

Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

The rules of Parliamentary Procedure are what make the MUN experience so alike to the real UN in the sense that delegates learn the ‘language’ to be used in debate rooms. These rules help to maintain order in the committee rooms as there are lengthy agendas and many delegations who wish to convey their point to the forum.

GENERAL RULES

- English is the official and working language of all committees during both formal and informal debate. All note-passing must be written in English as well. No other language will be tolerated inside the rooms as a means of communication.
- The decisions of the Chair are final.
- The Chair shall have complete control of the proceedings at any meeting and shall moderate discussion, announce decisions, rule on points or motions, and ensure and enforce the observance of these rules.
- The Chair may temporarily transfer his or her duties to another member of the committee staff. All procedural matters in committee are subject to the discretion of the Chair.
- The Chair may undertake any action that is not covered in the Rules of Procedure in order to facilitate the flow of debate at the conference.
- The Chair may use his or her discretion in terms of extending or reducing debate time, speaking time, and limit the number of points of information.
- The Chair holds the power of suspending rules or changes in the order of debate.
- Only the Chair, a delegate recognized by the Chair, or the speaker holding the floor has any right to speak.
- All speakers, including those rising to points must stand when speaking and address the Chair first.
- Delegates are to refrain from using “I” in debating sessions, and instead must refer to themselves in the third person.

CHAIR

- Agenda: the Chair shall set and communicate the agenda to the delegates before the conference.
- Revision of the Agenda: Additional items of an important and urgent nature may be placed on the agenda during a regular session by the Chair who may add additional topics to the agenda at his/her discretion.
- Limitation of Speaking Time: the Chair may limit the time allotted to each speaker. However, delegates can motion to increase or decrease the speaking time, which will be voted upon by the committee or council. When a delegate exceeds his or her allotted time, the Chair may call the speaker to order without delay.
- Recognizing Delegates: No delegate may address the body without the previously obtained permission of the Chair. The Chair may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion. The Chair shall enforce the time limit as described by clause iv

DELEGATES

- Point Of Personal Privilege: During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may raise a Point of Personal Privilege, and the Chair shall immediately address the point. A Point of Personal Privilege must refer to a matter of personal comfort, safety and/or well being of the members of the committee (the most common is the audibility of the speaker). The Chair may refuse to recognize a Point of Personal Privilege if the delegate has not shown proper restraint, or if the point is dilatory in nature.
- Point of Information (question to other delegates): After a delegate gives a speech, and if the delegate yields their time to Points of Information, one Point of Information (a question) can be raised by delegates from the floor. The speaker will be allotted the remainder of his or her speaking time to address Points of Information. Points of Information are directed to the speaker and allow other delegations to ask questions in relation to speeches and resolutions.
- Point Of Order: During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may raise a Point of

Order and the Chair shall immediately consider the request. A Point of Order must relate to the observance of the rules of the committee or to the way the Chair is exercising his or her power. A delegate raising a Point of Order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. The Chair may refuse to recognize a Point of Order if the delegate has not shown proper restraint governing the use of such a right, or if the point is dilatory in nature.

- Point Of Inquiry: If there is no discussion on the floor, a delegate may raise a Point of Inquiry to request clarification of the present procedural status of a meeting. A Point of Inquiry may never interrupt a speaker.
- Right of Reply: the Chair may recognize the Right of Reply only in instances of a grave personal insult. Rights of Reply must be submitted in writing to the Chair, and may only be granted after a speech is completed. The Chair shall inform the Secretary-General of the circumstances surrounding the Right of Reply. No ruling on this matter is subject to appeal.
- Order of Procedural Motions: The motions below shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the committee:
 - Point of Personal Privilege
 - Point of Order
 - Point of Inquiry
 - Point of Information
 - Motion to Caucus
 - Motion to Move into Time Against
 - Motion to Table Debate
- Yielding: The delegate, who has been recognized by the Chair to address the body on a substantive issue, may yield any time following their remarks after their speech. Yields may be made in three ways: to another delegate, to points of information (questions), or to the Chair. The delegate should yield to another delegate if they wish to give the remaining time to a colleague who will further support and clarify their point. Once a delegate yields his/her time to a fellow delegate, the second delegate (the one who has been yielded to) may not yield any remaining time to another. The delegate should yield to points of information if

they wish to allow colleagues to question their point and further defend it. The Chair selects delegates from the floor who may ask one question per speech. The delegate making the point has the right to ask the Chair for a follow-up question and the Chair may either grant or deny this request. Answers to questions asked are limited to the time remaining in a delegate's speech. The Chair has the right to call order to any delegate whose question is, in their opinion, not designed to elicit information. A delegate should yield the floor back to the Chair if they do not wish that their speech to be subject to comments. The Chair shall then move on to the next speaker.

- **Appeal to the Chair's Decision:** An appeal is made when a delegate feels that the Chair has made an incorrect ruling. The delegate formally challenges the Chair in writing by sending a note to the dais, moving to appeal the Chair's decision. The appeal will be taken to the co-Chair who will decide if the appeal is to be considered. Once the motion is acknowledged, the co-Chair will hear from both the delegate and the Chair before making a decision. This ruling is not subject to appeal.

DEBATE

- **Suspend Debate (Motion to Caucus):** Upon the recommendation of the Chair or any delegate, the committee may consider a motion to suspend the debate for a moderated or un-moderated caucus. This motion requires a majority vote.
- **Moderated Caucus:** The recommendation for a moderated caucus must include a time limit for delegate remarks and a time limit for the entire caucus (e.g. "The nation of [country name] moves for a five minute moderated caucus with a 30 second speaking time."). During moderated caucus, the Chair shall recognize delegates for remarks without the use of a speakers list and yields shall be out of order.
- **Un-moderated Caucus:** The recommendation for an un-moderated caucus requires a time limit to be made (e.g. "The nation of [country name] moves for a ten minute un-moderated caucus."). Un-moderated caucuses allow delegates to have informal discussions and move around the room.

- **Motion to Table Debate:** During the discussion of any matter, the committee may consider a motion to table debate on the item under discussion at the recommendation of the Chair or any delegate. If the motion is seconded, two representatives may speak in favor of and two against the motion. Then, the motion shall immediately be put to a vote. A two-thirds majority is required for passage. If a motion to table debate is passed, the topic is considered tabled and no further actions or votes will be taken on it. A topic may be reintroduced to the committee so that debate can resume through the same process. The motion to resume debate on a tabled topic shall also require a two-thirds majority for passage.
- **Motion to Move into Time ‘Against’ a Resolution or Amendment:** If a delegate feels that all that has to be said has been said he may simple call out, if no delegate is speaking, ‘Motion to move into time against’. If the motion is seconded and there are no objections, the motion is granted.
- **Closure of Debate:** A delegate may at any time move for the closure of debate on the item under discussion, after which debate will end and the proposed resolution or amendment will be put to an immediate vote. Permission to speak on the closure of debate shall be given only to two speakers opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to a vote. This motion requires a two-thirds majority decision. Upon passage of this motion the Chair will declare the closure of debate and immediately move into voting procedure on the pending proposal. The committee shall also close debate and move into voting procedure when the speakers list has been exhausted.

VOTING

- **Methods of Decision:** All procedural decisions, except for the closure and adjournment of debate, shall be made by a simple majority of the delegations present. Delegations physically present in the committee may not abstain on procedural motions. Decisions on draft resolutions and amendments shall require a simple majority in favor. However, the passage of all resolutions and amendments in the Security Council requires nine affirmative votes and an

affirmative vote or an abstention on the part of all five permanent members (People's Republic of China, France, Russian Federation, United States of America and United Kingdom).

- **Voting Rights:** Each present delegation shall have one vote. Observing nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) cannot vote on substantive matters. Each vote may be a Yes, No, or Abstain. On procedural motions, members may not abstain. Members present and voting shall be defined as members casting an affirmative or negative vote (no abstentions) on all substantive votes.
- **Method of Voting:** Delegations may vote in favor of or against a proposal or may abstain from voting. The committee shall normally vote by show of placards, but any delegate may request a roll call vote on substantive matters. The roll call vote shall be taken in alphabetical order of the English names of the countries present. During a roll call vote, delegations may answer with an affirmative vote, a negative vote, an abstention (when appropriate) or may pass. Delegations passing in the first round of voting will be called upon alphabetically in a second round, at which time they may only answer with an affirmative or negative vote. Delegations that appear to be voting out of policy, while casting an affirmative or negative vote, may reserve the right to explain their vote by Voting with Rights. Delegations must announce that they are Voting with Rights at the time they cast their vote. The Chair may permit delegations Voting with Rights to explain their votes after voting has concluded but before the decision has been announced.
- **Conduct While in Voting Procedure:** After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no representative may enter or leave the room, nor shall any representative interrupt the voting except on a Point of Personal Privilege, Point of Inquiry, or a Point of Order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. Communication (note-passing and speaking) between delegates is strictly forbidden. A member of the staff shall secure the doors during voting procedure.
- **Passage of Resolutions:** If a vote does not result in a simple majority* in favor, the resolution shall be regarded as rejected. A simple majority requires fifty percent of the members present during the last roll call, plus one. Example: 44 members present in the Human Rights Committee requires $22 (50\%) + 1 = 23$ affirmative

votes.

EXCEPTIONS

The United Nations Security Council requires nine affirmative votes for the passage of resolutions and amendments. In addition to the nine affirmative votes, an affirmative vote or an abstention on the part of all permanent members (People's Republic of China, France, Russian Federation, United States of America and United Kingdom) is required for the passage of all resolutions and amendments.

