WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY TRAINING HANDBOOK

WFUNA INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS GENEVA
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The World Health Assembly is the decision-making body of World Health Organization. It is attended by delegations from all 194 WHO Member States and focuses on a specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board.

The main functions of the World Health Assembly are to determine the policies of the Organization, appoint the Director-General, supervise financial policies, and review and approve the proposed programme budget. The Health Assembly is held annually in Geneva, Switzerland.

WHO’s Constitution came into force on 7 April 1948 – a date which is now celebrated every year as World Health Day. There are now more than 7000 people from more than 150 countries working for WHO in 150 country offices, in 6 regional offices and at WHO’s headquarters in Geneva.

The World Health Organization (WHO) was founded on the principle that health is a human right and all people should enjoy the highest standard of health. This aspiration towards better health for everyone, everywhere has guided the Organization’s work ever since.

One of the greatest achievements of the WHO was the eradication of smallpox in 1977.

**THE STAGES OF ASSEMBLY SESSIONS**

Assembly sessions are divided into the following segments:

A. The Opening Plenary of the Assembly

The simulation begins with an Opening Plenary of the World Health Assembly where delegates will adopt their Organization of Work by consensus and engage in an interactive session with a UN expert on one of three topics that will be discussed during WIMUN Geneva 2021: 1) Strengthening infodemic management (High School), 2) Global agenda on health, environment and climate change (University) and 3) Promoting the health of refugees and migrants and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (University).

B. Drafting Group (Informal Consultations):

1. **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 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.

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

3. **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.

4. **Review the draft 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, 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.

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1*Liechtenstein is currently the only UN member not in the WHO membership. Two of the members of the WHO, the Cook Islands and Niue, are self-governing countries in free association with New Zealand.*

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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.

5. **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.

6. 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.

7. 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. 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.

8. 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 can first focus on those amendments that are easier to reach agreement on.

9. After going through all the amendments at least once, the Committee 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.

10. 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.

11. 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”.

12. If consensus has been reached early, the Committee 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 of Committee A:**

Committee A is where technical and health matters are debated. Each session a wide variety of health issues are allocated to Committee A for consideration. Once a Drafting Group has completed its work on drafting a resolution, it is introduced to the members of the Committee. Before taking action on the resolution, the Committee holds a general discussion on the agenda item that is the focus of the resolution. During the General Discussion, delegates can make statements about their government’s priorities with regard to the agenda item they are discussing, any actions recommended in the draft resolution they would
like to highlight or emphasize or even share their positive or negative reactions to the negotiation process.

D. Closing Plenary of the Assembly

The final phase of the simulation includes a Closing Plenary of the Assembly led by the President where delegates will to adopt their resolution (based on the Rapporteur’s report) by consensus and make statements explaining their position on the resolution.

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 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 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 will merge the drafts so that no more than one resolution is submitted to the Bureau for consideration in each Committee.

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 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 has voted to do so) and/or the Motion to Adjourn Debate have been voted on.
11. Delegates can make a statement during the Closing Plenary to put on record any comments they may have about the outcome of their negotiations, particularly if it is withdrawn, or any reservations they may have on the resolution if it is adopted by consensus.

**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.

**Drafting Group:** The group of delegates who participate in informal consultations to draft and negotiate the text of a resolution.

**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.

**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.

**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,

   *Recalling* resolutions WHA53.17 on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and WHA60.23 on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy;

2. 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 (i.e. *Reaffirming also*).

   *Reaffirming* its commitment to the aim of the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases1 to reduce premature mortality and improve quality of life;

   *Reaffirming also* its commitment to addressing key risk factors for noncommunicable diseases through the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, adopted by the Health Assembly in 2003 (resolution WHA56.1) and the global strategy on diet, physical activity and health, endorsed by the Health Assembly in 2004 (resolution WHA57.17) and the evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce the public health problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol (resolution WHA58.26);

3. The preambular paragraphs also include information about the concerns that are driving the debate of the agenda item that is under consideration

   *Deeply concerned* that the global burden of noncommunicable diseases
continues to grow, in particular in low-income and middle-income countries, and convinced that global action is necessary, including by effectively addressing the key risk factors for noncommunicable diseases;

Noting with concern that, according to WHO, each year, 15 million people between the ages of 30 and 69 years die from a noncommunicable disease and that the current levels of decline in the risk of dying prematurely from noncommunicable diseases are insufficient to attain Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4 by 2030;

4. The preamble would also note other actions taken by the WHO, Member States, or other parts of the UN system

Welcoming the convening of the WHO Global Conference on Noncommunicable Diseases, which was organized by Uruguay and WHO, co-chaired by Finland, the Russian Federation and Uruguay, from 18 to 20 October 2017 in Montevideo;

Welcoming also the convening of the WHO Global Dialogue on Partnerships for Sustainable Financing of Noncommunicable Disease (NCD) Prevention and Control, hosted by the Government of Denmark and WHO from 9 to 11 April 2018 in Copenhagen, recognizing the need to prioritize tackling noncommunicable diseases as an essential pillar of sustainable development and an integral part of countries’ efforts towards universal health coverage;

Recalling the Shanghai Declaration on promoting health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted at the 9th Global Conference on Health Promotion, held in China from 21 to 24 November 2016;

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/274 (2018) on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases,

5. Only UN documents are referred to in the body of a World Health 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.

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. URGES Member States:

   (1) to continue to step up efforts on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in order to attain Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4 by 2030;

   (2) to actively engage in the preparations at national, regional and global levels for the third High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, to be held in 2018;

Second, it should consist of recommended actions that address actions that intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders (e.g., non-UN entities like non-governmental organizations or the private sector) should take to address the concerns outlined in the preamble.
2. CALLS ON international organizations and other stakeholders:
   
   (1) to support all countries, upon their request, in implementing their national action plans, in strengthening their health systems to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic;
   
   (2) to work collaboratively at all levels to develop, test, and scale-up production of safe, effective, quality, affordable medicines and vaccines for the COVID-19 response;
   
   (3) to address the proliferation of disinformation and misinformation particularly in the digital sphere and to supported the distribution of science-based data and information to the public;

   Third, it should include recommended actions that the Director-General of the WHO should take to address the concerns outlined in the preamble.

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:
   
   (1) to continue to work with the United Nations Secretary-General and relevant multilateral organizations, on a comprehensive and coordinated response across the United Nations system to support Member States in their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic;
   
   (2) to continue to build and strengthen the capacities of WHO at all levels;

   These three sections occur in most WHA resolutions and should be included in the resolutions drafted in Committee A.

   WHA resolutions follow certain editorial guidelines that differ from those found in other UN resolutions. First, both preambular and operative paragraphs end in a semi-colon (;) except for the last preambular paragraph that ends in a comma and the last operative paragraph that ends in a period. Second, the verb that begins an operative paragraph is written in caps (i.e., URGES).

   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.

   The best way to learn how to write a good resolution is to read them and analyze how they are structured. Click here for an example.