free to take final decisions but, since all aspects of the problem would have been given minute examination, it would undoubtedly find its own work greatly facilitated both with regard to substance and to the time thus saved. It would also often be possible for the committee to consider other items on its agenda while the sub-committee or working group was carrying out its assignment."

(f) The General Committee should fulfil its functions under rules 40, 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure and, in particular, make appropriate recommendations for furthering the progress of the Assembly and its Committees, in such a way as to facilitate the closing of the session by the date fixed; to this end, the General Committee should meet at least once every three weeks;

(g) Presiding officers should make use of the resources provided by the rules of procedure and exercise their prerogatives under rules 35 and 108,^e in order to accelerate the work of the General Assembly; to that effect they should, *inter alia*:

- (i) Open meetings at the scheduled time;
- (ii) Urge representatives to take the floor in the order in which they were inscribed on the list of speakers, it being understood that representatives prevented from so doing will normally be placed at the end of the list, unless they have arranged to change places with other representatives;
- (iii) Apply the rules of procedure in such a way as to ensure the proper exercise of the right of reply, explanation of votes and points of order.

^e Rule 106 of the present rules of procedure.

ANNEX V*
**Conclusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the
 Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly**

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* By resolution 2837 (XXVI) of 17 December 1971, the General Assembly approved the conclusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly established under resolution 2632 (XXV) of 9 November 1970, declared those conclusions to be useful and worthy of consideration by the Assembly, its committees and other relevant organs and decided that they should be annexed to the rules of procedure; the conclusions of the Special Committee are reproduced in the present annex. By the same resolution, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Special Committee, decided to amend rules 39, 60 (now rule 58), 69 (now rule 67), 74 (now rule 72), 101 (now rule 98), 105 (now rule 103), 107 (now rule 105), 110 (now rule 108) and 115 (now rule 114) of its rules of procedure and to adopt a new rule 112 (now rule 110) (see introduction, para. 30). For the report of the Special Committee, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 26 (A/8426)*.

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I. MANDATE OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

1. The members of the Special Committee agreed that the existing rules of procedure were generally satisfactory and that most improvements would be achieved not through changes in the rules of procedure but through better application of the existing rules, due account being taken of the conclusions of the Special Committee and of the various committees responsible for reviewing the procedures and organization of the General Assembly [para. 12 of the report of the Special Committee^b].

2. The Special Committee considered, moreover, that it would be desirable to review from time to time the procedures and organization of the General Assembly [para. 13].

II. GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF SESSIONS

A. OPENING DATE

3. The Special Committee is of the opinion that it would not be desirable to change the date fixed for the opening of sessions [para. 18].

B. DURATION OF SESSIONS

4. The Special Committee, noting that, despite the appreciable increase in the number of Member States, it has been possible to maintain an average duration of thirteen weeks for regular sessions, is of the view that this period should not be changed and that, in any case, the session should end before Christmas [para. 22].

5. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that the session should be divided into two parts. The Committee likewise did not endorse the suggestion that the session should theoretically last a whole year and should merely be adjourned after a two-month main session [para. 23].

C. RESIDUARY SESSIONS

6. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that a brief meeting of the General Assembly, to be called a "residuary session", might be held at head-of-mission level about the end of April for the discussion of certain administrative and routine questions [para. 24].

III. GENERAL COMMITTEE

A. COMPOSITION OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

1. Increase in membership

7. The Special Committee decided not to take any action on the question of either maintaining or increasing the present membership of the General Committee [para. 31].

8. Furthermore, the Special Committee did not retain the suggestion that the Chairman of the Credentials Committee should be authorized to participate in the work of the General Committee [para. 32].

2. Absence of members of the General Committee elected in their personal capacity

9. The Special Committee considers that the problems which arise when the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a Main Committee cannot attend a meeting of the General Committee

^b Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 26 (A/8426).

would be settled for the most part if the General Assembly decided to increase the number of Vice-Chairmen of the Main Committees [para. 36].

10. The Special Committee also considers that, if the General Assembly took such a decision, the Chairman of a Main Committee, in designating a Vice-Chairman as his substitute, should take into account the representative character of the General Committee [para. 37].

B. FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

1. *Importance of the role of the General Committee*

11. The Special Committee considers that the General Committee, in view of the functions conferred on it by the rules of procedure, should play a major role in advancing the rational organization and general conduct of the proceedings of the General Assembly. The Committee is of the opinion that the General Committee should discharge completely and effectively the functions assigned to it under rules 40, 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure, the purpose of which is to assist the Assembly in the general conduct of its work [para. 41].

2. *Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items*

12. The Special Committee recommends that, within the framework of the functions conferred on it by the rules of procedure, and subject to the limitation prescribed in rule 40 as regards the discussion of the substance of an item, the General Committee should examine the provisional agenda, together with the supplementary list and requests for the inclusion of additional items, more attentively and carry out more fully and consistently its functions of recommending with regard to each item its inclusion in the agenda, the rejection of the request for inclusion or its inclusion in the provisional agenda of a future session, as well as of allocating items to the Main Committees, regard being had to rules 99 and 101^c of the rules of procedure, with a view to ensuring that all items inscribed on the agenda can be taken up by the end of the session [para. 45].

3. *Organization of the work of the General Assembly*

13. The Special Committee recalls the recommendation, in subparagraph (f) of General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII),^d that the General Committee should meet at least once every three weeks. The Special Committee notes that the recommendation has not been complied with and expresses the hope that the General Committee will be able to hold more frequent meetings, in conformity with rule 42 of the rules of procedure, without thereby interfering with the normal meeting schedule of the plenary and the Main Committees [para. 49].

14. The Special Committee also considers that, in the discharge of the functions conferred by rules 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure and subject to the limitation prescribed in rule 41 regarding the decision of any political question, the General Committee should review the progress of the General Assembly and the Main Committees and should, as required, assist and make recommendations to the President and the Assembly for the co-ordination of the proceedings of the Main Committees and for expediting the general conduct of business [para. 50].

C. WAYS OF FACILITATING THE WORK OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

1. *Preparatory meetings*

15. The Special Committee does not consider that it is in a position to make any recommendation with regard to the holding of preparatory meetings of the General Committee [para. 54].

^c Rules 97 and 98 of the present rules of procedure.

^d See annex IV.

2. *Subsidiary organs*

16. The Special Committee does not consider that it is in a position to make any recommendation with regard to the establishment of subsidiary organs of the General Committee [para. 58].

IV. AGENDA

A. PRESENTATION AND PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

17. The Special Committee, aware of the need to assist delegations, to the greatest extent possible, to prepare for the work of the General Assembly, recommends to the Assembly that the Secretary-General should be requested:

(a) To communicate to Member States, not later than 15 February, the unofficial list of items proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda of the Assembly;

(b) To communicate to Member States, not later than 15 June, an annotated list of items which would indicate briefly the history of each item, the available documentation, the substance of the matter to be discussed and earlier decisions by United Nations organs;

(c) To communicate to Member States before the opening of the session an addendum to the annotated list [para. 64].

18. Furthermore, the Special Committee recommends that Member States requesting the inclusion of an item should, if they deem it advisable, make a suggestion concerning its referral to a Main Committee or to the plenary Assembly [para. 65].

B. REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF AGENDA ITEMS

1. *Non-inclusion of certain items*

19. The Special Committee, considering that the General Assembly should take into account the relative importance of agenda items in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, recommends to the Assembly that, in the context of rules 22 and 40 of the rules of procedure, Member States should take special interest in the contents of the Assembly's agenda and, in particular, in deciding on the appropriate solution of questions or on the elimination of items which have lost their urgency or relevance, are not ripe for consideration or could be dealt with and even disposed of equally well by subsidiary organs of the General Assembly [para. 70].

2. *Staggering of items over two or more years and grouping of related items*

20. The Special Committee considers that the staggering of items over two or more years constitutes one means of rationalizing the procedures of the General Assembly [para. 74].

21. Moreover, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that, as far as possible and appropriate, related items should be grouped under the same title [para. 75].

3. *Referral to other organs*

22. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should, where relevant, refer specific items to other United Nations organs or to specialized agencies, taking into account the nature of the question [para. 79].

23. The Special Committee also recommends that the General Assembly should give due weight to the debates that have taken place in other organs [para. 80].

4. *Non-receivability of certain additional items*

24. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that additional items, which are proposed for inclusion in the agenda less than thirty days before the opening of a

session, should be included only if the conditions prescribed by rule 15 of the rules of procedure are fully satisfied [para. 84].

C. ALLOCATION OF AGENDA ITEMS

1. *Division of work among the Main Committees*

25. The Special Committee wishes to draw attention to the importance of a rational distribution of agenda items among the Main Committees. In this connection, the Committee, recognizing that the structure of the Main Committees gives them specialization and experience, recommends that the allocation of agenda items should be based not only on the workload of the Committees but also on the nature of the item, regard being had to rules 99 and 101^c of the rules of procedure [para. 89].

26. The Special Committee also considers that it would be helpful if suggestions concerning the allocation of items were made much earlier so that Member States might have more time to study them [para. 90].

27. Lastly, the Special Committee recommends that the General Committee and the General Assembly should consider, in some cases, the possibility of referring more items directly to the plenary [para. 91].

2. *Non-referral of certain items to two or more Committees*

28. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that agenda items should be so allocated as to ensure, as far as possible, that the same questions or the same aspects of a question are not considered by more than one Committee [para. 95].

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES

A. FUNCTIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEES

29. There was general agreement among the members of the Special Committee that a flexible approach should be adopted towards the whole question of the division of work among the Main Committees and that the Committee should not make any recommendation concerning the referral of specific items, in order not to go beyond its field of competence [para. 97].

30. The Special Committee, considering that the potential of the seven Main Committees should be utilized to the full, recommends that the General Assembly should ensure a more balanced division of work among the Committees, giving due account to the nature of items. The Committee does not, however, feel that it should specify which items might be transferred from one Committee to another [para. 98].

31. The Special Committee, recognizing that the workload of a number of Committees is extremely heavy, is of the opinion that the General Assembly should advise those Committees so to organize their work as to enable them to consider their agenda in the most effective way [para. 99].

1. *First Committee*

32. The Special Committee, recognizing that the role of the First Committee is essentially political, recommends that this Committee devote itself primarily to problems of peace, security and disarmament [para. 103].

33. The Special Committee, not wishing to make any specific recommendation concerning the allocation of agenda items, did not feel that it should take any decision on the proposal that the reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation should be submitted to the First Committee [para. 104].

2. *Special Political Committee*

34. The Special Committee, reaffirming the major role which must be played by the Special Political Committee and recognizing further that the agenda of that Committee is relatively light, recommends that the General Assembly should consider transferring to the Special Political Committee one or two items usually considered by other Committees with a view to ensuring a better division of work among the Main Committees [*para. 108*].

35. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestions concerning the renaming of the Special Political Committee [*para. 109*].

3. *Second Committee*

36. The Special Committee did not feel that it should take any decision on the proposals that all the social aspects of development should be dealt with by the Second Committee. Accordingly, it did not endorse the suggestion to change the name of that Committee [*para. 113*].

4. *Third Committee*

37. The Special Committee did not feel it should take a decision on the proposal that some of the items on the agenda of the Third Committee should be transferred to other Main Committees [*para. 117*].

5. *Conflicts of competence among Committees*

38. The Special Committee considers that conflicts of competence among the Main Committees should be avoided whenever possible. Without prejudging the decision to be taken in each individual case, the Committee wishes to draw attention to the existence of this problem and to the advisability for the General Committee and the General Assembly to consider the most effective ways of remedying it [*para. 119*].

B. ROLE OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS

39. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should fully exercise the functions assigned to them in the rules of procedure and, in particular, make use of the prerogatives given them in rule 108^e [*para. 123*].

40. The Special Committee also reaffirms that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution as well as on that of experience and competence, as provided for in rule 105^f of the rules of procedure [*para. 124*].

41. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that candidates should have had at least one year's experience in one of the Main Committees or the suggestion that Chairmen should be elected at the end of the previous session [*para. 125*].

C. NUMBER OF VICE-CHAIRMEN

42. From its own experience, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that its subsidiary organs should consider, as far as possible, the designation of three Vice-Chairmen in order to ensure the representative character of their officers [*para. 131*].

D. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES

43. The Special Committee, recalling General Assembly resolution 2292 (XXII), recommends to the Assembly that the reports of the Main Committees should be as concise

^e Rule 106 of the present rules of procedure.

^f Rule 103 of the present rules of procedure.

as possible and, save in exceptional cases, should not contain a summary of the debates [para. 133].^g

VI. MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE TIME

A. PLENARY ASSEMBLY

1. General debate

(a) Frequency

44. The Special Committee, recognizing the unquestionable value of the general debate, considers that it should continue to be held every year and that the time devoted to it should be utilized to the maximum. It wishes to stress also the importance of participation by Heads of State or Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high officials as a means of enhancing the significance of the general debate [para. 137].

(b) Organization of meetings

(i) Length of the general debate

45. The Special Committee feels that the general debate would be more meaningful, as far as organization was concerned, if it took place intensively and without interruption. Its length should not normally exceed two and a half weeks if the time available were utilized to the maximum [para. 142].

(ii) Closure of the list of speakers

46. Considering that the organization of the general debate would be improved if delegations were required to decide more quickly when to speak, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the list of speakers wishing to take part in the general debate should be closed at the end of the third day after the opening of the debate [para. 144].

(c) Length of statements

47. The Special Committee, noting that during the session commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations it had been possible to hear a large number of speakers during a relatively short period without limiting the duration of statements, considers that this result was due to a better utilization of the time available and not to the imposition of a limitation on the length of speeches [para. 147].

48. The Committee notes that during recent sessions of the General Assembly the average length of speeches has been thirty-five minutes and expresses the hope that delegations will ensure that their statements will not be excessively long [para. 148].

(d) Submission of written statements

49. The Special Committee considers that the submission of written statements should not be formally instituted with regard to the general debate [para. 152].

2. Debate on items already considered in Committee

50. The Special Committee is of the opinion that rule 68^h of the rules of procedure has been applied judiciously and with satisfactory results [para. 155].

3. Non-utilization of the rostrum

51. The Special Committee thinks that it would be useful to draw the attention of representatives to the possibility of speaking without going to the rostrum. It considers, however, that in all cases it is for representatives to decide whether they prefer to speak from their seats or from the rostrum, whether on a point of order, for an explanation of vote or in exercise of their right of reply [para. 157].

^g For the recommendations concerning the reports of subsidiary organs, see para. 107 below.

^h Rule 66 of the present rules of procedure.

4. *Presentation of the reports of the Main Committees*

52. The Special Committee wishes to recall the recommendation made in 1947 by the Committee on Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly that Rapporteurs should not read out their reports in plenary meetings.¹ It wishes to stress that the presentation of reports in plenary meetings should be limited to brief introductory statements [*para. 158*].

53. The Special Committee recommends also that the General Assembly should confirm the practice whereby certain related reports of a non-controversial nature may be introduced simultaneously to the plenary Assembly by the Rapporteur [*para. 159*].

B. MAIN COMMITTEES

1. *Nomination of officers*

54. The members of the Special Committee agreed that the nomination of candidates involved a significant loss of time. They also recognized that the terms of rule 105 of the rules of procedure, which provided that elections should be held by secret ballot, no longer corresponded to the present practice, since in most cases, as a result of prior consultations, there was only one candidate for each post and voting by secret ballot was therefore superfluous [*para. 161*].²

55. The Special Committee, bearing in mind particularly the financial implications of such a procedure, did not retain the suggestion that nominations should be made in writing [*para. 162*].

56. Furthermore, in view of the dictates of courtesy and the possibility that cases might arise in which nominees would not be known until the last moment, the Special Committee did not deem it advisable to dispense completely with the oral nomination of candidates [*para. 163*].

57. The Special Committee considers that the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee would proceed to the election immediately. The Special Committee considers, however, that the general principle that elections are held by secret ballot should be retained [*para. 164*].

2. *Commencement of work*

58. The Special Committee recommends that all the Main Committees, with the possible exception of the First Committee, should begin their work on the working day following the receipt of the list of items referred to them by the General Assembly [*para. 170*].

59. The Special Committee also recommends that the First Committee should be ready to meet whenever no plenary meeting of the Assembly is being held [*para. 171*].

3. *Progress of work*

60. The Special Committee recommends that the Main Committees should from time to time review the progress of their work [*para. 176*].

4. *General debate in Committee*

61. The Special Committee, while recognizing the unquestionable usefulness and importance of the general debate, considers that Chairmen should encourage the Main Committees:

(a) To recognize the advisability of shortening the general debate, whenever that is possible without detriment to the work of the Committees;

(b) To extend, whenever appropriate, the practice of holding a single debate on related and logically linked agenda items [*para. 180*].

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Plenary Meetings*, vol. II, annex IV, document A/388, para. 26.

² Rule 105 (now rule 103) was subsequently amended (see introduction, para. 30 (e)).

62. The Special Committee recognizes that a general debate on questions previously considered by a United Nations organ and covered by a report of the organ concerned should be retained. The Committee, however, draws the attention of the Chairmen of the Main Committees to the possibility of consulting their Committees in every case when a general debate on a certain item does not seem to be needed. The Chairmen may resort to this practice to ascertain in particular whether the Committees desire to hold a general debate on every question referred to them by other organs [*para. 181*].

63. At the same time, the Special Committee wishes to reaffirm that the general debate serves a necessary and very useful purpose in the work of the Main Committees and that its organization should in no circumstances be changed without the consent of the Committees concerned, which therefore should decide on the applicability of the above-mentioned suggestions [*para. 182*].

64. The Special Committee did not deem it appropriate to make a recommendation concerning the suggestion that delegations sharing the same point of view could use a spokesman who would express those views in a single statement. Nor did the Committee retain the suggestion that the consideration of certain items already debated in previous sessions might be introduced by specially appointed rapporteurs who would summarize the main issues emerging from previous debates [*para. 183*].

5. *Concurrent consideration of several agenda items*

65. The Special Committee considers that in certain cases, when a Main Committee cannot proceed with its discussion of one item, it should be prepared to begin considering the next item on its agenda [*para. 187*].

6. *Establishment of subcommittees or working groups*

66. The Special Committee wishes to remind the General Assembly of the desirability of the Main Committees' making use of subcommittees or working groups [*para. 188*].

C. MEASURES APPLICABLE BOTH TO THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY AND TO THE MAIN COMMITTEES

1. *Opening of meetings at the scheduled time*

67. The members of the Special Committee agreed that the General Assembly would operate much more efficiently if the presiding officers made a special effort to open meetings at the scheduled time [*para. 190*].

68. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion to have meetings begin at 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. in view of the practical difficulties that such a measure would entail [*para. 192*].

2. *List of speakers*

69. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the President of the Assembly or the Chairman of a Main Committee should, soon after the beginning of the debate on an item, indicate a date for the closing of the list of speakers. He should endeavour to have the list of speakers closed at the latest after one third of the meetings allocated to the item have been held [*para. 202*].

70. Moreover, the Special Committee considers that speakers should, as far as possible, avoid putting down their names to speak on a given item and at the same time indicating an alternative meeting if they are unable to keep to their original schedule [*para. 203*].

71. Finally, the Special Committee wishes to reaffirm the practice whereby presiding officers should invite representatives to speak in the order of their inscription on the list of speakers, on the understanding that those prevented from doing so should normally be moved to the end of the list, unless they have arranged to change places with other representatives [*para. 204*].

3. *Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers*

72. The Committee wishes to stress that the amendment on this subject^b is of a purely technical nature, its only purpose being to limit the number of representatives who could speak on a proposal submitted under rules 74 and 115¹ of the rules of procedure [para. 210].

73. With regard to the general question of setting a time-limit on interventions, the Special Committee, while recognizing that, in so far as possible, statements should be kept brief so as to allow all delegations to present the views of their Governments, considers that no rigid rule on the question could be applied [para. 211].

4. *Explanations of vote*

74. The Special Committee considers that, in explaining their votes, delegations should limit their statements to an explanation, as brief as possible, of their own votes and should not use the occasion to reopen the debate [para. 216].

75. The Special Committee also considers that presiding officers should be encouraged to use, whenever they deem it appropriate, their powers under rules 90 and 129^m of the rules of procedure [para. 217].

76. Finally, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that a delegation should explain its vote only once on the same proposal, in either a Main Committee or a plenary meeting, unless the delegation considers it essential to explain it in both meetings. It recommends further that the sponsor of a draft resolution adopted by a Main Committee should refrain from explaining its vote during the consideration of that draft resolution in the plenary unless it deems it essential to do so [para. 218].

5. *Right of reply*

77. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that delegations should use restraint in the exercise of their right of reply, both in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees, and that their statements in exercise of that right should be as brief as possible [para. 223].

78. The Special Committee recommends, furthermore, that statements made in the exercise of the right of reply should be delivered, as a general rule, at the end of meetings [para. 224].

6. *Points of order*

79. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following text as a description of the concept of a point of order [para. 229]:

“(a) A point of order is basically an intervention directed to the presiding officer, requesting him to make use of some power inherent in his office or specifically given him under the rules of procedure. It may, for example, relate to the manner in which the debate is conducted, to the maintenance of order, to the observance of the rules of procedure or to the way in which presiding officers exercise the powers conferred upon them by the rules. Under a point of order, a representative may request the presiding officer to apply a certain rule of procedure or he may question the way in which the officer applies the rule. Thus, within the scope of the rules of procedure, representatives are enabled to direct the attention of the presiding officer to violations or misapplications of the rules by other representatives or by the presiding officer himself. A point of order has precedence over any other matter, including procedural motions (rules 73 [114]ⁿ and 79 [120]^o).

* See introduction, para. 30 (c).

¹ Rules 72 and 114 of the present rules of procedure.

^m Rules 88 and 128 of the present rules of procedure.

ⁿ Rule 71 [113] of the present rules of procedure.

^o Rule 77 [119] of the present rules of procedure.

“(b) Points of order raised under rule 73 [114]^a involve questions necessitating a ruling by the presiding officer, subject to possible appeal. They are therefore distinct from the procedural motions provided for in rules 76 [117]^p to 79 [120]^o which can be decided only by a vote and on which more than one motion may be entertained at the same time, rule 79 [120]^o laying down the precedence of such motions. They are also distinct from requests for information or clarification, or from remarks relating to material arrangements (seating, interpretation system, temperature of the room), documents, translations etc., which—while they may have to be dealt with by the presiding officer—do not require rulings from him. However, in established United Nations practice, a representative intending to submit a procedural motion or to seek information or clarification often rises to ‘a point of order’ as a means of obtaining the floor. The latter usage, which is based on practical grounds, should not be confused with the raising of points of order under rule 73 [114].”

“(c) Under rule 73 [114],” a point of order must be immediately decided by the presiding officer in accordance with the rules of procedure; any appeal arising therefrom must also be put immediately to the vote. It follows that as a general rule:

- “(i) A point of order and any appeal arising from a ruling thereon is not debatable;
- “(ii) No point of order on the same or a different subject can be permitted until the initial point of order and any appeal arising therefrom have been disposed of.

“Nevertheless, both the presiding officer and delegations may request information or clarification regarding a point of order. In addition, the presiding officer may, if he considers it necessary, request an expression of views from delegations on a point of order before giving his ruling; in the exceptional cases in which this practice is resorted to, the presiding officer should terminate the exchange of views and give his ruling as soon as he is ready to announce that ruling.

“(d) Rule 73 [114]^a provides that a representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. Consequently, the purely procedural nature of points of order calls for brevity. The presiding officer is responsible for ensuring that statements made on a point of order are in conformity with the present description.”

7. *Congratulations*

80. The Special Committee is of the opinion that it would be better to retain the current practice of the plenary Assembly whereby congratulations to the President are confined to brief remarks included in the speeches made during the general debate [*para.* 235].

81. With regard to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, the Special Committee recommends that, in the case of a newly established organ or of the rotation of officers or an existing one, congratulations to the Chairman should be expressed only by the temporary Chairman and congratulations to other officers should be expressed only by the Chairman [*para.* 237].^a

8. *Condolences*

82. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that condolences addressed to a delegation on the death of a prominent person or in the event of a disaster should be expressed solely by the President of the General Assembly, by the Chairman of a Main Committee or by the Chairman of a subsidiary organ on behalf of all members. Where circumstances warrant it, the President of the General Assembly might call a special plenary meeting for that purpose [*para.* 242].

^p Rule 74 [116] of the present rules of procedure.

^a For congratulations in the Main Committees, see rule 110, adopted on the recommendation of the Special Committee.

83. The Special Committee moreover takes note of the practice whereby the President of the General Assembly, on behalf of all members, dispatches a cable to the country concerned [*para. 243*].

9. *Roll-call votes*

84. The Special Committee, while believing that there is no need to change the rules of procedure relating to roll-call votes, recommends that delegations should endeavour not to request such a vote except when there are good and sound reasons for doing so [*para. 247*].

10. *Electronic devices*

85. The Special Committee did not believe that it should express any views on the possible use of an electronic voting system by all Committees, since the question of the installation of mechanical means of voting was included in the draft agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly [*para. 249*].

86. The Special Committee did not retain the suggestion that a mechanical or electronic timing device might be installed in the General Assembly Hall and the Main Committee rooms [*para. 250*].

VII. RESOLUTIONS

A. SUBMISSION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

1. *Date of submission of draft resolutions*

87. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that draft resolutions should be submitted as early as possible so as to give debates a more concrete character. It considers, however, that no rigid rule should be established in the matter, since it is for delegations to determine, in each case, the most appropriate moment for submitting draft resolutions [*para. 254*].

88. So as to ensure that debates take shape as quickly as possible without making it mandatory for delegations to submit a formal draft resolution, the Special Committee also considers that delegations might resort more often to the possibility of circulating draft resolutions as informal working papers which would provide a basis for the discussion but whose contents would be strictly provisional [*para. 255*].

2. *Submission of draft resolutions in writing*

89. Because of the appreciable loss of time that such a procedure could entail, the Special Committee decided not to endorse the suggestion that proposals and amendments should be submitted in writing only [*para. 256*].

3. *Consultations*

90. The Special Committee, recognizing the indisputable value of consultations, believes that delegations should explore every avenue for arriving at negotiated texts. It considers, however, that the initiative for such consultations must rest solely with the delegations concerned and can, under no circumstances, be dictated in mandatory provisions [*para. 258*].

91. The Special Committee also believes that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should be invited to bear in mind the possibility of establishing, where necessary, working groups for the purpose of facilitating the adoption of agreed texts. Such groups may be open, as appropriate, to interested delegations. It does not, however, consider it advisable to contemplate the establishment of such working groups whenever two or more draft resolutions have been introduced on the same matter [*para. 259*].

4. *Number of sponsors*

92. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that the number of sponsors of a draft resolution should be limited [*para. 260*].

93. The Special Committee does, however, wish to draw attention to the practice whereby the sponsors of a proposal decide whether other delegations can become co-sponsors [para. 261].

5. *Time-lapse between the submission and the consideration of draft resolutions*

94. The Special Committee, while recognizing the difficulties experienced by some delegations in consulting their Governments within the time laid down by rules 80 and 121¹ of the rules of procedure, does not deem it advisable to propose an amendment to those rules [para. 265].

B. CONTENT OF RESOLUTIONS

95. The Special Committee is of the opinion that the wording of resolutions, to be effective, must be as clear and succinct as possible. It recognizes, however, that only the delegations concerned can decide upon the content of the proposals which they are sponsoring [para. 267].

96. The Special Committee also wishes to emphasize that the text of a draft resolution should not go beyond the competence of the Committee in which it is submitted. Where, however, it is suggested that a draft resolution does so, the Special Committee feels that it is up to the Committee concerned to take a decision in the matter [para. 268].

C. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. *Financial controls*

97. The Special Committee feels that the provisions of rules 154 and 155² of the rules of procedure are satisfactory and should be strictly applied [para. 272].

98. The Special Committee is also of the opinion that the financial implications of draft resolutions should be viewed in terms of an overall assessment of priorities and that the principal organs should give careful consideration to the draft resolutions adopted by their subsidiary organs where such drafts call for the appropriation of funds [para. 273].

2. *Work of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

99. The Special Committee recognizes that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions should meet more frequently, but does not consider itself qualified to make detailed recommendations on the matter [para. 275].

3. *Resolutions setting up new organs*

100. While acknowledging that new organs should be set up only after mature consideration, the Special Committee believes that it would be inadvisable to amend the rules of procedure and lay down hard and fast rules in the matter [para. 277].

D. VOTING PROCEDURE

1. *Required majority*

101. The Special Committee considers that rules 88 and 127³ of the rules of procedure should be left unchanged [para. 282].

102. The Special Committee also considers that the suggestion referred to in paragraph 279 of the report is unacceptable and, moreover, goes beyond its mandate [para. 283].

¹ Rules 78 and 120 of the present rules of procedure.

² Rules 153 and 154 of the present rules of procedure.

³ Rules 86 and 126 of the present rules of procedure.

2. *Measures to accelerate procedures*

103. The Special Committee, recalling the recommendations which it has made elsewhere concerning debate on items already considered in Committee (see para. 50 above) and roll-call votes (see para. 84 above), feels that it is inadvisable to make any changes in the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure [para. 287].

3. *Consensus*

104. The Special Committee considers that the adoption of decisions and resolutions by consensus is desirable when it contributes to the effective and lasting settlement of differences, thus strengthening the authority of the United Nations. It wishes, however, to emphasize that the right of every Member State to set forth its view in full must not be prejudiced by this procedure [para. 289].

E. REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS

105. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestions aimed at reducing the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly [para. 293].

VIII. DOCUMENTATION^a

A. REDUCTION IN THE VOLUME OF DOCUMENTATION

106. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should:

(a) Draw attention to the provisions of its resolutions 2292 (XXII) and 2538 (XXIV) summarized in document A/INF/136, and stress the need for strict adherence to them, not only in letter, but also in spirit, by Member States and also, in the light of its internal rules, by the Secretariat;

(b) Instruct its subsidiary organs to include in the agenda of each session an item on the control and limitation of the documentation of the organ itself in the spirit of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1272 (XIII) [para. 300].

B. PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTS

107. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that:

(a) Timely distribution of documents in all working languages should be scrupulously observed;

(b) All the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should be required to complete their work and submit their reports before the opening of each regular session of the Assembly;

(c) Reports to be considered by the General Assembly should be as brief as possible and contain precise information confined to a description of the work done by the organ concerned, to the conclusions it has reached, to its decisions and to the recommendations made to the Assembly; the reports should include, where appropriate, a summary of proposals, conclusions and recommendations. As a rule, no previously issued material (working papers and other basic documents) should be incorporated in or appended to such reports, but, where necessary, referred to;

(d) Taking into account the needs of Member States, the number of copies of reports and other United Nations documents should, whenever appropriate, be limited, i.e., they should be issued in the /L. series [para. 304].^b

^a See also resolution 2836 (XXVI).

^b For the recommendations concerning the reports of the Main Committees, see para. 43 above.

C. RECORDS OF MEETINGS AND SOUND RECORDINGS

108. The Special Committee recommends that rule 60, as revised,* should be applied in accordance with the following observations:

(a) Summary records should continue to be provided for the General Committee and for all Main Committees other than the First Committee;

(b) The General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, should decide annually whether the option that has traditionally been approved for the Special Political Committee to have, on specific request, transcriptions of the debates of some of its meetings, or portions thereof, should be maintained;

(c) The provision of summary records to subsidiary organs should be reviewed periodically by the General Assembly in the light of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the use of minutes instead of summary records, and of the comments of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon;*

(d) Sound recordings should be kept by the Secretariat in accordance with its practice [para. 309].

IX. SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER OF ORGANS

109. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should review, either periodically or when considering their reports, the usefulness of its various subsidiary organs [para. 313].

110. The Special Committee also recommends that the General Assembly should consider the possibility of merging some of these organs [para. 314].

B. COMPOSITION OF ORGANS

111. The Special Committee considers that membership of a body depends on the nature and function of that body and that it cannot, therefore, be subject to any general rule [para. 318].

112. The Special Committee is of the opinion that subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should, where appropriate, have the authority to invite a Member State which is not a member of the organ concerned to participate without vote in the discussion of a matter which the organ considers to be of particular interest to that Member State [para. 319].

113. The Special Committee is also of the opinion that the composition of subsidiary organs should be subject to periodic change [para. 320].

114. Finally, the Special Committee considers that visits of subsidiary organs away from their normal meeting places should be authorized by the General Assembly only when the nature of the work renders such visits essential [para. 321].

C. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

115. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Secretary-General should play a greater role in drawing up the calendar of meetings, it being understood that in every case the final decision rests with the organ concerned [para. 323].

* Rule 58 of the present rules of procedure (see introduction, para. 30 (a)).

* E/4802 and Add.1 and 2.

X. OTHER QUESTIONS

A. CREDENTIALS OF DELEGATIONS

116. The Special Committee, while aware of the problems posed by the non-recognition by the General Assembly of a delegation's credentials, feels that it is not in a position to make any proposal on the matter [*para. 327*].

B. ROLE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

117. The Special Committee is of the opinion that the Secretary-General should play an active role in making suggestions with regard to the organization of sessions, it being understood that the final decision on the recommendations he makes lies with the General Assembly [*para. 331*].

C. SECRETARIAT

118. The Special Committee considers that the question of the reorganization of the Secretariat, however valid it might be, does not come within its terms of reference. It is of the opinion, therefore, that it should not make any recommendation on the matter [*para. 333*].

D. GUIDANCE REGARDING GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE AND ASSISTANCE TO PRESIDING OFFICERS

1. *Preparation of a manual on procedure*

119. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should consider requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a systematic and comprehensive compilation of the conclusions which the Assembly may adopt on the basis of the reports of the Special Committee and of the Joint Inspection Unit, this compilation to form an annex to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly [*para. 339*].

2. *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*

120. The Special Committee, recognizing the usefulness of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*, expresses the hope that it will be brought up to date as quickly as possible [*para. 341*].

3. *Preparation of a repertory of practice on the rules of procedure of the General Assembly*

121. The Special Committee did not consider that it should endorse the proposal to issue a repertory of practice on the rules of procedure of the General Assembly [*para. 344*].

4. *Reminders of previous recommendations*

122. It was suggested that at the beginning of the session the President of the General Assembly should remind the Assembly of, and particularly invite the attention of the Chairmen of Main Committees to, the recommendations for improving the methods of work which were specifically approved in General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII).^y While there was general agreement on the principle underlying that suggestion, the Special Committee did not feel that it need make any specific recommendation in that regard [*paras. 345 and 346*].

123. The Special Committee did not retain the suggestion that the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly^z should be reissued on account of the financial implications that such a measure would entail [*paras. 345 and 346*].

^y See annex IV.

^z *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

5. Assistance in procedural matters

124. The Special Committee noted that it was not possible to assign a member of the Office of Legal Affairs continuously to each of the Main Committees but that legal advice was always furnished, either orally or in writing, when requested [*para. 348*].

125. The Special Committee did not consider that it should make any recommendation on the proposal that the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees should enlist several assistants under them, both from the Secretariat and, wherever possible, from the delegations themselves, to whom they would allocate items on the agenda for the purpose of closely following them up with the delegations directly concerned and expediting the progress of the General Assembly [*paras. 347 and 348*].

E. STUDIES OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

126. The Special Committee did not consider that it should retain the suggestions concerning the insertion in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of provisions similar to those in the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council [*para. 352*].

127. The Special Committee took note of the proposal concerning a comparative study of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and those of the governing bodies of the specialized agencies and suggests that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should consider undertaking such a project [*para. 353*].

128. Lastly, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Secretariat should be instructed to undertake a comparative study of the versions of the General Assembly's rules of procedure in the various official languages in order to ensure their concordance [*para. 354*].

F. SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

129. The Special Committee, aware of the training problems facing delegations, particularly as regards newly arrived representatives, suggests that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should consider ways of helping to solve these problems [*para. 356*].

G. REGIONAL GROUPS

130. The Special Committee endorses the suggestion that the names of chairmen of the regional groups for the month should be published in the *Journal of the United Nations* and recommends that it should be left to the Secretariat to decide how often it should be applied [*paras. 357 and 358*].

ANNEX VI

Decision 34/401 on the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly^a

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. GENERAL COMMITTEE

1. The General Committee should, at the outset of each session, consider how the work of the session can best be rationalized.
2. The General Committee should also meet periodically throughout the session to review the progress of work and to make recommendations to the General Assembly on the general programme of the session and on measures aimed at improving its work.

B. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

3. Both plenary and committee meetings should begin at 10.30 a.m. and 3 p.m. and, in order to expedite the work of the General Assembly, all meetings should begin promptly at the scheduled time.

C. ALLOCATION OF ITEMS

4. Substantive items should normally be discussed initially in a Main Committee and, therefore, items previously allocated to plenary meetings should henceforth be referred to a Main Committee unless there are compelling circumstances requiring their continued consideration in plenary meeting.

D. GENERAL DEBATE

5. Out of consideration for the other speakers and in order to preserve the dignity of the general debate, delegations should refrain from expressing their congratulations in the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered.

E. EXPLANATIONS OF VOTE

6. Explanations of vote should be limited to ten minutes.
7. When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee.

F. RIGHT OF REPLY

8. Delegations should exercise their right of reply at the end of the day whenever two meetings have been scheduled for that day and whenever such meetings are devoted to the consideration of the same item.

^a Adopted by the General Assembly at its 4th, 46th, 82nd and 99th plenary meetings, on 21 September, 25 October, 29 November and 12 December 1979, on the recommendations of the General Committee. Section VI of the decision, which related mostly to the establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Subsidiary Organs, has not been reproduced in the present annex.

9. The number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item.

10. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to ten minutes and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes.

G. NON-UTILIZATION OF THE ROSTRUM

11. Explanations of vote, interventions in the exercise of the right of reply and procedural motions should be made by delegations from their seats.

H. BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

12. It is imperative that Main Committees should allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee and that they should take this requirement into account when they adopt their programme of work.

13. Furthermore:

(a) A mandatory deadline, not later than 1 December, should be established for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with financial implications;

(b) The Fifth Committee should, as a general practice, consider accepting without debate the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the financial implications of draft resolutions up to a prescribed limit, namely, \$25,000 on any one item;

(c) Firm deadlines should be set for the early submission of the reports of subsidiary organs which require consideration by the Fifth Committee;

(d) A minimum period of forty-eight hours should be allowed between the submission and the voting of a proposal involving expenditure in order to allow the Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications.

I. REPORTS OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES

14. Reports of the Main Committees should be as concise as possible and, save in exceptional cases, should not contain a summary of the debates.

15. The practice of dealing in plenary meeting with reports of the Second Committee, whereby it is stated that the positions of delegations regarding draft resolutions recommended by the Second Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records, should be extended to reports of other committees.

J. BALLOTING PROCEDURE

16. The practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard and the same practice should apply to the election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

K. CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

17. To save time at the end of the session, the practice of making concluding statements in the General Assembly and its Main Committees should be dispensed with except for statements by the presiding officers.

II. WORK OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES

18. Before the conclusion of a session of the General Assembly, regional groups should agree on the distribution of chairmanships among them for the following session.

19. Candidates for the chairmanships of the Main Committees should be nominated as soon as possible.

20. It is strongly recommended that nominees for the chairmanships of the Main Committees should have experience in the work of the General Assembly.

21. During sessions, the Chairmen or other officers of the Main Committees should be entrusted by their Committees, whenever appropriate, with the conduct of informal negotiations aimed at reaching agreement on specific issues.

22. Chairmen of Main Committees should fully exercise their authority under rule 106 of the rules of procedure and, in particular, propose more frequently the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers or of the number of times each representative may speak on any given item.

23. The Main Committees which require the largest number of meetings should be encouraged to hold more meetings early in the session in order to ensure a better distribution of meetings over the whole session.

III. DOCUMENTATION

24. Subsidiary organs should be required to complete their work at the latest by 1 September, so that their reports may be available in all the working languages in time for consideration by the opening of the session of the General Assembly, and the Committee on Conferences should take this provision fully into account.

25. No reports should contain a compilation of other previous documents.

26. Subsidiary organs should not annex to their reports summary records of their meetings or other material which were already distributed to all Member States.

27. The General Assembly should review periodically the need for summary records of its subsidiary organs.

28. The General Assembly, including its Main Committees, should merely take note of those reports of the Secretary-General or subsidiary organs which do not require a decision by the Assembly and should neither debate nor adopt resolutions on them, unless specifically requested to do so by the Secretary-General or the organ concerned.

29. The publication of reports of the principal organs and of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly and of draft resolutions and amendments should be given priority over that of any individual communications received from Member States.

30. Member States should refrain, to the extent possible, from requesting the circulation of any individual communications as documents of the General Assembly and in lieu thereof, where circulation of such documents is desired, should, as far as possible, request such circulation under the cover of a note verbale in the official languages in which they submit them.

IV. RESOLUTIONS

31. Subsidiary organs reporting to the General Assembly should make every effort to submit draft resolutions in order to facilitate the consideration of the items.

32. Whenever possible, resolutions requesting the discussion of a question at a subsequent session should not call for the inclusion of a separate new item and such discussion should be held under the item under which the resolution was adopted.

V. PLANNING OF MEETINGS

33. The Committee on Conferences should be authorized to play a more effective role in the planning of meetings and in the use of conference facilities.

34. No subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

VI. SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY^b

^b This section, which related mostly to the establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Subsidiary Organs, has not been reproduced in the present annex.

ANNEX VII

Conclusions of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization concerning the rationalization of the procedures of the General Assembly

1. The agenda of the sessions of the General Assembly should be simplified as much as possible by grouping or merging related items, after consultation and with the agreement of the delegations concerned.*
2. Specific items should be referred, where relevant, to other United Nations organs or to specialized agencies. The right of States to request that specific items be discussed in the General Assembly should remain unimpaired.
3. The recommendation in paragraph 28 of annex V to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, according to which the Assembly should ensure, as far as possible, that the same questions, or the same aspects of a question, are not considered by more than one Main Committee, should be more fully implemented, except when it would be helpful for the Sixth Committee to be consulted on the legal aspects of questions under consideration by other Main Committees.
4. The General Committee should play more fully its role under rule 42 of the rules of procedure and paragraphs 1 and 2 of General Assembly decision 34/401, reviewing periodically the work of the Assembly and making the necessary recommendations.
5. The Chairmen of the Main Committees should take the initiative, in the light of past experience, to propose the grouping of similar or related items and the holding of a single general debate on them.
6. The Chairmen of the Main Committees should propose to the Committee the closing of the list of speakers on each item at a suitably early stage.
7. Agreed programmes of work should be respected. To this end, meetings should start at the scheduled time and the time allotted for meetings should be fully utilized.
8. The officers of each Main Committee should review periodically the progress of work. In case of need, they should propose appropriate measures to ensure that the work remains on schedule.
9. Negotiation procedures should be carefully selected to suit the particular subject-matter.
10. The Secretariat should facilitate informal consultations by providing adequate conference services.**
11. The mandate of subsidiary organs should be carefully defined in order to avoid overlapping and duplication of work. The General Assembly should also review periodically the usefulness of its subsidiary organs.
12. Resolutions should be as clear and succinct as possible.

* The view was expressed that the agreement of the delegations concerned was not an essential condition.

** The view was expressed that this recommendation was not intended to have any financial implications whatsoever and was approved subject to that condition.

* By resolution 39/88 B of 13 December 1984, the General Assembly approved the conclusions of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization concerning the rationalization of the procedures of the General Assembly and decided that they should be annexed to the rules of procedure; these conclusions are reproduced in the present annex.

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This index provides a reference to the rules of procedure and to the recommendations contained in the annexes to the rules. It should be noted that:

(a) In the first column, entitled "Rules", numbers in italics refer to the rules applicable to committees;

(b) In the second column, entitled "Annexes", Roman numerals I to VII refer to the respective annexes and Arabic numerals indicate the relevant paragraphs in each annex.

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