

SECONDARY SCHOOLS UNITED NATIONS SYMPOSIUM

RULES OF PROCEDURE



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General Rules

Scope

These rules shall apply to all regular sessions of the Secondary Schools United Nations Symposium for all committees. These rules are self-sufficient and no other rules shall apply, unless otherwise stated in the supplemental rules for Specialized Agencies or Crisis Committees. In situations not covered by the rules, the Chair shall constitute the final authority.

Language

The working language of the conference is English, except in bilingual committees or committees where an additional language has been designated by the Chair. All documents must be drawn up and speeches delivered in English. No translation services will be provided in any committee.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat shall consist of the Secretary-General and those persons the Secretary-General have appointed to the Secretariat. Any member of the Secretariat may address any committee at any time. The ruling of a Secretariat member on any rule or regulation herein is final and overrides any other ruling or appeal. Any rule may be altered, suspended or added by a member of the Secretariat at any time.

The Dais

Composition

Each committee shall have a Dais, composed of several staff members, as designated by the Secretariat. Individually or collectively, members of the Dais shall have the capacity to assume the office of the Chair.

Duties

The Dais shall be responsible for maintaining the Speakers' List, recording the Roll Call at the beginning of each committee session, and recording the results of all votes in the committee.

The Chair shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting, direct discussion, accord the right to speak, equitably and objectively recognize points and motions, put questions to a vote, announce decisions, ensure the observation of these rules, and rule on disputed points.

The Chair is also primarily responsible for the substantive content of the committee proceedings. The Chair (or their designate) must authorize each draft resolutions for their introduction to the floor.

Powers

After the Secretariat, the Chair shall be the final authority in each committee. The chair may refuse to entertain any procedural motion at her/his discretion. At any time, the Chair may propose the adoption of a procedural motion without a vote by the committee.

Competence

The members of the committee may not question the competence of the Dais. The Undersecretary General of Committee Affairs, with the advice and consent of the Secretary-General, may remove any member of the Dais if necessary. The committee members may approach the Secretariat if they so desire.

Delegations

Rights

Except for Commonwealth Heads of Government Committee (CHOGM) and North American Trade Organization Committee (NATO), each member shall be represented by one voting delegate on each committee. Delegations may include an alternate in these two committees. Only one person may hold speaking and voting rights for the delegation at any given time.

Non-Member States/Observer States

A representative of a State that is not a member of the United Nations, or a representative of an organization holding observer status, shall have the same rights as a full member except that they may not vote on substantive matters, and may not be a sponsor or signatory to a resolution.

Non-Governmental Organizations

A representative of a non-governmental organization shall have the same rights as a full member except that he or she may not vote on substantive matters, or sponsor (or sign) draft resolutions. Delegates representing non-governmental organizations will have access to certain unique procedural actions, as follows:

Oral Statements to Committee: An NGO may submit a written appeal to his or her chair explaining the topic and intention of the proposed statement. The Chair will then, at his or her discretion, interrupt the normal flow of debate to introduce the NGO.

Circulation of written pronouncements: An NGO may submit to the Chair a written pronouncement of no more than 1000 words, addressing the position and work of their organization. This pronouncement will then, at the discretion of the Chair, be distributed throughout the committee.

Censure

Delegates are expected to know their country's foreign policy. Delegates who clearly and persistently misrepresent their country's foreign policy in speeches and substantive votes are subject to censure. The Undersecretary-General of Committee Affairs, with the advice and consent of the Secretary-General and the Chair, must pre-authorise all motions for censure.

Once censure is moved, the delegate in question is allowed two minutes to explain him/herself and speak against the censure. The motion shall then be voted on. It requires a two-thirds majority to pass. The effects of censure are as follows:

First censure: The delegate is barred from the committee room for the remainder of the current committee session and for the duration of the next committee session.

Second censure: The delegate is barred from the committee room for the remainder of the conference.

The Committee

Roll Call

At the beginning of each session the Dais shall initiate roll call. Each delegate must respond either “present” or “present and voting”. Delegates who are “present” may vote in favour, opposed or abstain, subject to the rules on abstention. Delegates who are “present and voting” may only vote in favour or opposed; abstentions are never permitted. If a delegation is not present at the time the Roll Call is taken, it is expected to pass a note to the Dais once it arrives.

Quorum

Before formal debate or voting procedure may begin, the committee must meet quorum. In this case, quorum is defined as one-third of the voting members of a committee as determined by the roll call list. Any delegate may, at any time, request verification of quorum. The Chair will rule immediately on the motion, initiating roll call if he/she deems it necessary. Quorum is assumed to be met unless it is shown otherwise.

Majorities

A simple majority is defined as more votes in favour than opposed (a motion fails on a tie vote). Any number of abstentions may not cause the motion to fail

A two-thirds majority is defined as at least two votes in favour for each vote opposed (eg. a vote of 6 in favour, 3 opposed, would pass regardless of the number of abstentions).

A unanimous vote is defined no votes against the motion. Any delegate voting against a motion requiring unanimity shall cause that motion to fail. Any number of abstentions does not cause the motion to fail. The absence of any number of delegates shall not affect the success or failure of a motion requiring unanimity unless quorum is thereby not attained.

Majorities

For procedural matters, each delegation has the obligation to vote. Only votes of “yes” or “no” shall be in order. A motion for a Roll Call Vote on procedural matters is never in order.

Debate

Agenda

The agenda refers to the order in which the committee shall discuss the topics. The first order of business for the committee shall be the consideration of the agenda.

Only topics on the provisional agenda shall be considered, except in committees designated by the Secretariat as crisis committees.

The Chair shall open a primary speakers' list and entertain a motion to set the first topic on the agenda. In the event of such a motion, the Chair shall call for two speakers for and two speakers against.

If the motion carries, a secondary speakers' list shall be opened to discuss the agenda topic. If it fails, the committee shall continue general debate.

Once an agenda topic has been closed or tabled and all proposals concerning the topic have been voted upon, the Chair shall return to the primary speakers' list to consider the agenda again.

Crisis Committees

In a committee designated by the Secretariat as a crisis committee, the Dais may call upon the committee to table debate on the current topic area so that a more urgent matter may be attended to immediately. After the crisis has been resolved, the committee will return automatically to debate on the tabled topic.

Speaker's List

Primary Speakers' List

A primary speakers' list shall be established at first to set the agenda. This speakers' list shall remain open throughout the duration of the conference, and will be returned to upon closure or tabling of the individual topics.

Secondary Speakers' List

Once the first agenda topic is set, a secondary speakers' list that deals with the topic in question shall be opened. Separate lists shall be established for specific procedural motions on an as-needed basis.

General Policy

A member may add his or her name to the list, as long as it is not already on the list, by submitting a written request to the Dais. Debate is closed automatically upon exhaustion of the speakers' list.

Suspension of Debate

During the course of debate, a delegate may move to caucus. When making such a motion, the delegate must specify a type and purpose, and in the case of a moderated caucus, a time limit, and speaking time for the caucus. There are two types of caucus. They are as follows:

1. Unmoderated caucus: The Dais is not involved. Delegates may leave their seats, leave the room, etc. to speak to each other in a less formal setting or to write draft resolutions. No points or motions shall be in order during unmoderated caucus.
2. Moderated caucus: Delegates remain in their seats and are recognized at the Chair's discretion to speak for the specified amount of time. During a moderated caucus, the Chair shall call to order delegates who are making speeches not germane to the designated topic. Only points of personal privilege and points of order are in order during a moderated caucus.

Tabling of Debate

A motion to table debate may be used to end debate on a given substantive issue without having voted on the resolution. The Chair may rule such a motion out of order. If the motion is in order, the Chair may recognize two (2) speakers for and two (2) against the motion, after which the motion is put to an immediate vote requiring a simple majority to pass. If the motion passes, debate on the tabled item or topic is stopped and the item is put aside without further actions or votes of any kind. Speakers then will be recognized according to the order on the primary speakers' list.

The Chair may entertain a motion to reintroduce the tabled topic. A motion to resume debate on a tabled item requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass and shall be debatable to the extent of one (1) speaker for and one (1) speaker against. If this motion passes, debate is resumed on the tabled topic. The secondary speakers' list established for that topic automatically will be reopened.

Closure of the Speakers' List

A member may, at any time, move for closure of the speakers' list. The Chair may rule such a motion dilatory. This motion requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass and is debatable to the extent of one (1) speaker against this motion. If the motion passes, no new speakers shall be added to the list. Once the speakers' list has been exhausted, debate is closed automatically and all draft resolutions and amendments are brought to an immediate vote. After the speakers' list has been closed, it cannot be re-opened.

Closure of Debate

A member may, at any time, move for closure of debate on substantive matters under discussion. The Chair may rule such a motion out of order. If the motion is ruled in order, the Chair may recognize up to two (2) speakers against this motion, but none in favour. This requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass. If the motion passes, all draft resolutions and amendments are brought to an immediate vote.

If the speakers' list is exhausted, debate is closed automatically and all draft resolutions and amendments on the floor are brought to an immediate vote.

Recess

A motion to recess is in order only within the final 15 minutes of a committee session. The Chair may rule this motion out of order. The Chair's decision on this matter cannot be appealed. The motion to recess requires no debate and passes on a simple majority. The effect of the motion is to suspend the meeting of the committee until the next regularly scheduled committee session.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion for adjournment requires a simple majority to pass, and is in order only when at least one of the following conditions have been met:

- (1) The committee has considered every topic on its agenda.
- (2) There remains fewer than 30 minutes in the last committee session of the conference.

Speeches

Addressing the Committee

No member may address the committee without having obtained the permission of the Chair. The Chair may call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are not relevant to the subject matter under discussion. A speech may not be interrupted by another delegate, unless that delegate is rising on a Point of Personal Privilege or a Point of Order.

Time Limit on Speeches

A member of the committee may move to set a time limit on speeches. Such a motion requires a simple majority to pass. The Chair may rule such a motion dilatory without appeal.

Yields

Each delegate must yield his/her time in one of the following four ways:

- (1) To the Chair: The remaining speaking time is forfeit and the committee moves on.
- (2) To comments: Two delegates, selected by the Chair, may make 30 second comments on the speech just delivered. The content of comments must pertain solely to the preceding speech. The Chair shall call to order a speaker whose comment does not pertain solely to the preceding speech.
- (3) To another delegate: The delegate speaking may designate another delegate to speak for the balance of his/her speaking time.
- (4) To questions: The delegate may use the rest of his/her time to answer questions posed by other delegates. The Chair shall select delegates to pose questions. Only the time taken to answer the questions shall be counted against the speaker's remaining time. The time taken to pose the questions is not taken into account, although the Chair may cut off a delegate who takes too long to ask a question.

Right of Reply

In the event that a delegate personally insults another delegate or his or her country during his or her speech, the insulted delegate may request a right of reply from the Chair by writing a note to the dais. If it is granted, the insulted delegate has 30 seconds to reply to offensive comment. A right of reply to a speech delivered in a right of reply is never in order. A right of reply is only in order immediately following the speech in which the delegate was insulted, and all decisions of the Chair relating to rights of reply are not subject to appeal.

Parliamentary Points

Point of Personal Privilege

A delegate may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege during the discussion of any matter when his or her ability to participate in the proceedings is in any way impaired or they feel any discomfort. The Chair shall attempt to remove the cause of the impairment. This point may interrupt a speaker.

Point of Order

A delegate may rise to a Point of Order to complain of improper parliamentary procedure. The Chair will immediately rule on the Point of Order. He or she shall rule out of order any points which he or she finds dilatory or improper; such a decision is not subject to appeal. A Point of Order may interrupt a speaker. The member rising to a Point of Order may not speak on the topic of discussion.

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry

A delegate may rise to a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry in the case that he/she has a question for the Dais regarding the rules of procedure. Points of Parliamentary Inquiry can neither interrupt a speaker nor be in regard to substantive matters.

Substantive Matters

Working Papers

Working papers are informal documents used to communicate ideas with the entire committee. They need not be in resolution format and need no sponsors or signatories. To be photocopied and distributed they require the authorization of a member of the Dais, granted based on the usefulness of the paper, clarity of expression, whether or not the idea is already understood by the committee, and whether or not the paper substantially duplicates a working paper or draft resolution already on the floor. Working papers need not be introduced and are never voted upon.

Resolutions

Draft Resolutions

Documents submitted to and approved by the Dais, in proper resolution format, shall be considered and referred to as draft resolutions. The term “resolution” is to be used only in reference to documents already passed by that body or other UN bodies.

Format

Draft resolutions must be written in proper resolution format, as outlined in the SSUNS Delegate Handbook. Copying, distribution, and introduction of draft resolutions will occur upon approval of the draft resolution by the Dais.

Sponsors

A minimum of three (3) states must be designated as sponsors of a draft resolution in order for it to be approved by the Dais. Delegates sponsoring a draft resolution are obligated to vote in favour of the draft resolution. This obligation (to vote in favour of) is waived upon the passage of one or more unfriendly amendments, or upon the passage of a division of the question motion. Once a draft resolution has been introduced, delegates may not remove their sponsorship. Additional sponsors may be added to a draft resolution with the consent of all existing sponsors and upon approval of the Chair.

Signatories

A draft resolution must have the signatures of a minimum of one-fifth ($\frac{1}{5}$) of the total members of the committee, as determined by the Dais, in order to be approved and introduced, with sponsors counted as signatories. Delegates may sign a draft resolution even though they do not support the document in question; signatories only wish to bring the draft resolution to debate. Once a draft resolution has been introduced, delegates may not remove their signatures, and no further delegates may sign the draft resolution.

Introduction

A delegate may motion to introduce a draft resolution or amendment, upon its approval by the Dais and distribution to members of the body. Adoption of this motion shall require a simple majority vote. Sponsors will be invited by the Chair to read the active clauses of the draft resolution or amendment to the body. Introductions by a sponsor during a speech will be considered out of order.

Question and Answer Period

Immediately following the introduction of a draft resolution, any delegate other than a sponsor may move for a question and answer period. When making the motion, the delegate shall specify a length and speaking time for the question and answer period. The Chair may accept or refuse this motion at his or her discretion. The decision of the Chair is not subject to appeal. The motion passes on a simple majority. Once the period has begun, delegates recognized randomly by the Chair may ask questions to the sponsors of the draft resolution. These questions must pertain only to the draft resolution and the Chair shall call to order any delegate who does not respect this rule. Once the question has been posed, one sponsor may respond to the question within the allotted speaking time. This pattern shall continue until the time allotted for the question and answer period has elapsed or no more delegates wish to ask questions.

Competence of Body

A motion to question the competence of a body to discuss a draft resolution or amendment is in order only if made immediately following the introduction of the draft resolution or amendment. The motion requires one speaker in favour and one opposed and requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass. If the motion passes, the document will be withdrawn from the committee and cannot be reintroduced.

Amendments

Substantive amendments to pre-ambulatory clauses are never in order.

Non-substantive

Amendments to draft resolutions to correct errors in spelling or format are considered non-substantive and shall be incorporated as part of the original draft resolution without a vote. The Dais will make final decisions on non-substantive amendments.

Friendly

Substantive amendments approved by all sponsors of the draft resolution and approved by the Dais are considered friendly and are added to the draft resolution without a vote. Friendly amendments may be further amended through the unfriendly amendment process. The Chair may read the friendly amendment out to the body upon its incorporation into the draft resolution.

Unfriendly

Substantive amendments not receiving approval from all sponsors of the draft resolution are considered unfriendly and require signatures from one-fifth (1/5) of the total members of the committee, as determined by the Dais, and the approval of the Dais to be introduced. Unfriendly amendments are voted on separately upon closure of debate. Amendments to unfriendly amendments are out of order.

Withdrawal of Documents

Draft Resolutions and Friendly Amendments

A draft resolution or a friendly amendment may be withdrawn from the consideration of the committee if all the sponsors so desire.

Unfriendly Amendments

An unfriendly amendment may be withdrawn from the consideration of the committee if all the sponsors of the amendment so desire.

Reintroduction

Withdrawn draft resolutions and amendments may be reintroduced by obtaining the signatures of one-fifth (1/5) of the members of the committee, as determined by the Dais. Such draft resolutions and amendments will be voted on following closure of debate.

Voting

Voting Procedure

Voting on draft resolutions, except where otherwise provided, shall occur by placard vote. Draft resolutions, except where otherwise provided, shall require a simple majority to pass, and shall be voted upon as a whole.

Once a Secondary Speakers' List is exhausted or a motion for closure of debate is passed, the committee moves into voting procedure. Once voting procedure has begun, the doors of the committee room must be secured, and no one allowed in or out of room except in case of emergency. Delegates having left the room during voting procedure for any reason may not return until voting procedure has finished. During voting procedure, no note-passing or caucusing is allowed.

Once in voting procedure, when there are no points or motions on the floor, the Chair shall put the unfriendly amendments, draft resolutions, or parts thereof, to a vote. There shall be no further debate except as specifically provided in these rules. Once voting on draft resolutions has finished, the Chair shall declare the end of voting procedure, and the committee shall return to the Primary Speakers' List. If all topics are exhausted the Chair shall entertain a motion to adjourn.

Method of Voting

Each member shall have one vote. All matters shall be voted upon by a show of placards. Delegates must vote “in favour,” “opposed,” or “abstain” (where applicable). No member may cast a vote on behalf of another member.

Roll Call Vote

A motion may be made to have a Roll Call Vote only on a substantive matter. This motion is subject to the approval of the Chair; such a decision is not subject to appeal. The roll call shall be done alphabetically, from the beginning of the alphabet. In case of a Roll Call vote, delegates may vote “with rights” upon the discretion of the Chair.

Pass

During a Roll Call Vote, a member may pass, in which case he or she is placed at the end of the voting roll. Members who pass during the first sequence of voting cannot pass a second time and must cast a vote in the affirmative or negative only.

Delegates voting “with rights” must vote in the affirmative or negative, and shall be given a brief opportunity to explain their vote to the body upon the conclusion of

Division of the Question

A member may move to vote on the operative clauses of the draft resolution individually or in groups. This motion shall be considered after all amendments have been brought to the floor, and immediately precedes a vote on the resolution. Motions to divide preambulatory clauses will be ruled out of order. A delegate moving to Divide the Question must specify a method for dividing the question. If there is more than one (1) proposal to divide the question, the motions shall be voted on in order of the most destructive to the least destructive to the spirit of the draft resolution, as determined by the Chair. The motion is debatable to the extent of two (2) speakers in favour and two (2) opposed. A simple majority is required to pass a motion for Division of the Question. If a motion passes, all pending motions for Division of the Question are ruled out of order, and the divisions are put to an immediate vote, with only those passing incorporated into the final draft resolution. If all operative clauses are voted upon and fail, the resolution is considered to have failed.

Important Question

A motion to have a draft resolution considered an important question will be ruled out of order unless the draft resolution deals with:

- I) Maintenance of international peace and security,
- II) Admission of new members to the United Nations,
- III) Suspension of the rights and privileges of membership,
- IV) Expulsion of members,
- V) Operation of the trusteeship system,
- VI) Budgetary questions.

Such a motion is debatable to the extent of one (1) speaker for and one (1) against and requires a simple majority to pass. If passed, the decision on the draft resolution will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority in favour in order to become a resolution. Motions for an Important Question are out of order in all Specialized Agencies.

Reconsideration

Only substantive matters may be reconsidered. The motion for reconsideration is in order only immediately after a vote on a substantive matter and may only be made by a delegate on the prevailing side of the vote. (e.g. China voted against a resolution and Chile voted in favour. It failed. Immediately after the vote, China may move to reconsider, but Chile may not.) A motion to reconsider requires two (2) speakers in favour, two (2) opposed and a two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass. Upon passage of a motion to reconsider, the preceding draft resolution shall immediately be put to a new vote, with the new result superseding the previous result.

Voting Amendments

If an unfriendly amendment has been moved to a draft resolution, the amendment shall be voted on first. If two (2) or more amendments have been made to the proposal, the committee shall vote on the amendments in the order of their introduction to the body. Where the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another, the latter shall not be voted on. A simple majority is required to adopt an amendment; a tie will result in the failure of the amendment. Following the adoption or rejection of all amendments, the draft resolution in its resulting form shall be put to a vote.

Voting

More than one (1) resolution may be passed on any given agenda topic.

Majority

A simple majority of the members present is required for a draft resolution to pass, unless a motion successfully passes to decide on a draft resolution as an Important Question. Exceptions may be made according to an addendum in the Rules of Procedure for certain specialized agencies.

Tie

If voting on any substantive matter ends in a tie, the matter fails.

Supplement

Precedence

Where multiple points or motions have been made, the committee shall consider them in the following order of precedence, dealing with every point or motion of higher precedence before those of lower precedence. Substantive matters are accorded the lowest precedence.

1. Point of Order
2. Point of Personal Privilege
3. Right of Reply
4. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry
5. Motion to Set the Speaking Time
6. Motion to Adjourn
7. Motion for Recess
8. Motion for Censure
9. Motion for Moderated Caucus
10. Motion for Unmoderated Caucus
11. Motion for the Verification of Quorum
12. Motion for Closure of Debate
13. Motion for Closure of the Speakers' List
14. Motion to Table Topic
15. Motion to Divide the Question
16. Motion for an Important Question
17. Motion to Introduce an Amendment
18. Motion to Introduce a Draft Resolution
19. Motion for Reconsideration
20. Motion to set the Default Yield