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SIMULATION

HANDBOOK

ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL
WEAPONS (OPCW)

Organisation for the Prohibition Against Chemical Weapons Simulation Handbook

Overview of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is the international body responsible for implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a multilateral disarmament treaty that bans the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, and use of chemical weapons. The CWC was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992 and entered into force on 29 April 1997. The OPCW, headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands, began operations the same year. With 193 States Parties, the CWC is one of the most widely adhered-to disarmament treaties in history, reflecting a near-universal rejection of chemical weapons.

The OPCW's mandate extends beyond disarmament. In addition to overseeing the verified destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities, the organisation conducts inspections of chemical industry facilities, provides assistance and protection against chemical threats, supports international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry, and investigates alleged uses of chemical weapons. In recognition of its work, the OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013.

Structure

The OPCW has three principal organs, established by the Chemical Weapons Convention:

THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES (CSP)

The Conference of the States Parties is the principal and plenary organ of the OPCW. It is composed of all States Parties to the Convention and normally meets annually. The CSP oversees the implementation of the CWC, considers compliance issues, adopts the OPCW's budget and programme of work, elects members of the Executive Council, and takes decisions on major policy and institutional matters. Decisions are generally taken by consensus, reflecting the Convention's emphasis on cooperative disarmament, though voting procedures exist when consensus cannot be reached.

Structure (cont.)

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EC)

The Executive Council is the executive decision-making body of the OPCW and is composed of 41 States Parties, elected on a rotational basis according to equitable geographical distribution. The Council meets several times per year and is responsible for supervising the activities of the Technical Secretariat, promoting the effective implementation of the Convention, addressing cases of non-compliance, and making recommendations to the Conference. Many sensitive compliance and verification issues are first addressed within the Executive Council.

THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT (TS)

The Technical Secretariat is the professional and administrative arm of the OPCW. Headed by the Director-General, it carries out inspections, monitors destruction activities, provides technical assistance, supports capacity-building and training, and prepares reports for the policy-making organs. Inspectors and technical experts of the Secretariat play a central role in ensuring the credibility and effectiveness of the OPCW's verification regime.

THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The Committee of the Whole (CoW) is a procedural body of the Conference of the States Parties, established to facilitate detailed negotiations among all States Parties. Rather than creating a smaller, separate committee, the Conference meets "as a Committee of the Whole," meaning that all delegations participate, but under more flexible and informal working methods than in formal plenary meetings.

The Committee of the Whole is typically used to conduct line-by-line negotiations on draft decisions and resolutions, particularly those involving complex, technical, or politically sensitive issues such as budgets, programme priorities, compliance language, or institutional reforms. In the CoW, delegations can propose amendments, suggest alternative wording, and seek compromises in a setting that encourages dialogue and consensus-building.

Importantly, the Committee of the Whole does not take final decisions. Its role is to negotiate and refine draft texts. Once agreement is reached—or as much agreement as possible is achieved—the revised text is reported back to the Conference in plenary, where it may be adopted by consensus or, if necessary, put to a vote. In practice, the CoW serves as a key forum where consensus is forged, making it central to the functioning of the OPCW's diplomatic process.

The Stages of Committee of the Whole Sessions

The simulation of the OPCW will focus on the work of the Committee of the Whole. It will be divided into the following segments:

A. FIRST 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 negotiating in informal consultations. The presentation of the Organization of Work is the first order of business which must be adopted by consensus before the Committee of the Whole can begin its General Debate.
2. Engage in an Interactive Session with a UN expert 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 an expert followed by Q&A from the delegates.
3. Convene the General Debate where individual delegates speaking in their national capacity and/or on behalf of a political group 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 IS SPENT) TO:

1. **Allow each regional group to draft a Decision.** 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 of the Whole must agree by consensus on a common structure for the operative section of the Decision.
2. **Merge the different drafts.** The regional groups must each choose a head delegate to lead the discussions on how to merge their different drafts into one Decision that is later reviewed paragraph by paragraph by the entire Committee. Each group can change the head delegate leading the negotiations on their behalf as often as they want.
3. **Review the draft Decision line by line** to create a compilation text that contains a complete list of amendments proposed by delegates participating in the simulation. These amendments are neither friendly or unfriendly and are never voted on during informal consultations. Delegates will temporarily suspend the line by line after reviewing the preambular section to debate the amendments that have been proposed so far.

The Stages of Committee of the Whole Sessions

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

4. Debate the amendments proposed by delegates during the line by line review. During this stage of the deliberations, delegates talk to each other with the goal of reaching consensus on the amendments that have been proposed. An amendment cannot be accepted if one or more delegates have an objection to including it in the text. When this happens, delegates can agree to an alternative version of the amendment if that will address the objection that has been raised or if there is strong objection to the amendment from other delegates, the delegate who proposed it can withdraw it, if they so choose. Every time the wording of an entire paragraph has been agreed to by the Committee it should be marked "Agreed ad ref" to indicate that the Committee has temporarily agreed to the text in that paragraph until the entire negotiation process has been completed.
5. During the debate, delegates can choose to have the Chair moderate the debate of amendments or to do it by themselves. It is up to the Committee of the Whole to decide.
6. If there is an amendment that the delegates cannot agree on during informal consultations, the amendment should be "bracketed" or set aside for further discussion later on so that the Committee of the Whole can first focus on those amendments that are easier to reach agreement on.
7. After going through all the amendments proposed during the review of the preambular paragraphs at least once, the Committee of the Whole will return to those amendments that have been "bracketed" after the entire Decision has been reviewed.
8. Facilitators can be appointed to help delegates reach agreement on these amendments.
9. Once all of the amendments in the preambular section have been debated, this process is repeated in the operative section. All delegates review each operative paragraph and propose amendments and then engage in a debate on each one until there are no amendments left to discuss.
10. After all the amendments have been debated and all paragraphs are marked 'agreed ad ref', the Chair should scroll through the entire resolution paragraph and paragraph and ask the delegates to carefully read the text to make sure there are no further objections.
11. If new objections are raised, they are immediately debated 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 and time still remains in the Committee of the Whole, delegates can go back and add more text or even another sub-topic. If new text is added, it must be reviewed and any amendments that proposed to the new text must be debated in the manner set forth in this handbook.

The Stages of Committee Sessions (cont.)

C. FORMAL MEETING TO:

1. **Sponsor the draft Decision:** Before action is taken the Chair will ask the delegates if they wish to be included in the list of sponsors of the draft Decision.
2. **Adopt the draft Decision:** Once the list of sponsors has been documented, the delegates will either adopt the draft Decision by consensus (i.e., without voting) or by voting (if consensus has not been reached).
3. If consensus is reached, **non-sponsors can make an Explanation of Position** which is a statement that allows them to indicate any reservations their government may have about the Decision that was adopted. If the resolution is adopted by a vote, **non-sponsors can express their reservations by making an Explanation of Vote.**

Things to Know about the Rules of Procedure

1. When delivering a speech during the Opening Plenary or the first formal meeting of the Committee of the Whole, speeches cannot be interrupted. The Speakers List is followed until all speakers have had an opportunity to speak.
2. Passing notes during Formal Meetings is not allowed.
3. The presiding officer during meetings will never ask, "Are any points or motions on the floor?"
4. 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.
5. Delegates will not be allowed to yield their time to the Chair or another delegation.
6. 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.
7. Delegates must raise a Point of Order without being prompted.
8. 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 of maximum of two times during the General Debate.
9. Signatories are not required in order for a Decision to be considered. When there are multiple versions of a draft Decisions on an agenda item, the Committee will merge the drafts so that no more than one resolution is submitted to the Bureau for consideration.
10. During informal consultations, there will be no rules of procedure. Delegates are encouraged to work together to achieve consensus on the wording of the draft Decision that is under consideration.
11. The line by line review offers an opportunity for delegates to propose changes to the draft Decision.
12. During the line by line review delegates can indicate if they agree or disagree with the amendments that are proposed. Delegates must wait until the line by line review has been suspended or completed before they can begin debating the amendments that have been proposed.
13. If delegates are 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.
14. 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 to voice their reservations on specific parts of the text or to disassociate their government from a particular paragraph.

Terms used in WIMUN

1. **Bureau:** refers to the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Rapporteur who are officials elected by the General Assembly to preside over Committee meetings.
2. **Tabling a draft Decision:** refers to the act of submitting a draft Decision to the Bureau for consideration. This action does not require signatories.
3. **Paragraphs:** Model UN conferences around the world are used to referring to the clauses or sub-clauses of an outcome document. At the United Nations, these are referred to as paragraphs and sub-paragraphs.
4. **Consensus:** Consensus occurs when all of the delegations in a Committee reach agreement on the wording of every paragraph in a draft Decision and are ready to adopt it without voting on it. This is the goal of the negotiation process.
5. **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 the draft Decision. 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.
6. **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 the draft Decision. 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 UN4MUN. 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 President during Plenary meetings) and not to the delegates.
3. **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.
4. **Director:** Most MUN conferences have a Director that oversees working papers and draft resolutions and acts as an expert on topics. UN4MUN 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
5. **Friendly and Unfriendly amendments:** These terms are not used at the UN and do not apply the negotiation process in UN4MUN which focuses on reaching consensus among all delegates.
6. **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).
7. **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 Decision

Every draft Decision 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 a semi-colon (;). Preambular paragraphs are not numbered.

Operative paragraphs begin with a word or phrase in the present tense (e.g., **Recognises**) 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 **bolded**.

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 OF CONTENT TO INCLUDE IN THE PREAMBLE

A good way to begin a draft Decision on the topic that will be discussed is to reaffirm the Convention on Chemical Weapons which is known as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction:

The Conference of the States Parties,

Reaffirming the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (the Convention);

If there are other Decisions that the CSP has taken that are important to recall they would also be included in the preamble:

Recalling the decision of the Conference of the States Parties (the Conference) entitled...;

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 bolded (e.g., **Recalling also**). And if it is used three times in a row the third the word 'further' is used (e.g., **Recalling further**).

It is important to keep in mind, the because the OPCW is mandated to enforce the Convention on Chemical Weapons, delegates need to be aware of the different Articles in the Convention so that they can reference appropriate sections that are linked to the broad areas they wish to focus on in their Decision. For example:

Recalling that Parts VI, VII, and VIII of the Verification Annex impose specific restrictions and obligations on States Parties...;

TYPE AND ORDER OF CONTENT TO INCLUDE IN THE PREAMBLE (CONT.)

The preamble is also the place to note any concerns that are driving the debate of the agenda item that is under consideration:

Expressing grave concern that the threat of chemical weapons...;

If there are any actions that have had a positive impact they would also be noted in the Preamble:

Commending the ongoing work of...;

CONTENT TO BE INCLUDED IN OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS

The operative paragraphs should consist of recommended actions that address the concerns outlined in the preamble. These actions are typically targeted to three different entities. Some are addressed to the States Parties:

1. **Encourages** all States Parties to strengthen cooperation

Other actions are addressed to the OPCW Secretariat:

5. **Requests** the Secretariat to examine and report...;

And finally, some actions are addressed to the Director-General:

7. **Decides** that the Director-General shall report to the Council...;

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

1. All verb and verb phrases used to begin either preambular or operative paragraphs should be bolded. Check the list of terms used in OPCW Decisions posted on the simulation page for common verbs and verb phrases that are acceptable to use in Decisions.
2. All paragraphs should end in a semi-colon (;), except for the very last paragraph of the Decision which should end in a period.
3. Sometimes a verb that begins a paragraph can be repeated more than once in a paragraph. When that occurs, it should be bolded each time. The second time it is used within the same paragraph add the word 'also' and if it is used a third time, add the word 'further':

Decides that the continued possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic in Syria, and its failures to submit an accurate and complete declaration and to destroy all of its undeclared chemical weapons and production facilities, have caused serious damage to the object and purpose of the Convention, and **decides also**, pursuant to subparagraph 21(k) of Article VIII and paragraph 3 of Article XII of the Convention...

Drafting a Resolution (cont.)

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.

Editorial Guidelines

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

Recalling its resolutions 57/309 of 22 May 2003, 58/9 of 5 November 2003, 58/289 of 14 April 2004, 60/5 of 26 October 2005, 62/244 of 31 March 2008, 64/255 of 2 March 2010 and 66/260 of 19 April 2012 on improving global road safety,

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 1 of their efforts to achieve sustainable development,

Recalling further the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, convened by the President of the General Assembly on 25 September 2013, and its outcome document,

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:

1. *Invites Member States to continue to improve, where appropriate, their road management systems and to introduce both road safety audits for new construction projects and road safety assessment programmes for the existing networks;*
2. *Also invites Member States to develop and implement comprehensive policies on post-crash care and to consider enacting legislation to legally protect bystanders who in good faith provide care to those injured in a crash;*
3. *Further invites Member States to raise awareness of serious road traffic injuries, in particular brain and spinal cord injuries, and to encourage investment in scientific research aimed at effectively treating such injuries;*

A list of terms commonly used terms in resolutions will be posted on the WIMUN NY 2026 website along with the Study Guide and Annotated Bibliography for each simulation.
