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Rules of Procedure **UN General Assembly** Plenary Sessions

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Introduction

The General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) is one of the six main organs of the UN and is composed of the representatives from all 193 member states. It meets annually in September and has the power to make recommendations on international issues, including peace and security, budgetary matters of the organization, and the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council.

The UNGA operates on a one-country, one-vote system, which means that each member state has an equal say in the proceedings. The UNGA also has several subsidiary bodies, including six main committees that focus on specific issues, such as disarmament, economic and financial matters, and social, humanitarian, and cultural issues.

The UNGA has played a significant role in the development of international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has also been involved in the establishment of numerous UN bodies and programs, such as the World Health Organization and the UN Development Programme.

While the UNGA does not have the power to enforce its decisions, its resolutions and recommendations can have significant influence on the actions of member states and other international actors.



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1. General Considerations

1.1. Chairpersons

The Board of the General Assembly Plenary Sessions shall be composed of the Secretary General of the United Nations, the two Deputy Secretary Generals and President of the General Assembly.

1.2. Competence of the Chairpersons.

The competence of the Chairpersons may not be questioned by delegates.

1.3. Delegate's Participation

All Delegations are obliged to attend the whole procedure of the General Assembly Plenary and have the right to participate in all procedures. All member states shall vote on all draft resolutions under consideration through their ambassador.

2. General Assembly - Opening Plenary

2.1. Overview of the procedure

2.1.1. The President of the General Assembly announces the beginning of the session and entertains a motion to verify the quorum. After the verification of the quorum, the ambassadors of the delegations will address the Plenary with their opening speeches.

2.1.2. Each ambassador will have 60 seconds (1 minute) maximum to address the Plenary. After the conclusion of the 5 speeches, the Plenary will be granted one (1) right of reply. The right of reply will have to refer to the last 5 speeches.

2.1.3. The President of the General Assembly will give the floor to a delegate qualifying for a right of reply at his/her discretion. There will be no right of reply to a right of reply.

2.1.4. After all the ambassadors address the Plenary, the President of the General Assembly will adjourn the meeting.

2.2. Verification of the Quorum

2.2.1. The representatives of all delegations participating in ThessISMUN attend the General Assembly Plenary Session. General Assembly activities and debate will begin when at least 12 of the delegates



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attending the conference are present, as determined by a Roll Call.



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2.2.2. Delegates may propose to a *Motion for the Verification of Quorum*, where the Secretariat will proceed with the verification of the quorum by initiating a Roll Call. The President can rule the Motion dilatory without option for appeal.

2.2.3. If quorum is not met thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled start time of the plenary session, the Secretariat will decide whether to start the session with the delegates present at the moment.

2.2.4. Delegations arriving during or after the Roll Call are required to send a note to the Secretariat stating their presence in the General Assembly. As long as participants have not informed the President of their arrival they will not be recognized or allowed to vote. All participants who have not informed the President of their arrival until voting procedure begins are not eligible to vote. The President may at any time, and especially before entering voting procedures, revisit the quorum at his/her own discretion

2.3. Rules of procedure

2.3.1. Ambassador Opening Speeches

The Secretariat will assign an ambassador to each delegation. Forty (40) ambassadors will be chosen to deliver their Opening Speech based on geographical representation to deliver an opening speech during the Plenary Session of the General Assembly. Each speech must not exceed one (1) minute and must provide a summary of the country's viewpoint on the pressing matters being discussed, based on the Agenda of ThessISMUN.

2.3.2. Right of Reply.

A Delegate whose personal or national integrity has been impugned by another Delegate's comments may rise to a *Right of Reply*. Disagreement with the content of the Delegate's speech does not constitute sufficient justification for a *Right of Reply*. The President will recognize the *Right of Reply* at his/her discretion as well as decide on how to resolve the motion. This point may not interrupt a speaker but should be addressed the moment he/she has finished his/her speech. Should the President rule the Right of Reply out of order, his/her decision cannot be appealed. No delegate may call for a Right of Reply on a Right of Reply.



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Sample opening speech:

Your Excellency the Secretary General, madam/mister president, honorable delegates, Greece as a member of the European Union, NATO and of course the United Nations has affirmed its desire for peace and co-operation. In that feeling of mutual understanding Greece urges Cyprus and Turkey to find common ground and reach an agreement. Further encourages and commits itself towards a peaceful and compromising solution of the name of the North Macedonia. Also expresses its hope for the amelioration of the Greece-Turkey relations. Finally Greece stresses the importance of ongoing environmental protection in order to face global climate change. Keeping in mind that this has become a common effort by all countries towards achieving this goal Greece wishes you all the most constructing debates during the days of the conference.

Sample Opening Speech, qualifying for a Right of Reply:

Your excellency the Secretary General, madam/mister President, honorable Delegates, the Islamic Republic of Iran is a Middle-eastern country, neighboring both Iraq and Afghanistan, two countries that have been invaded by the imperialist hawks of the West, namely the United States of America. Iran is a peace-loving Islamic state, ranking second in the world in natural gas reserves and third in oil reserves. It is OPEC's 2nd largest oil exporter. Thus it is pretty obvious why the Americans want to suppress our mighty state and control our nuclear energy production plans, which are solely for peaceful purposes. We shall not tolerate such behavior against us and we shall resist to the last man, in order to preserve our freedom and rights from the greed of the Americans and their allies.

We call upon all those prizing freedom and justice to stand against such oppression!

Sample Right of Reply:

The United States of America would like to reply to the Islamic Republic of Iran that they have invaded neither Iraq nor Afghanistan and would never commit themselves to such barbarous and inhumane acts, as Iran has, in order to secure any energy resources. The claims of Iran are preposterous and this can be seen through their efforts to develop a nuclear arsenal in order to destabilize the peace and security in the region. Thank you.



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3. General Assembly - Closing Plenary

3.1. Authority of the Secretariat

The President of the General Assembly's decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

3.2. Overview of the procedure

3.2.1. The President of the General Assembly announces the beginning of the session and entertains a ***Motion to verify the quorum***. After the verification of the quorum, the President of the General Assembly announces that only the draft resolutions of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd committee of the General Assembly will be presented and voted upon by the Plenary.

3.2.2. Then, the President of the General Assembly will entertain a ***Motion for the introduction of the first draft resolution***. The sponsor of the draft will rise to the podium and will only read the operative clauses. After the presentation of the draft, the sponsor will have 5 minutes maximum to support the document.

3.2.3. Then, the President of the General Assembly will entertain one (1) speaker in favor and one (1) speaker against the draft. Each one will have one (1) minute.

3.2.4. After the presentation and voting on all the drafts, the President of the General Assembly will adjourn the meeting.

3.3. Order of Consideration of Committees in the Closing Plenary Session of the General Assembly

3.3.1. The plenary session will begin with the following order of committees: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Committee of the General Assembly. Then will follow the reports from the Security Council, ECOSOC, HRC and CERD etc. Whether the Reports of the Security Council, ECOSOC, HRC, and CERD are finally read, lies upon the discretion of the Secretariat.

*Resolutions will not need additional signatures in order to be considered by the General Assembly.

*If a resolution before the General Assembly fails it may not be reconsidered.

*If a resolution at the General Assembly passes, it is considered to be adopted by the Organization.



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3.4. Procedure concerning the Draft Resolution

3.4.1. Introduction of a Draft Resolution

After the verification of the Quorum the President of the General Assembly may entertain a *Motion to Introduce the Draft Resolution*, which requires a simple majority to pass.

Once the Motion has passed, the President shall invite the Sponsor of the Draft Resolution to read out only the operative clauses of the Draft Resolution to the General Assembly. The Sponsor or one of the Signatories will then be recognized for five (5) minutes to speak in favour of the Draft Resolution. The Speaker may yield his/her remaining time to Questions or to another Delegate if he/she wishes to do so. After the introduction the President of the General Assembly will entertain one (1) speaker in favor and one (1) speaker against the Draft Resolution. Following the completion of the speeches the President may open the floor for points or motions at his/her discretion.

3.4.2. Motion for a Moderated Caucus.

A Delegate proposing a *Motion for a Moderated Caucus* must indicate a total duration of the caucus, speaking time for each individual speaker, as well as the proposed topic of discussion concerning the Draft Resolution of the Motion.

The President may suggest a more appropriate total duration, speaker's time or topic, or may rule the Moderated Caucus out order without possibility of appeal.

If the Motion passes, the General Assembly will enter informal debate whereby the President will recognize at his/her discretion Delegates who raise their placards to speak about the issue at hand.

3.4.3. Motion to Extend the Moderated Caucus.

A Delegate may propose a *Motion to Extend the Moderated Caucus* if he/she feels that additional time benefits the work of the General Assembly. The Delegate proposing an Extension of the Moderated Caucus must suggest duration for the extension, not exceeding the initial Moderated Caucus. The individual speaker's time and the purpose of the Caucus remain the same. The President may suggest a



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more appropriate total duration and put it to vote or may rule the Motion out of order without possibility of appeal. Only one extension of the Moderated Caucus is allowed.

3.4.4. Motion to Close Debate on the Draft Resolution

A Delegate may propose a *Motion to Close Debate* in order to end debate on a Draft Resolution.

3.4.5. Motion to Close Debate on the Topic Area under Discussion.

A Delegate may propose a *Motion to Close Debate* in order to end Debate on the Topic Area under Discussion, whereby the General Assembly will enter immediately voting procedure on a certain Draft Resolution on the floor. If the President rules the Motion in order, it is in his/her discretion to entertain one (1) speaker in favor and one (1) speaker against the Motion. This motion requires 2/3 majority in order to pass.

4. Voting Procedure

4.1. General Information

When the President announces that the General Assembly is entering voting procedure, no entering or exiting from the room will be permitted, unless there is an emergency or until the voting procedure has come to an end. All auxiliary personnel, such as Journalists and Advisors etc. are required to immediately exit the room. The Secretariat may or may not allow the Administrative Staff to remain in the room. Note passing is suspended. At this time, Motions to Split the House, Divide the Question or Roll Call Voting are in order.

4.2. Method of Voting

Each Delegate of the General Assembly has one vote and must demonstrate his/her voting intentions by raising his/her placard at the President's request unless there is a Roll Call vote (see below).



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4.3. Motion for a Roll Call Vote.

Roll Call Motions are in order primarily for substantive matters. This Motion is automatically accepted unless the President rules it out of order; the decision is not subject to appeal. The Roll Call starts from a Delegate, randomly selected by the President.

4.4. Voting Rights

4.4.1. General Information

Delegates must vote “in favour” or “against” on procedural matters and “in favour”, “against” or “abstain” on substantive matters. No Delegate shall vote on behalf of another Delegate. Abstentions are not counted as negative votes.

4.4.2. Passing.

During the Roll Call voting procedure, a Delegate may choose to pass. The President will place the Delegate at the bottom of the voting list. A Delegate who has passed once during a voting sequence may not pass again or abstain, but must ascertain his/her vote. A delegate who has passed cannot vote “with Rights”.

4.4.3. Voting with Rights.

A Delegate may request a right of explanation after voting. Upon completion of voting, and after the Delegates who passed have ascertained their vote, the Secretariat will allow those voting with rights to explain their vote. The President may limit the speaking time at his/her discretion.

4.5. Motion to Split the House

The *Motion to Split the House* is used by a Delegate wishing to exclude abstention from the voting options during the final vote on the Draft Resolution. This Motion has to be proposed immediately after the General Assembly Closes Debate and enters Voting Procedure. The motion requires 2/3 majority in



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order to pass. Once the Motion passes, delegations shall not be allowed to abstain during the voting of the Resolution.

4.6. Motion to Divide the Question

Prior to the start of the voting procedure on a Draft Resolution, a Delegate may rise to a ***Motion to Divide the Question*** in order to vote on an individual operative clause, a group of operative clauses or clause by clause. A Delegate must specify how he/she wishes to divide the operative clauses.

4.7. Disruptiveness of the Motions related to the Voting Procedure

4.7.1. Should there be more than one Motion to divide the question on the floor, General Assembly shall vote upon the Motions, starting from the most disruptive one. The President shall take one (1) Speaker in favour and one (1) Speaker against the first Motion to Divide the Question for a speaking time of one (1) minute each. The Motion requires 2/3 majority in order to pass. If the Motion passes, subsequent

4.7.2. Motions to Divide the Question will be ruled dilatory and the General Assembly will proceed to voting on the Draft Resolution in the manner suggested by the Motion. If the Motion fails, the remaining

4.7.3. Motions will be considered in accordance with the above procedure.

4.7.4. The divided section that fails during voting will be taken out of the final Draft Resolution; only those sections that have passed will remain. Subsequently, the General Assembly will proceed to vote on the new final Draft Resolution as a whole.

4.8. Motion to Retake the Vote.

The ***Motion to Retake the Vote*** is in order when the result of the vote on the Resolution ends with a difference of one (1) or a tie. The Motion automatically passes and the General Assembly enters informal debate for a short period of time, defined by the Secretariat. After the caucus the vote shall be retaken and the result of the second vote shall be considered as final. No Motions to retake the vote shall be entertained. Should the second vote end in tie the results of the previous vote shall be considered final and shall not be subject to another motion to retake vote. In case the initial vote is a tie as well the matter is considered to have failed.



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5. Motion to Adjourn the Session.

A Delegate may rise to a *Motion to Adjourn the Session*¹ in order to cease permanently all General Assembly Plenary activities¹. The President may rule the Motion out of order without possibility of appeal or putting it to vote. The Motion is debatable, thus the President will entertain upon his/her discretion one (1) speaker in favour and one (1) speaker against. This motion requires 2/3 majority in order to pass.

¹ This motion is in order only to be used for the end of the conference.



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Appendix of Points and Motions.

Rule	Description	Debatable	Votes Required	Interrupt Speaker
Point of Personal Privilege	Feeling discomfort	No	No	Yes
Point of Order	To point out a misuse of rules	No	No	No
Right of Reply	Reply to an insult	No	No	No
Point of Parliamentary Inquiry	Clarify the rules	No	No	No
Motion to Verify the Quorum	Seeking to verify the presence of delegates	No	Simple Majority	No
Motion to Adjourn Session	Adjourn session to cease permanently all council activities	Yes (1+/1-)	2/3 Majority	No
Motion for a Moderated Caucus	Proceed to a Moderated Caucus	No	Simple Majority	No
Motion to Split the House	Forbid the right for abstentions	No	2/3 Majority	No
Motion to Retake Vote	Retake vote if there is an one vote difference	No	No	No
Motion to Close Debate on a Resolution	Close the separate debate on a Draft Resolution	Yes (1-)	2/3 Majority	No
Motion to Question Competence	Question the authority of the council on a topic	Yes (1+/1-)	2/3 Majority	No
Motion to Divide the Question	Divide the operative clauses to groups and vote each group separately	Yes (1+/1-)	2/3 Majority	No
Motion to Introduce a Draft Resolution	Introduction of a Draft Resolution	No	Simple Majority	No



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