In 1945, 51 founding Member States signed the UN Charter to create the United Nations. Today the membership of the UN includes 193 Member States. The General Assembly occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

It provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues and is empowered to make recommendations to States on international issues within its competence as authorized by the UN Charter.

According to the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly may:

- Consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States;
- Elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of other United Nations councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General;
- Consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament;
- Discuss any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, make recommendations on it;
- Discuss, with the same exception, and make recommendations on any questions within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations;
- Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields;
- Make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among countries;
- Consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs.

The Assembly may also take action in cases of a threat to the peace, breach of peace or act of aggression, when the Security Council has failed to act owing to the negative vote of a permanent member. In such instances, according to its “Uniting for Peace” resolution of 3 November 1950, the Assembly may consider the matter immediately and recommend to its Members collective measures to maintain or restore international peace and security.

The General Assembly debates over 170 agenda items each year and adopts over 300 resolutions on these items.

The Assembly meets from September to December each year, and thereafter from January to September, as required, including to take up outstanding reports from the Fourth and Fifth Committees. Also during the resumed part of the session, the Assembly considers current issues of critical importance to the international community.

The General Assembly is one of the six Organs established by the Charter and the General Assembly.

Each of the 193 Member States in the Assembly has one vote. Votes taken on designated important issues—such as recommendations on peace and security, the election of Security Council and Economic and Social Council members, and
budgetary questions—require a two-thirds majority of Member States, but other questions are decided by a simple majority.

In recent years, an effort has been made to achieve consensus on issues, rather than deciding by a formal vote, thus strengthening support for the Assembly’s decisions. The President, after having consulted and reached agreement with delegations, can propose that a resolution be adopted without a vote.

There are six Main Committees of the General Assembly:

- Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee);
- Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee);
- Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (Third Committee);
- Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee);
- Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee);
- Legal Committee (Sixth Committee).

**GA SIMULATIONS AT WIMUN GENEVA ONLINE 2021**

Given the importance of giving youth a voice in the UN system, a think tank recently put forth a proposal to add a youth advisory body either as a Seventh Committee or at the very least as an informal mechanism in parallel to the Assembly. In support of this proposal we decided to add a futuristic simulation of the UN Youth Council to the 18th edition of WIMUN to take a peek at what it might look if it were implemented as an informal mechanism in parallel to the GA. The concept for the Youth Council proposes a twofold mandate:

- To ensure that the work the UN does on youth meets the needs of young people by supporting the implementation of the UN youth strategy and promoting youth participation; and
- To mainstream youth across the UN system, ensuring that young people are represented in all areas that concern youth, and that young people with different backgrounds are heard in the development of the UN system, the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 and all other strategic operations of the UN.

Building on the groundbreaking Security Council resolution 2250 which underscored the role of youth in preventing and resolving conflict and encouraged Member States to include young people in decision-making processes across these areas, the inaugural simulation of the UN Youth Council will focus on “Youth Participation in Peace Processes”. Another factor that will distinguish this simulation from other simulations is that the delegates will to be representing youth organizations that are actively engaged building peace in their communities, countries and regions. In all other simulations, delegates will be representing Member States.

In addition to the Youth Council, WIMUN Geneva Online 2021 will include a simulation of the Third Committee that will draft and adopt a resolution on “Supporting the social inclusion of refugees” as well as a simulation of the Fourth Committee that will draft and adopt a resolution on “International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space” with a particular emphasis on addressing space debris.

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THE STAGES OF ONLINE COMMITTEE SESSIONS

The work in each Committee and the Youth Council is divided into the following segments:

A. Formal meeting (run according to Rules of Procedure) to:

1. **Review and adopt the Organization of Work** which details how long delegates have to deliver their statements during the General Debate and how the time will be organized during the time delegates will be in their Committees and Council. The presentation of the Organization of Work is the first order of business which must be adopted by consensus before the Committee or Council can begin its General Debate.

2. **Engage in an Interactive Session with UN experts** to give delegates an opportunity to deepen their knowledge on the topic they will be debating. The Interactive Session will begin with a statement delivered by one or more experts followed by Q&A from the delegates.

3. **Convene the General Debate** where political groups and individual delegations will have an opportunity to make an opening statement on the topic that will be discussed. Any delegation or political group wishing to make a statement during the General Debate must subscribe to the Speakers List before the debate begins.

B. Informal consultations (where rules of procedure are suspended and where most of the time in the Committee or Council is spent) to:

4. **Draft resolution in regional groups**: This replaces the use of working papers which is followed in some Model UN conferences. Before delegates will be split into different regional groups, the Committee or Council as a whole must agree on what sub-topics they will include in the operative section of their resolution. Each regional group will draft up to three paragraphs under each sub-topic.

5. **Merge the different drafts**: The delegates must merge their different drafts into one resolution that is later reviewed paragraph by paragraph by the delegates.

6. **Submit the draft** along with a list of sponsors. Once the one draft resolution is submitted, the two groups driving the negotiation process are the sponsors and non-sponsors.

7. **Review the resolution line by line** to create a compilation text that contains a complete list of amendments proposed by delegations that chose not to sponsor the resolution. These amendments are neither friendly or unfriendly and are never voted on during informal consultations. Every time the wording of an entire paragraph has been agreed to by the Committee or Council, it is marked “Agreed ad ref” to indicate that the delegates have temporarily agreed to the text in that paragraph. Delegates can go back at any time and propose amendments to paragraphs they have already reviewed long as the negotiation process is still ongoing. Once consensus has been reached and there are no further objections to the text, then and only then does the amendment process come to a close.

8. **Debate the amendments** proposed by the non-sponsors during the line by line review. Delegates will be given a choice at different points during the line by line to temporarily suspend the line by line review to debate the amendments that have been proposed so far.

9. This takes place during informal consultations where sponsors and non-sponsors talk to each other with the goal of reaching consensus on the amendments that have been proposed. Sponsors and non-sponsors must be
willing to be flexible during their negotiations in order to reach consensus. This involves making compromises and sometimes being willing to remove text that some delegates may object to strongly.

10. The debate of amendments will be moderated by the presiding officer. The debate will begin by first giving the delegate who proposed the amendment under discussion a chance to explain why they think it should be adopted by the Committee or Council. If there are no objections the amendment will be inserted into the draft resolution. If any delegates object, they will be given a chance to explain why they disagree. The debate will continue until all delegates agree on whether to keep the amendment, delete it or accept an alternate wording of the amendment.

11. If there are any amendments that are contentious during informal consultations and the delegates are having difficulty reaching consensus, the amendment should be “bracketed” or set aside for further discussion later on, so that the Committee or Council can first focus on those amendments that are easier to reach agreement on.

12. After going through all the amendments at least once, the Committee or Council should return to those amendments that have been “bracketed.” The presiding officer will also act as a facilitator to help delegates reach agreement on these amendments.

13. After all amendments have been debated and agreement has been reached on whether to accept them as they were proposed or accept a revised version of the amendment or to delete it, the Facilitator will scroll through the entire resolution paragraph by paragraph and ask the delegates to carefully read the text to make sure there are no further objections.

14. If new objections are raised during the final review, each amendment is discussed until agreement has been reached on all of the new amendments and every paragraph is marked “Agreed ad ref”.

15. If consensus has been reached early, the Committee or Council can go back and add more text. What new text is added must be reviewed and any amendments that are proposed to the new text must be debated in the manner set forth in this handbook.

C. Formal meeting (run according to the rules of procedure) to:

16. **Formally introduce the draft resolution** to the entire Committee or Council. The sponsors must decide who will introduce the resolution on their behalf.

17. Before the formal adoption of a resolution, the Chair will ask if there are any delegations wishing to be added to the list of sponsors. This is the last occasion for non-sponsors to change their status and become a sponsor of the resolution.

18. **Adopt the draft resolution** either by consensus (i.e., without voting) or by voting (if consensus has not been reached).

19. (When consensus has not been reached and action will be taken by voting), **Allow the non-sponsors to introduce amendments** during the final formal meeting and put them to a vote and/or put forth a motion to divide the resolution into parts and have the Committee or Council vote separately on individual paragraphs.

20. Allow non-sponsors to either explain their position (if consensus has been reached) or explain their vote (if consensus has not been reached).
THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. There are no moderated and unmoderated caucuses. That means that during the General Debate during the Opening Plenary and Committee or Council Sessions, the speeches are never interrupted. The Speakers List is followed until all speakers have had an opportunity to speak.

2. The presiding officer during meetings will never ask, “Are any points or motions on the floor?”

3. Parliamentary points (e.g., Points of Personal Privilege, Points of Information, and Points of Inquiry) and motions (e.g., Motion for Moderated or Unmoderated Caucuses, Motion to Set Agenda, Motions to Set Speaking Time, Motion to Move to Voting Procedures, etc.) are not allowed during the conference. These are parliamentary rules of procedure and they are not used at the United Nations because it is not a Parliament.

4. Delegates will not be allowed to yield their time to the Chair or another delegation.

5. The only point that is allowed during a formal meeting is a Point of Order, which is only to be used if a delegate feels the rules of procedure are not being followed properly.

6. Delegates must raise a Points of Order without being prompted.

7. The Right of Reply is allowed during the General Debate if a delegation wishes to respond to a comment made during a speech that they find offensive. Any delegation wishing to exercise their right of reply must notify the Secretary of their Committee or Council of their request. If granted by the Chair they must wait until the end of the Speakers List to reply. Each delegation can exercise their Right of Reply a maximum of two times during the General Debate.

8. Signatories are not required in order for a resolution to be considered. When there are multiple versions of a draft resolution on an agenda item, the Committee or Council will merge the drafts so that no more than one resolution is submitted to the Bureau for consideration in each Committee or Council.

9. During informal consultations, there will be no rules of procedure. Delegates are encouraged to work together to achieve consensus on the wording of the resolution that is under consideration.

10. If the Committee or Council is not able to reach consensus in the time it has available to negotiate the text, a delegate can request that the draft resolution be put to a vote during the final formal meeting. When this occurs, non-sponsors can introduce amendments that are then put to a vote and/or put forth a motion to divide the resolution into separate votes (i.e., vote on whether to include individual paragraphs). Action on the resolution is not complete until delegates have voted on the entire resolution which occurs after amendments have been introduced and voted on and/or after the resolution has been divided into Separate Votes (if the Committee or Council has voted to do so) and/or the Motion to Adjourn Debate have been voted on.

11. If a resolution is put to a vote because the Committee or Council has not been able to reach consensus, the sponsors can no longer reject any amendments that a non-sponsor may propose during the final formal meeting to take action on the resolution. The fate of the amendment, in this instance, is decided by a simple majority of the Member States in the Committee or Council.
12. **Motion to Adjourn Debate (also known as the No-Action Motion):** This motion is only used during the final formal meeting when consensus has not been reached and the sponsors of a resolution want to kill an amendment that has been proposed by a non-sponsor. If there is an objection to the motion, the chair will give two speakers for and two speakers against the motion an opportunity to speak. After all speakers have finished, the motion is voted on. If it passes, then consideration of the amendment is terminated and not voted on. If there are other amendments, then the Chair will allow them to be introduced and voted on unless the sponsors raise a new Motion to Adjourn Debate.

13. **Motion to Divide the Resolution into Separate Votes:** If consensus is not reached during the final formal meeting to take action, non-sponsors can put forth a motion to divide the resolution into separate votes. This motion is made if a delegate would like to remove one or more paragraphs from the resolution. If there are any objections to this motion, the chair will give two speakers for and two speakers against the motion an opportunity to speak. After all speakers have finished, the motion is voted on. If it passes, then the resolution is first divided into one or more separate votes and then the entire resolution is voted on. If the motion fails, then the resolution is not divided into separate votes and the Committee or Council proceeds to vote on the entire resolution.

14. When consensus is not reached, delegates are expected to make these motions without being prompted.

15. Regardless of whether a resolution is adopted by consensus or by a vote, non-sponsors are allowed to make a statement during the final formal meeting of their Committee or Council or the Closing Plenary to put on record any reservations they may have on the resolution before action is taken. When non-sponsors wish to voice their reservations on specific parts of the text or to disassociate their government from a particular paragraph, they can only do it once, either in the Committee/Council or the Plenary but not both.

**TERMS USED IN WIMUN**

**Bureau:** During real meetings of the UN, this term refers to the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Rapporteur who are officials elected by the General Assembly to preside over Committee meetings. In the online simulation, the Chair will be the only GA official representing the Bureau.

**Tabling a resolution:** Refers to the act of submitting a resolution to the Bureau for consideration. This action does not require signatories.

**Paragraphs:** Model UN conferences around the world are used to referring to the clauses or sub-clauses of a resolution. At the United Nations, these are referred to as paragraphs and sub-paragraphs.

**Informal consultations:** This takes place when groups of delegates informally negotiate the text of a draft resolutions. Amendments that are proposed and discussed during informal meetings are never voted on. Delegates continue discussing each amendment until agreement is reached on whether to accept the amendment as proposed, delete it or accept an alternate wording of the amendment. There are no rules of procedure during these informal meetings.

**Consensus:** Consensus occurs when all of the delegations in a Committee reach agreement on the wording of every paragraph in a draft resolution and are ready to adopt it without putting it to a vote. This is the goal of the negotiation process.
**Explanation of position:** When consensus has been reached and a resolution is adopted without a vote, a non-sponsor is given the opportunity to make a statement about any reservations they may have about particular paragraphs that are included in the draft resolution. It is possible to agree to adopt a resolution without a vote and still have elements of a resolution that the non-sponsor is not entirely pleased with. Or it may be to express their disappointment that something important to the non-sponsor was left out of the resolution.

**Explanation of vote:** When a resolution is adopted by taking a vote, a non-sponsor is given the opportunity to make a statement about any reservations they may have about particular paragraphs that are included in the draft resolution. Or it may be to express their disappointment that something important to the non-sponsor was left out of the resolution.

**TERMS NOT USED IN WIMUN**

**Dais:** This term is not used at the UN and is therefore not a part of the terminology of WIMUN. The proper term to use when referring to the officials presiding over a meeting is the Bureau.

**Honourable Delegates or Honourable Chair:** These terms are used in a Parliament and since the UN is not a Parliament it is not appropriate to use them during the simulation of UN meetings. When making a statement during the General Debate, delegates should address his/her comments to the person presiding over the meeting (e.g., Mr./Madame President during Plenary meetings) and not to the delegates.

**House:** In some conferences, the person presiding over a meeting might say, “Will the House come to order” if the delegates are making too much noise. Again, since the UN is not a Parliament, it is inappropriate to refer to the Assembly or a Committee as the “House” when addressing delegates.

**Director:** Most MUN conferences have a Director that oversees working papers and draft resolutions and acts as an expert on topics. WIMUN does not have Directors. There is the Chair who presides over meetings and Secretariat staff or real UN experts who advise on topics being discussed in each Committee.

**Friendly and unfriendly amendments:** These terms are not used at the UN and do not apply the negotiation process in WIMUN which focuses on reaching consensus among all delegates.

**Moderated and unmoderated Caucuses:** These terms do not exist at the UN. While the debate of amendments can be moderated or unmoderated, this is not the same as a moderated and unmoderated caucus that are common in other Model UN simulations.

**Clauses:** Model UN conferences around the world refer to the clauses of a draft resolution. In contrast, the editorial guidelines at the UN refer to them as paragraphs and sub-paragraphs.

**DRAFTING A RESOLUTION**

Every resolution is divided into two sections that consist of preambular and the operative paragraphs.

Preambular paragraphs begin with a word or phrase in the present participle (e.g., **Recalling**) and always ends with comma. Preambular paragraphs are not numbered.
Operative paragraphs begin with a word or phrase in the present tense (e.g., Encourages) and always end with a semi-colon except for the last operative paragraph that ends with a period.

The words or phrases used to begin a paragraph are always italicized and never underlined.

The preambular paragraphs set the stage and context for the operative section.

The best way to learn about how to write a good resolution is to study and compare them. Here are some tips about what goes into a good resolution.

Type and order of content to include in the preamble with examples for each

When reading this section, please keep in mind that the aim is to give you an idea of the range of content that could be included in a resolution and does not mean that this content is always included in a resolution. It also aims to serve as a guideline on how to decide the order in which to include content when drafting a resolution or merging content from different resolutions on the same agenda item.

1. The preamble usually begins by recalling past actions that the General Assembly has taken on the agenda item that is being discussed,

   The General Assembly,


2. If there are other actions that the United Nations has taken on this agenda item, that would go next,

   Recalling also the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, and its outcome document, entitled “The future we want”, in which Member States took into account road safety as part of their efforts to achieve sustainable development,

3. If the same word is used twice in a row to begin a paragraph, the second time it is used, the word ‘also’ is added and italicized.

4. After highlighting the actions of the United Nations, it is common to add paragraphs that recall reports distributed to Member States by the Secretary-General,

   Having considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report on improving global road safety and the recommendations contained therein,

5. At this point it is usually good to add some information about the concerns that are driving the debate of the agenda item that is under consideration,

   Expressing its concern that the number of road traffic deaths still remains unacceptably high, with an estimated 1.24 million lives lost in 2010, and that only 7 per cent of the world’s population is covered by adequate laws that address all behavioural risk factors, including the non-use of helmets, safety belts and child restraints, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, inappropriate and excessive speed and the inappropriate use of cellular telephones, including texting, while driving,
Also expressing its concern that half of all road traffic deaths worldwide involve pedestrians, motorcyclists and bicyclists, and that some developing countries have inadequate infrastructure and insufficient policies in place to protect these vulnerable road users,

6. If there is any impact that has resulted from the actions the UN has taken that the delegates wish to draw attention to, this would go after expressing their concerns,

Noting with satisfaction that targeted steps to reduce road traffic injuries undertaken by the United Nations, including in the framework of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, have yielded positive results, and recognizing in this regard that more than 100 Member States, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society representatives organized pedestrian safety activities during the second United Nations Global Road Safety Week, held from 6 to 12 May 2013,

7. The preamble would also note any actions taken by Member States and/or specialized UN agencies, programmes and funds,

Commending the Governments of Brazil, Mozambique, Romania and Thailand and the World Health Organization for the successful launch, in May 2013 in the context of the sixty-sixth World Health Assembly, of the Global Alliance for Care of the Injured,

8. Recognition of regional commissions would come next, if this information was available,

Acknowledging the important interregional efforts of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in organizing the Europe-Asia Road Safety Forum to promote the implementation of United Nations road safety conventions and to facilitate the exchange of experiences in this field among European and Asian countries,

9. If there are any other reports delegates want to highlight this would be included at some point after a report by the Secretary-General is mentioned,

Taking note of the report of the Commission for Global Road Safety entitled Safe Roads for All: A Post-2015 Agenda for Health and Development,

10. Only UN documents are referred to in the body of a General Assembly resolution. If there are other resources, reports or books that were used while doing research and they were not published by the UN, they should not be included in the resolution.

11. If a preambular paragraph is used to highlight actions taken by Member States and/or civil society without mentioning specific countries or organizations, that would go toward the end of the preambular paragraphs,

Commending Member States that have acceded to the United Nations international legal instruments on road safety and that have adopted comprehensive legislation on major risk factors, including the disregard for road signs and signals, the non-use of helmets, safety belts and child restraints, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, inappropriate and excessive speed and inappropriate use of cellular telephones, including texting,
Recognizing Member States and civil society for their continued commitment to road safety by observing the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on the third Sunday of November every year,

Content to be included in operative paragraphs with examples

First and foremost, the operative paragraphs should consist of recommended actions that address the concerns outlined in the preamble.

Sometimes there is a sequence of paragraphs the lead up to the recommended action. Consider the following example of operative paragraphs:

1. Recognizes the importance of the efficient movement of people and goods and access to environmentally sound, safe and affordable transportation as a means to improve social equity, health, the resilience of cities, urban-rural linkages and the productivity of rural areas, and in this regard takes into account road safety as part of the effort to achieve sustainable development;

2. Commends Member States that have developed national plans that are in line with the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, and encourages Member States that have not yet developed such plans to do so, paying special attention to the needs of all road users, in particular pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, as well as issues related to sustainable mobility;

3. Invites Member States that have not yet done so to nominate, as appropriate, national focal points for the Decade of Action to coordinate and facilitate national activities for the Decade;

In this instance, operative paragraphs 2 and 3 contain two related recommended actions. Operative paragraph 1 and the first half of operative paragraph 2 set up these recommended actions by establishing why they are important and by drawing attention to actions already taken by some Member States (without naming who they are) that are linked to these recommendations.

What is interesting about this example, is that operative paragraph 1 and the first part of paragraph 2 would ordinarily be content that we would expect to find somewhere in the preamble but because it is being used to justify a specific action in the operative section, it makes more sense to include in the operative section as a lead in to a specific recommendation.

More details about editorial guidelines for drafting resolutions can be found here.

For terms commonly used in resolutions, please consult the UNITAR Handout that is part of your training resources.