

# Rules of Procedure

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Rules of procedure are utilised by most Model UN conferences to maintain order and decorum by deciding who speaks, on what and when. This is essential as delegates put forth their points of view and interact with other States on lengthy agendas. However, many Model UN simulations have evolved to follow parliamentary rules of procedure which do not accurately mirror the realities of the proceedings that take place at the UN General Assembly. In an effort to bring Model UN procedure closer to the actual functioning of the UN, this guide hopes to highlight the differences in procedure between MUNs and the UN and clearly lay down procedures to follow that are more accurately aligned with realities of UN proceedings.

An international conference is an interaction between States through the medium of the delegates, who act as representatives of States. It is through these conversations, primarily cooperative, that much of the business at the UN progresses. Rules of procedure divide these 'consultations' into two kinds of discussion:

## Formal Consultation

During formal proceedings, the rules of procedure are observed under the supervision of the committee Chairperson. Delegates, during this time, are able to make speeches, answer questions, introduce and debate resolution and amendments. The purpose of these rules is to ensure that only one delegate speaks at any given time and to allow the Chairperson to steer the negotiations in a constructive direction.

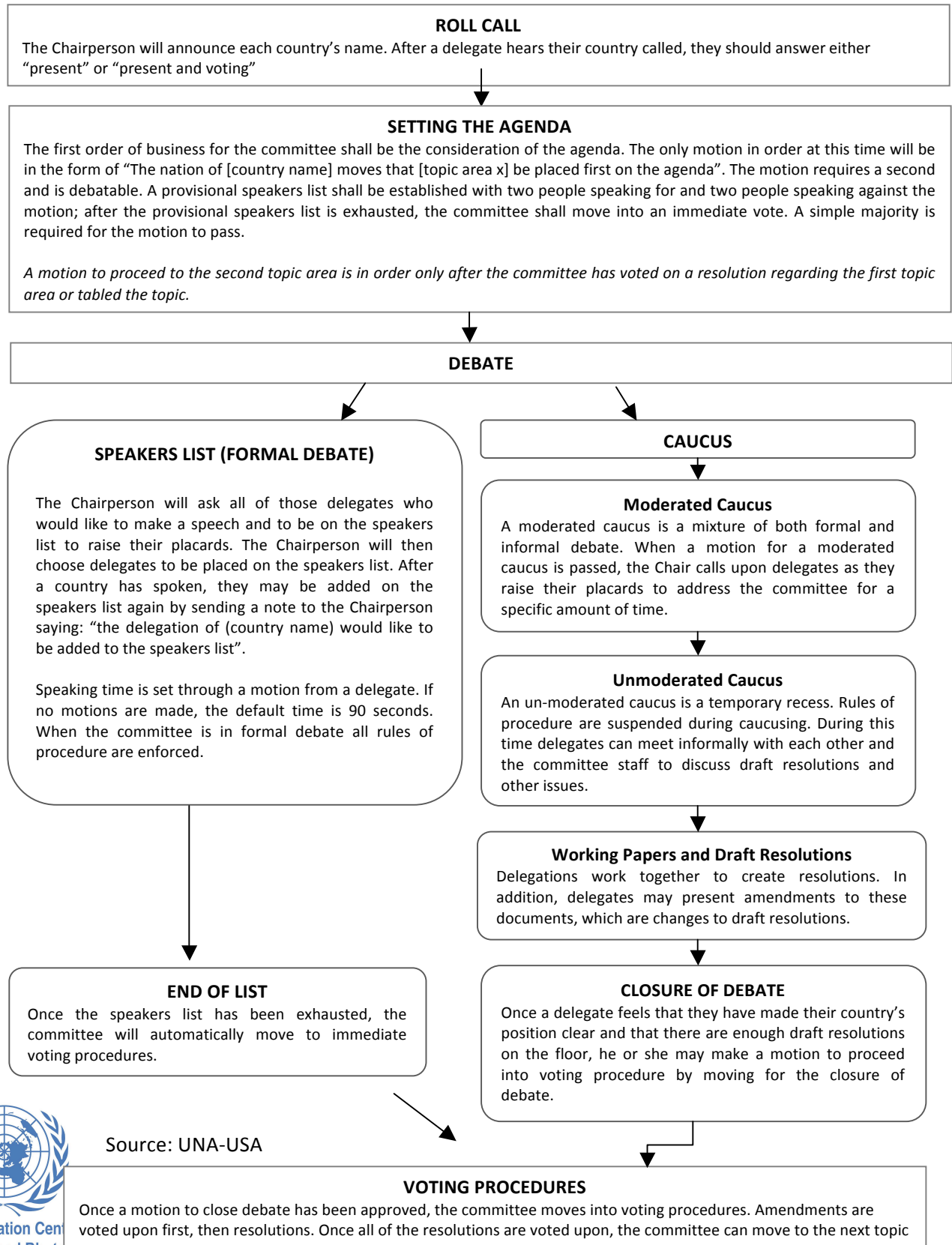
## Informal Consultation

Delegates are in consultation with each other from the moment they arrive at the MUN or UN until they leave. In addition to the order of business, their exchanges may be social or to pursue other objectives. This is the type of consultation that takes place in the form of face-to-face conversations, during which no formal rules of procedure are put into effect.

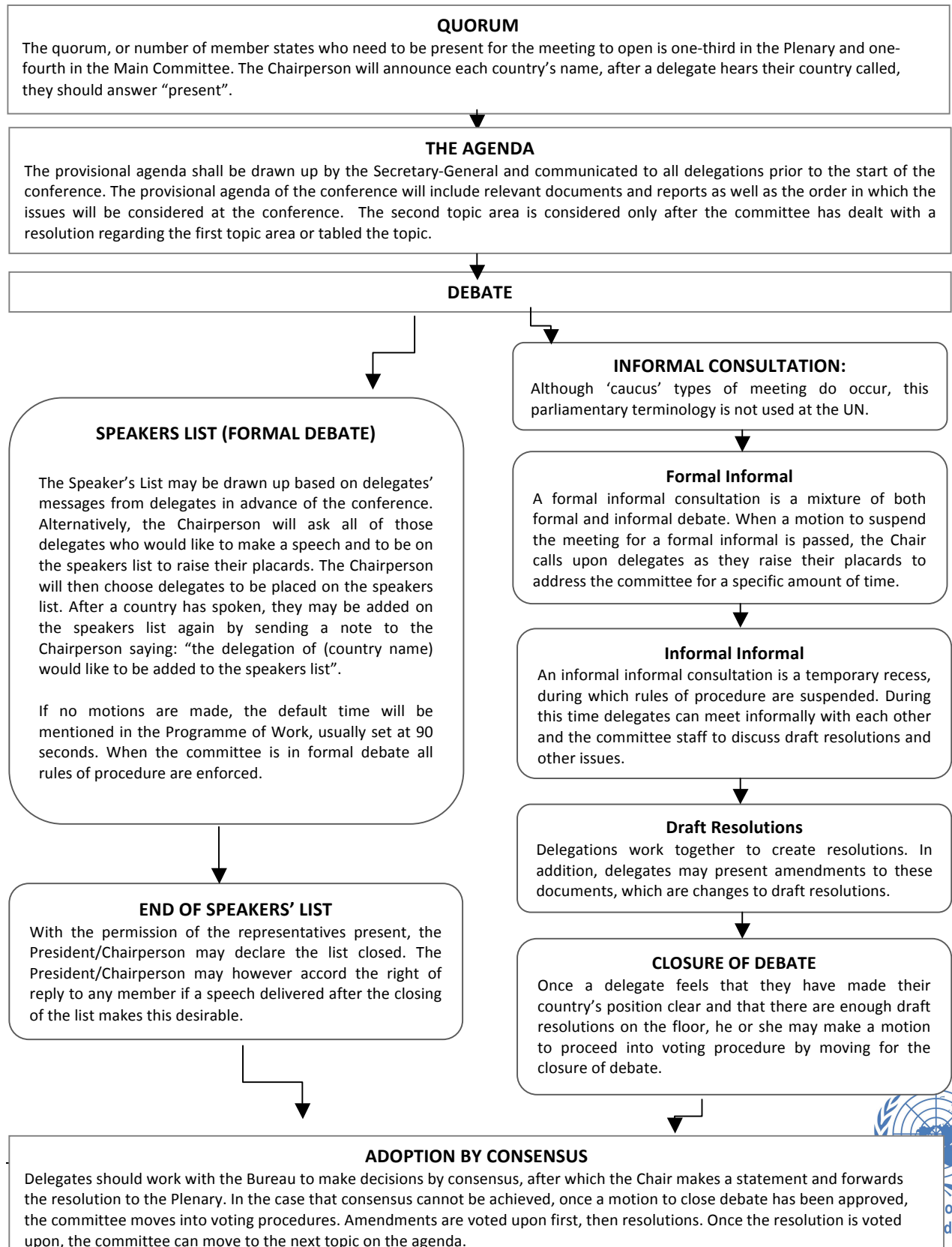
At MUN simulations in the past, the rules of procedure have figured much more prominently in the proceedings than they do at the UN. Part of the reason for this is due to the more rigid parliamentary rules of procedure employed at MUNs. Another reason for this is that the majority of the proceedings of an MUN – motion, debate, negotiation, amendment and resolution – take place during formal consultation, highlighting the need for rules of procedure and the need to introduce motions. On the other hand, the principal mode of communication between delegates at the UN is through face-to-face informal consultations; therefore the negotiation process does not rely heavily on formal proceedings. Formal processes at the UN are mainly used to provide a context for informal consultations between delegations and to formalise agreements previously reached during these.



## Flow of Debate: Traditional MUN Model



## Flow of Debate: UN General Assembly Model



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## Rules of Procedure

### I. OPENING THE DEBATE

#### 1. Setting The Agenda:

Rule 1: The provisional agenda for the conference shall be drawn up by the Secretary-General and communicated to all delegations at least two months before the start of the conference.

Rule 2: The provisional agenda of the conference shall include:

- a) Reports on the themes selected for each conference; and,
- b) All items which the Secretary-General deems necessary to put before the delegations;
- c) The order in which issues will be considered in the meeting.

Rule 3: At each conference, the provisional agenda shall be submitted to the meeting for approval during the opening session.

#### 2. Minute of silent prayer or meditation:

Rule 4: Immediately after the opening of the first meeting and preceding the closing of the final meeting, the President/Chairperson shall invite the representatives to observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

### II. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

#### 3. Speeches:

Rule 5: No representative may address the meeting without having previously obtained permission of the President/Chairperson. The President/Chairperson shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak after adding them to the Speaker's List. The President/Chairperson may call out a speaker if his or her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

#### 4. Time Limit on Speeches:

Rule 6: The meeting 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 a time limit which will then be put to vote. When the debate is limited and a representative



exceeds his or her allotted time, the President/Chairperson shall call the speaker to order without delay.

5. Points of Order:

Rule 7: During the discussion of any matter, a representative may raise a 'point of order' if the delegate believes that the President/Chairperson is not following the Rules of Procedure or not being sufficiently active in ensuring that other representatives do so. The point of order shall be immediately ruled on by the President/Chairperson in accordance with the rules of procedure. If a delegate feels that the ruling of the President/Chairperson is incorrect, they may appeal against the ruling. The appeal is put to a vote and the decision of the President/Chairperson could be overruled by a majority of the members present and voting.

- There is a widely used convention for signaling to the President/Chairman that the reason that the delegate is asking for the floor is to raise a 'point of order' rather than simply to be put on the Speaker's List, the delegate makes a 'T' with their hand and placard.

6. Closing of List of Speakers; Right to Reply:

Rule 8: During the course of the debate, the President/Chairperson may announce the list of speakers and, with the permission of the representatives present, declare the list closed. The president/Chairperson may however accord the right of reply to any member if a speech delivered after the closing of the list makes this desirable. Right of reply is not used under any other circumstances.

### III. **MOTIONS**

7. Suspension of Meeting:

Rule 9: The meeting may be suspended for a limited amount of time upon request by a representative or the President/Chairperson. Such matters will not be debated but will immediately be put to a vote. A suspended meeting is resumed on the same day. This motion is used to break for informal consultations, and for lunch and tea breaks.

8. Adjournment of Meeting:

Rule 10: During the discussion of any matter, a representative may motion for the adjournment of the meeting. Such motions will not be debated but immediately put to a vote. Any continued consideration of an item on the agenda will take place at another meeting on another day. This motion can be used at the end of the day.



#### 9. Adjournment of Debate:

Rule 11: During the discussion of any matter, a representative may propose the motion to adjourn the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak for the motion and two representatives may speak against, after which the proposal will be put to a vote. Adjournment of debate ends parts or all of the agenda item being discussed during the conference. This can be used to block action on specific draft resolution and is known as a 'no-action motion'.

#### 10. Closure of Debate:

Rule 12: A representative may at any time motion for the closure of debate on the item under discussion, whether or not the representative has signified their wish to speak. A representative can motion for this after they feel that sufficient progress has been made on draft resolutions, and they are ready to be adopted by consensus, or to be forced to a vote. 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 vote. If the meeting votes in favour of this motion, the President/Chairperson shall declare the closure of the debate.

#### 11. Order of Procedural Motions:

Rule 13: Subject to Rule 8, the motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all the other procedures or motions in the meeting:

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

### IV. **DRAFT RESOLUTIONS**

#### 12. Tabling Draft Resolution:

Rule 14: Any member state may submit a draft resolution to the Secretary for which no minimum percentage of support is required. However since resolutions are aimed to be adopted by consensus, it is advised that representatives build multilateral support before tabling draft resolutions.



### 13. Proposals and Amendments:

Rule 15: Proposals and amendments on a tabled draft resolution/decisions shall be submitted are either formally submitted in writing to Secretary, issued as 'L-documents' or proposed orally from the floor, if no member objects.

Rule 16: 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 considered or voted upon. A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of the proposal.

Rule 17: A member can request division of proposals, i.e. a separate vote on paragraphs or parts of the draft resolution or amendment before the adoption of the whole text. This applies to parts of a paragraph, an entire paragraph or several paragraphs. If the request is challenged, there will be a vote to decide whether the proposal can be divided such that the paragraph(s) can be voted on separately to the rest of the draft resolution. After two delegates each have spoken for and against the request, there will be a vote based on simple majority. If by majority, the request is passed, immediately after the voting on the paragraph, the entire draft resolution will be considered. 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.

### 14. Voting on draft resolution:

Rule 18: It is assumed that draft resolutions will be adopted by consensus and therefore shall not require voting. However, in the event that the draft resolution cannot be accepted by consensus, the meeting will go into a vote.

Rule 19: If all operative paragraphs of a draft resolution are rejected, the draft resolution will be considered rejected as a whole.

## V. VOTING

### 15. Voting Rights:

Rule 19: Each member state of the meeting shall have one vote.



16. Majority Required:

Rule 20: Decisions of the General Assembly meeting shall be made by a simple majority of the members present and voting, except on important questions including recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, and budgetary questions. This applies to both draft resolutions and amendments.

17. Method of voting:

Rule 22: The meeting shall normally vote by a show of hands or by standing but any representative may request a roll-call vote. The roll-call will be taken in alphabetical order, and when called, the representative shall answer “yes”, “no” or “abstention”.

18. Conduct during voting:

Rule 23: After the President/Chairperson has announced the beginning of voting, no delegate shall interrupt the voting unless on a point of order in connection with the actual voting procedure. The President/Chairperson may permit members to explain their vote either before or after the voting. The time given for these explanations may be limited by the President/Chairperson. The President/Chairperson shall not permit the proposer of an amendment to explain his vote on his own proposal or amendment.

19. Equally divided votes:

Rule 24: If a vote is equally divided on any matter, the President/Chairman shall decide if a second vote shall be taken. If the second vote also results in an equally divided situation, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

