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# **SIMULATION HANDBOOK**

**UN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSEMBLY**

# UN Environmental Assembly Simulation Handbook

The UN Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment. It addresses the critical environmental challenges facing the world today. UNEA meets twice a year to set priorities for global environmental policies and develop international environmental law.

The UNEA was created in June 2012, when world leaders called for UN Environment to be strengthened and upgraded during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20).

The establishment of the Environment Assembly was the culmination of decades of international efforts, initiated at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 and aimed at creating a coherent system of international environmental governance.

The Assembly is the governing body of UNEP. UNEA establishes the global environmental agenda by setting policies and priorities for UNEP's work. It adopts resolutions and decisions on pressing environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, marine pollution, and sustainable development. UNEA reviews and approves UNEP's budget and biennial work program, ensuring that resources align with the organization's goals. This includes allocating funds to specific environmental initiatives and projects. In addition, UNEA monitors UNEP's performance and ensures that its activities align with the mandates and priorities set by member states. It holds UNEP accountable for implementing decisions and achieving desired outcomes.

UNEA is composed of 193 Member States. The Assembly is led by a Bureau and its President. The Bureau is composed of ten Ministers of the Environment for a term of two years. The Bureau assists the President.

## Committee of Permanent Representatives

Throughout the year, Member States engage in Open-ended meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The Committee contributes to the preparation of the agenda of the UN Environment Assembly, provides advice to the Assembly on policy matters, prepares decisions for adoption by the UN Environment Assembly and oversees their implementation. Although the CPR drafts most resolutions that are negotiated by the Assembly, Member States can table resolutions if they so desire.

The Committee of Permanent Representatives was formally established as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Assembly (now the UN Environment Assembly) in May 1985. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis led by a five-member Bureau elected for a period of two years.



# 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 UN Environment Assembly where delegates will adopt their Organization of Work by consensus and engage in an interactive session on “Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics”.

## B. INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS (WHERE RULES OF PROCEDURE ARE SUSPENDED AND WHERE MOST OF THE TIME IN THE ASSEMBLY IS SPENT)

1. **Agree on four broad areas.** Before delegates will be split into different regional groups, they must agree on four broad areas they wish to focus on in the operative section of the resolution.
2. **Split into four regional groups to draft a resolution.** Delegates will be divided into four regional groupings to draft an entire resolution on the topic they have been assigned.
3. **Merge the different drafts.** The Facilitator will put all four drafts into one document that the delegates will then merge together until the total length of the resolution is between 30-35 paragraphs.
4. **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.
5. **Review the draft resolution line by line.** The Facilitator will read each paragraph and give the non-sponsors an opportunity to propose amendments to the draft resolution. When amendments are inserted into the draft resolution this creates what is called a “compilation text” because it serves as a record of all the changes that have been proposed.
6. Once the delegates have completed the line by line review of the preambular paragraphs, they will be given a choice to temporarily suspend the line by line review so they can debate the amendments that have been proposed so far or to continue on to the operative paragraphs.
7. Debate the amendments proposed by the non-sponsors during the line by line review. This takes place in an informal meeting where sponsors and non-sponsors talk to each other with the goal of reaching consensus on the amendments that have been proposed. During these informal consultations, sponsors have the power to accept, reject or agree to an alternate wording of the amendments.



# The Stages of Assembly Sessions (cont.)

## B. INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS (WHERE RULES OF PROCEDURE ARE SUSPENDED AND WHERE MOST OF THE TIME IN THE ASSEMBLY IS SPENT) (CONT.)

8. 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 delegates it should be marked "Agreed ad ref" to indicate that the Working Group has temporarily agreed to the text in that paragraph.
9. If the delegates decide to review the entire resolution without suspending the line by line, then informal consultations on the amendments would not begin until after the line by line review is completed.
10. If there are any amendments that delegates are having difficulty reaching consensus on what to do during informal consultations, they should be "bracketed" or set aside for further discussion later on, so that the delegates can first focus on those amendments that are easier to reach agreement on.
11. After going through all the amendments at least once, the delegates should return to those amendments that have been "bracketed". Facilitators should be present to help delegates reach agreement on these amendments.
12. After all amendments have been resolved, the Facilitator will scroll through the entire resolution one last time and ask the delegates to carefully read the text to make sure there are no further objections.
13. If new amendments are proposed during the final review, they are immediately discussed until agreement has been reached and every paragraph is marked "Agreed ad ref".
14. If consensus has been reached early and time still remains, delegates can go back and add more text. If new text is added, it must be reviewed and any amendments that are proposed to the new text must be debated in the manner set forth in this handbook.
15. **Once consensus is reached on the draft resolution**, the draft resolution is officially adopted in the Closing Plenary of the Assembly.

## C. CLOSING PLENARY OF THE ASSEMBLY

The final phase of the simulation includes a Closing Plenary led by the President where delegates will adopt their resolution by consensus and make statements explaining their position if they so choose. If consensus is not reached on a resolution, it will be withdrawn by the President.



# Things to Know about the Rules of Procedure

1. The presiding officer will never ask, "Are any points or motions on the floor?" during meetings.
2. 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.
3. Delegates will not be allowed to yield their time to the Chair or another delegation.
4. 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.
5. Delegates must raise a Point of Order without being prompted.
6. 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 Working Group will merge the drafts so that no more than one resolution is submitted to the Bureau for consideration.
7. 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.
8. If the delegates are not able to reach consensus, the resolution will be withdrawn and will not be voted on.
9. 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

1. **Bureau:** refers to the President and Vice-Presidents who are officials elected by the Assembly to preside over meetings. Since it is not possible to elect a President for an online simulation, one has been appointed in advance.
2. **Facilitator:** The Facilitator is responsible for presiding over the informal consultations and has the responsibility of helping the delegates reach consensus on the text of the draft resolution.
3. **Working Group:** The group of delegates who participate in informal consultations to draft and negotiate the text of a resolution.
4. **Tabling a resolution:** refers to the act of submitting a resolution to the Bureau for consideration. This action does not require signatories.



## Terms used in WIMUN (cont.)

5. **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.
6. **Consensus:** Consensus occurs when all of the delegations in a Commission reach agreement on the wording of every paragraph in a draft resolution and are ready to adopt it without voting on it. This is the goal of the negotiation process. In order to reach consensus delegates have to be ready to make compromises. In most ECOSOC Commissions, if consensus is not reached on the text of a resolution, it is withdrawn.
7. **Explanation of position:** When consensus has been reached and a resolution is adopted without a vote, any delegation that chose not to sponsor the resolution 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 a Member State 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

1. **Dais:** This term is not used at the UN and is therefore not a part of the terminology of the WIMUN approach. The proper term to use when referring to the officials presiding over a meeting is the Bureau.
2. **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 Chair) and not to the delegates. Real UN diplomats never begin speeches using the word "Honourable" before the presiding officer's title.
3. **House:** In some conferences, the person presiding over a meeting may 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 ECOSOC as the "House" when addressing delegates.
4. **Friendly and Unfriendly amendments:** These terms are not used at the UN and do not apply the negotiation process in the WIMUN approach which focuses on reaching consensus among all delegates.
5. **Moderated and Unmoderated Caucuses:** These terms do not exist at the UN. what does exist are Formal Informals and Informal Informals which are similar in some respects but differ in other respects (see definition above).
6. **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. The term "clause(s)" is **never used** when referring to real UN resolutions.



# 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 what to include when drafting a resolution or merging content from different resolutions on the same agenda item.

### 1. The preamble usually includes past actions that the Assembly has taken on the agenda item that is being discussed:

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, by which the Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in this regard, reaffirming the commitment to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources,

*Reaffirming* United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/10 of 27 May 2016 on oceans and seas, and the ocean-related outcomes of the Environment Assembly's past sessions,

*Welcoming* the adoption by the International Maritime Organization of a revised strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships,

### 2. It also includes expressions of concern that Member States have about the issue that is being discussed:

*Concerned* about threats to the health of our oceans, coastal areas, wetlands and islands, as reflected by, inter alia, the second World Ocean Assessment, the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,





# Drafting a Resolution (cont.)

## 3. It is also a place to recognize the positive impact that some actions have add in addressing the concerns that have been raised:

*Noting with appreciation* the progress made in the implementation and growth of the Regional Seas Programme since its establishment in 1974, and recognizing the key role of the Regional Seas Programme and the regional seas conventions and action plans and their importance in assisting countries and regions in applying an ecosystem approach to manage the marine and coastal environment

## 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. The most common verbs that are used to introduce an action are: Encourages, Invites , Calls on and Requests. Examples of each from real resolutions are provided below:

1. *Encourages* Member States to, as appropriate, adopt, ratify or implement the regional seas conventions, protocols and action plans for the protection and conservation of the marine and coastal environment, while promoting high visibility of the regional dimension in all relevant global processes and forums;

2. *Invites* Member States to explore and develop partnership initiatives, in cooperation with the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, that support circular economy approaches in the sugar cane agro-industry and promote cleaner technologies, good practices for preventing deforestation, education and awareness-raising, capacity-building, information exchange on best practices, scientific research, innovation, and technology development and transfer, on mutually agreed terms and support;

3. *Calls on* all Member States, international organizations and other stakeholders to seek the highest level of participation and ambition at the third United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and invites the Executive Director to provide the necessary input for the Conference, as appropriate;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with Member States, members of specialized agencies and relevant stakeholders, in particular the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, subject to the availability of resources, to continue to collect information and conduct further.



# Editorial Guidelines

When the same verb is used more than once in row you must use the following pattern:

*Noting* its resolution 2/10, in which the Environment Assembly took into account the contribution that the United Nations Environment Programme could make, upon request by the concerned States, to assist them in the protection and preservation of the marine environment, 1 General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex. UNEP/EA.6/Res.15 2

*Noting also* General Assembly resolution 76/300 of 28 July 2022 and Human Rights Council resolution 52/23 of 4 April 2023 on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment,

*Noting further* decision 15/24 of 19 December 2022 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity,

The second time it appears “also” is inserted after the verb and the third time it appears “further” is inserted **after** the verb.

When repetition of verbs occurs in the operative section the order is reversed. The second time the verb is used, “also” appears **before** the verb and the third time it appears “further” appears **before** the verb as demonstrated below:

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to prepare a report, subject to the availability of resources, building on existing measures and initiatives to address lead, cadmium, arsenic and organotins, and to continue the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in supporting Member States in their actions;

11. *Also requests* the Executive Director to report to the Environment Assembly at its seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution and the implementation of the programme of work with respect to chemicals and waste.

A list of terms commonly used terms in resolutions will be posted on the WIMUN Singapore 2025 website along with the Study Guide and Annotated Bibliography for each simulation.

