The GA Handbook

A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly

The GA Handbook

A practical guide
to the United Nations
General Assembly

The GA Handbook

A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly

Published by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland
to the United Nations

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

The GA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations
633 Third Avenue, 29th floor
New York, New York 10017

Copyright © 2017, 2011 by Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations
First edition 2011. Second edition 2017

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN: 978-0-615-49660-3

Edited by Johann Aeschlimann and Mary Regan

Text by Nicole Ruder, Kenji Nakano and Johann Aeschlimann

Project management by Johann Aeschlimann and Linda Florio

Design by Linda Florio, Florio Design

Interior photography by Sally Montana

Printed and bound by GHP, Inc., USA

5 4 3

7 Letter from the President
9 Reader's Guide

11 1 The General Assembly and its President
13 1.1 Mandate of the GA
14 1.2 GA Sessions
15 1.3 The President of the GA
17 1.4 The Vice-Presidents of the GA
17 1.5 The GA Committees
19 1.6 The High-Level Political Forum
22 1.7 The UN System and the GA
24 1.8 The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM)

27 2 Participation and Credentials
28 2.1 Member States
30 2.2 Observers
31 2.3 UN Entities and Civil Society

35 3 The General Assembly at Work
36 3.1 The GA Agenda
39 3.2 GA Meetings
44 3.3 Conduct of Business
46 3.4 Debating GA Agenda Items
52 3.5 GA Resolutions and Decisions
61 3.6 Elections and Appointments

67 4 Main Committees
68 4.1 The Work of the Main Committees
69 4.2 First Committee
71 4.3 Second Committee
73 4.4 Third Committee
75 4.5 Fourth Committee
76 4.6 Fifth Committee
79 4.7. Sixth Committee

83 5 Key General Assembly Events
84 5.1 The Opening Week
85 5.2 The High-Level Week
86 5.3 The General Debate
88 5.4 GA High-Level Meetings
89 5.5 Thematic Debates
90 5.6 Civil Society Hearings
91 5.7 Commemorative GA Meetings

93 6 The Office of the President of the General Assembly
94 6.1 The Code of Ethics
95 6.2 The PGA Team
96 6.3 Office and Infrastructure
96 6.4 Technical Support
98 6.5 Funding and Finances
99 6.6 Safety and Security
100 6.7 Protocol Services
100 6.8 Official Travel

103 7 Information and Communication
104 7.1 Information and communication
104 7.2 Communication tools
105 7.3 The PGA and the Member States
105 7.4 The PGA and the Media
106 7.5 The PGA and the Other Principal Organs of the UN
107 7.6 Outreach

110 Appendix
125 Source Notes
132 Index
135 Photo Credits
136 Acknowledgments

In 2017, Switzerland celebrates 15 years as a Member State of the United Nations. In March of 2002, a majority of citizens from the 26 Swiss cantons voted to apply for membership, and in September of that same year, the 57th session of the General Assembly accepted our application and welcomed the Swiss Confederation as the 190th Member State.

This anniversary is a good time to take stock. Looking back on the past 15 years, I can say with confidence that the Swiss people made the right decision in 2002. It is plainly visible that all nations need to connect, communicate and search for common ground if we want to find solutions to urgent global problems. And for this, we need the universal forum of the United Nations and its General Assembly.

The challenges are formidable: Climate change, growing global inequalities, natural and humanitarian disasters, the breakdown of states, a vicious circle of unemployment, vulnerability and exclusion — all leading to human suffering, casualties, masses of refugees or internally displaced people, and a disquieting trend towards radicalization in many countries. The United Nations is the place where we can find the answers that are acceptable to all stakeholders. This is doable: Look at the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Let us reach those goals!

As a member of the global community, Switzerland has a great interest in a United Nations that works well. We highly value the universal membership of the Organization and the system of "one country, one vote" in the General Assembly. These tenets are the basis of its legitimacy as the eminent and representative policy-making organ of the United Nations.

In order for the UN to achieve its goals, its principal organs must function as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Thus, seven years ago, when my predecessor Joseph Deiss served as the first Swiss President of the General Assembly, the Swiss Mission to the UN produced this handbook as a practical guide to the procedures and practices of the General Assembly. Now it was time for an update, and I hope that this second edition remains valuable to all interested in the inner workings of this great body.

Doris Leuthard
President of the Swiss Confederation

EXIT

Reader's Guide

Some may argue that the UN General Assembly (GA) is best experienced intuitively and that knowledge about how it works best passed on by word of mouth. We beg to differ. We believe that a written guide to the GA can add value to its institutional memory.

What the GA Handbook is and is not about

This book is for Member States and for the President of the UN General Assembly (GA). The GA Handbook is a practical guide to the GA. It is not about the substance of what is discussed and considered by the GA. It is about the rules and procedures, the schedules and protocols, the practices and precedents — in short, it is about the dry stuff.

The GA Handbook compiles relevant provisions from the GA Rules of Procedure, in particular the changes established in recent revitalization resolutions, the mandates scattered throughout GA resolutions and decisions as well as lessons learned from previous GA presidencies.

> The GA Handbook is not a legal document. The "Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly" (GA Rules of Procedure) is the only definitive source on how the GA is to conduct its business. The GA Handbook does not reflect official positions of the UN Secretariat, and it does not claim to be comprehensive. It prioritizes information relevant to the work of the PGA and of Member States, and it leaves out information considered to be too detailed.

How to use this book

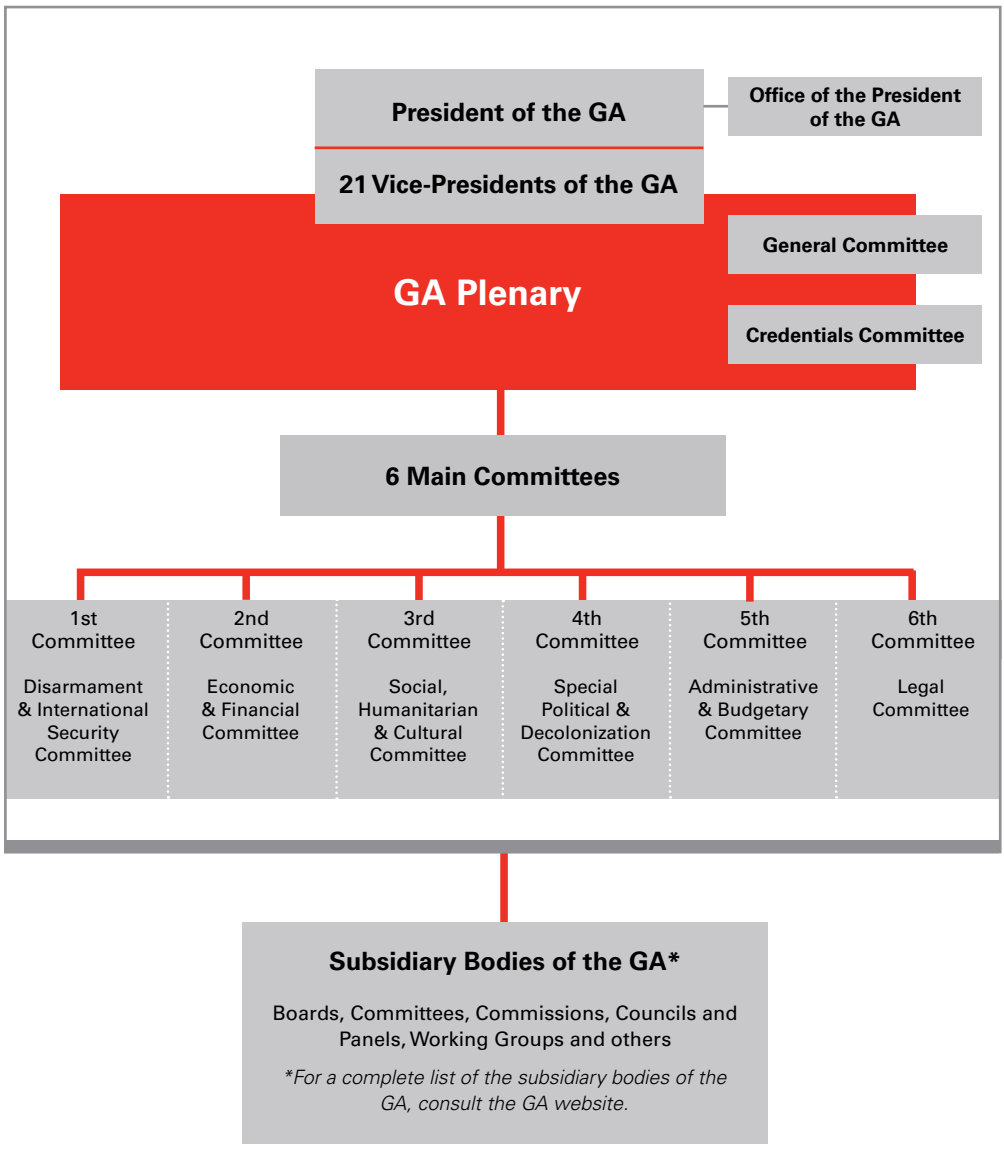
The table of contents and the index provide quick referencing. In addition, references to related sections are made throughout the text.

The GA Handbook is divided into seven chapters: four on the GA, one on its Main Committees, one on the Office of the PGA, and one on the PGA's interactions with Member States, the media, and the world outside. Changes in the use of online tools are reflected up to September 2017. Some information is presented in tables for easier reading. Topics of specific relevance are presented in grey-shaded inserts. Boxes in the margins alert the reader to possible sources of confusion or highlight facts of particular interest. The ten appendices contain additional information.

A note on the sources: Most of the information in the GA Handbook comes from official UN guidelines and documents. These sources are referenced at the end of the book.

A note on acronyms: The GA Handbook uses GA for "General Assembly" and PGA for "President of the GA." In tables, inserts and text boxes the "Secretary-General" is referred to as SG. The "Department for General Assembly and Conference Management" is referred to by its acronym, DGACM. The "Department of Public Information" is referred to as "DPI." The "Economic and Social Council "is referred to as ECOSOC.

The General Assembly and its President


President of the GA
Office of the President of the GA
21 Vice-Presidents of the GA
GA Plenary
General Committee
Credentials Committee
6 Main Committees
1st Committee
Disarmament & International Security Committee
2nd Committee
Economic & Financial Committee
3rd Committee
Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Committee
4th Committee
Special Political & Decolonization Committee
5th Committee
Administrative & Budgetary Committee
6th Committee
Legal Committee
Subsidiary Bodies of the GA*
Boards, Committees, Commissions, Councils and Panels, Working Groups and others
*For a complete list of the subsidiary bodies of the GA, consult the GA website.

1 The GA and its President

The UN Charter establishes six principal organs: the General Assembly (GA), the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the UN Secretariat.

Each of the 193 Member States of the UN has one vote in the GA. "We reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as well as the role of the Assembly in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law" (2005 World Summit Outcome).

The GA is free to choose the way it conducts its business. The GA Rules of Procedure continue to evolve and to be adapted. Over the years, the GA has granted itself many exceptions to established rules.

The GA has a President (President of the General Assembly — PGA) and twenty-one Vice-Presidents. The GA works through a Plenary, six Main Committees, a General Committee and a Credentials Committee. In addition, there are various subsidiary bodies, such as boards, committees, commissions, and councils, that report to the GA.

The GA meets in sessions. At the beginning of each session, the GA adopts an agenda of items to be considered.

1.1 Mandate of the GA

According to the Charter, the GA:

- may consider any issue within the scope of the Charter but may not take decisions on international situations or disputes that the Security Council is considering
- may discuss the powers or functions of any UN organ established by the Charter and of any of the subsidiary bodies of the GA
- receives and discusses reports issued by the other principal organs established under the Charter as well as reports issued by its own subsidiary bodies
- approves the budget of the UN and decides on the scales of assessment, i.e., each Member State's share of the budget
- elects and appoints its own officers, the members of the other principal organs, the members of some of its subsidiary bodies and — based on the recommendation of the Security Council — the Secretary-General (see section 3.7).

Early days

10 January 1946:
First GA, with 51 nations represented, opens in Westminster, London.

24 October 1949:
Cornerstone laid for the present UN Headquarters in New York.

14 October 1952:
First meeting of the GA opens in the new General Assembly Hall in New York.

GA revitalization

The increase in UN membership and the continued expansion of the agenda add to the complexity of the GA's work. Efforts to rationalize and streamline started a few years after the first session. Since 1991 (the 46th GA), the term "GA revitalization" has been used to describe this ongoing process. The main issues are: the role and authority of the GA and the PGA, working methods, and the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General; strengthening the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the GA. In 2015 and 2016, the GA adopted landmark resolutions on GA revitalization. The implementation and follow-up is first and foremost the responsibility of the Member States.

1.2 GA Sessions

The General Assembly meets in "regular annual sessions" and in "special sessions." Both consist of formal and informal meetings (see section 3.2). All GA sessions are numbered consecutively.

Regular annual session of the GA

The regular annual session opens on Tuesday of the third week of September and runs for one year. The first regular session opened in 1946.

Since its 44th session (1989–90), the GA has been formally regarded as being "in session" for the entire year. There are two distinct parts of a session. The time from mid-September to the Christmas break in December is called the "main part of the session" and is the most intense period of work. It includes the general debate and the bulk of the work of the Main Committees. The period from January to September is called the "resumed part of the session." Most thematic debates, PGA-led consultation processes, and working group meetings take place during that period. The GA Handbook refers to the regular annual session simply as "the GA session."

Session vs. meeting

The word "session" is often used to refer to a "meeting," e.g., "during the afternoon session." While this is generally understood, technically there is no such thing as the "GA afternoon session." The correct term is the "GA afternoon meeting."

Special sessions of the GA

According to the Charter, special sessions can be held "as occasion may require." A special session of the GA can be convened either at the request of the Security Council or a majority of Member States. The request of the Security Council requires a vote of nine or more of its fifteen members.

A special session of the GA is referred to as "UNGASS" (UN General Assembly Special Session). There have been 30 special sessions to date. Since 1975, all of them have been mandated by the GA. The full list is available on the GA website.

A special session deals with one issue only and its agenda is very short. A special session usually adopts one or two outcome documents, for example a political declaration, an action plan,

or a strategy. Special sessions are often high-level events with the participation of Heads of State and Government and government Ministers.

The GA Rules of Procedure apply to special sessions. A special session elects its own president, usually the PGA of the ongoing regular session. Special sessions can incur additional costs comparable to those of a GA high-level meeting (see section 5.4).

Special sessions last from one to several days. Like a regular annual session, a special session consists of formal and informal plenary meetings. A subsidiary body of the special session, the "Committee of the Whole", deals with the negotiation of an outcome document. Negotiations usually start long before the opening of the special session.

What are emergency special sessions?

In 1950, the GA created an exception to the prerogative of the Security Council in dealing with threats to peace and security. In resolution 377(V)-A, titled "Uniting for Peace," the GA decided that if the Security Council cannot come to a decision on an issue due to a veto (or the threat of a veto) by one of its permanent mem-bers (P-5), the GA may hold an emergency special session within 24 hours to consider the same matter. An emergency special session of the GA is convened in the same manner as a special session.

An emergency special session is the only time the GA takes decisions on issues that are under the exclusive mandate of the Security Council. There have been ten emergency special sessions to date, six of them pertaining to the situation in the Middle East. The full list of emergency sessions is available on the GA website.

Tenth Emergency Special Session

The tenth Emergency Special Session on "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory" opened in 1997 and has never been formally closed. Member States decided to "temporarily adjourn" and to authorize the PGA to resume the session upon request from a Member State. As of September 2017 the tenth Emergency Special Session has been resumed fourteen times.

1.3 The President of the GA

Who can become PGA?

Any Member State can put forward a candidate for President of the GA. The PGA is elected in his/her personal capacity and for the duration of the term of office represents the membership as a whole.

The Member State of the PGA cannot at the same time hold the office of Vice-President or Chair of a Main Committee. Thus, the five permanent members of the Security Council, who are always Vice-Presidents, cannot hold the office of the PGA.

The Presidency of the GA rotates among the five regional groups, namely the Group of Asia-Pacific States (71st session), the Group of Eastern European States (72nd session), the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (73rd session), the Group of African States (74th session), the Western European and other States Group (75th session). The full list of past PGAs is available on the GA website.

How is the PGA elected?

The President is elected by a simple majority vote of the GA. Usually, the Member States of a regional group agree on one candidate and present a clean slate. In such cases the election can take place by acclamation. The GA requests that PGA candidates submit a vision statement and has decided to conduct hearings with them (see section 3.6).

The President is elected at least three months before formally assuming office, usually in mid -June. This allows him/her to prepare and to assemble a team before the GA session begins in September.

What is the role and mandate of the PGA?

The PGA is the guardian of the GA Rules of Procedure but has no say in the actual decision-making of the GA — in fact, the PGA does not have a vote in the GA. Even on procedural matters,the PGA always remains under the authority of the GA (see section 3.3).

With very little formal power and a one-year, non-renewable term of office, the PGA depends on the moral authority and the convening power of the office as main instruments to keep the 193 Member States working together. Often, the good offices of the PGA have allowed the GA to remain a universal forum for all Member States, even for those involved in disputes, and even when addressing difficult and politically sensitive questions. In recent years, the vision of the PGA's role has grown.

The Charter of the UN establishes only the function of the PGA. The exact role and mandate have been defined and agreed on by the GA and are described in the GA Rules of Procedure, in GA revitalization resolutions, and in other GA resolutions which assign responsibilities and tasks to the PGA.

PGA mandates from the GA Rules of Procedure

According to the GA Rules of Procedure, the PGA shall:

- open and close each GA plenary meeting
- direct the discussions in plenary meetings (e.g., managing the list of speakers and according the right to speak)
- ensure observance of the GA Rules of Procedure
- rule on points of order
- propose adjournment or suspension of a meeting.

PGA mandates from revitalization resolutions

The revitalization resolutions request the PGA to:

- organize thematic debates (see section 5.5)
- suggest the theme for the general debate
- organize hearings of Secretary-General candidates (see section 3.6).
- preserve records and institutional memory and prepare a report on best practices and lessons learned for his/ her successor
- enhance public visibility of the PGA and the GA
- meet regularly with the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council, and the President of ECOSOC
- brief Member States periodically on recent activities, including official travels

Where does the GA meet?

The default location for all GA meetings is the New York Headquarters of the UN, with its dedicated General Assembly Hall and conference rooms. However, GA meetings or sessions can be held in a different location if a resolution or decision to that effect is adopted. This has only occurred twice since the New York Headquarters was inaugurated in 1952: a GA meeting in 1988 and a GA special session in 2000 took place in Geneva. Meetings and sessions outside New York involve significant costs.

- provide financial disclosures
- observe a code of ethics (see section 6.1)
- have contacts with civil society.

PGA mandates from individual GA resolutions

Mandates assigned to the PGA by individual resolutions can pertain to the organization of events such as high-level meetings (see section 5.4), the negotiation of outcome documents, or consultations on a specific topic (see section 3.5). The PGA may appoint one or more Permanent Representatives as facilitators for such processes. The PGA's role as an enabler of facilitation processes has expanded in recent years.

What else does the PGA do?

The PGA interacts and engages with the media, civil society and the wider public. He/she can be invited to attend UN Conferences and other international and regional intergovernmental meetings and visit Member States.

1.4 The Vice-Presidents of the GA

How are the Vice-Presidents elected?

The GA elects the 21 Vice-Presidents for the next session on the day of the election of the PGA. Like the PGA, the Vice-Presidents formally assume office at the opening of the GA session. The five permanent members of the Security Council are always among the Vice-Presidents. To ensure balanced geographical representation, the remaining Vice-Presidencies are distributed among the regional groups as follows:

- 6 members from the Group of African States
- 5 members from the Group of Asia-Pacific States
- 1 member from the Group of Eastern European States
- 3 members from the Group of Latin American States
- 2 members from the Western European or other States Group

The list adds up to 22. There are only 21 Vice-Presidents, as the regional group putting forward the PGA gets one less vice-presidential mandate. Each regional group usually agrees on a clean slate (see section 3.6). This allows for election by acclamation.

What is the role of the Vice-Presidents?

All Vice-Presidents are members of the General Committee (see section 1.5). When the PGA is absent, one of the Vice-Presidents is called upon to assume the role of "acting President of the GA," with the same mandate and responsibility as the PGA. Vice-Presidents from permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) do not usually assume this role.

1.5 The GA Committees

The procedural and organizational issues for a GA session are dealt with in the General Committee and the Credentials Committee.

Why Manhattan?

After the decision to locate the permanent headquarters of the UN outside of war-torn Europe, several American cities showed an interest, among them San Francisco, Philadelphia and New York City, which had offered the former 1939 World Fair grounds in Queens. In 1946, while the UN was considering Philadelphia, the US politician Nelson Rockefeller, a scion of the wealthy Rockefeller family, took the initiative to secure a more attractive site in Manhattan. His father, John D. Rockefeller Jr., eventually agreed to write a check for 8.5 million USD (worth 113 million USD in 2017) for the UN to buy the parcel of land in East Midtown Manhattan ("Turtle Bay") that the Organization has been occupying ever since.

Substantive issues are considered in the Plenary or in one of six Main Committees. At the beginning of the session, the GA agrees on a "division of labor" and allocates agenda items to the six Main Committees and/or to the Plenary itself. All Main Committees report to the GA Plenary (see chapter 4 on Main Committees).

The six Main Committees and their officers

The Main Committees consist of all Member States of the GA. Each Main Committee is headed by a Bureau consisting of a Chair, three Vice-Chairs, and a Rapporteur.

The six Main Committees roughly correspond to the GA's major fields of responsibility:

- 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)

How are the Officers of the Main Committees elected?

The Main Committees usually elect their Chairs and other officers on the day of the election of the PGA. No Member State can serve both as Vice-President and Chair of a Main Committee during the same GA session.

Main Committee Chairs usually rotate among the five regional groups. Each is allocated one chair. The sixth chair rotates among the Groups of African, Asia-Pacific, and Latin American and Caribbean states. The three Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur are allocated to the four regional groups that do not hold the chair. Patterns of rotations are agreed to in GA decisions for a limited time. The current pattern of rotation of the Main Committee Chairs covers the period up to and including the 73rd GA session.

Each regional group usually agrees on a clean slate, allowing for election by acclamation. As clean slates are not always ready in time, the election of some Bureau members can be postponed until the first formal meeting of the respective Main Committee.

The day of the elections of GA officers

All elections of GA officers take place on the same day in the GA Hall. The proceedings are as follow:

- the GA elects the PGA
- the PGA, the PGA-elect, the SG, the Chairs of the regional groups and the host country make statements
- the GA elects the Vice-Presidents
- the SG draws lots for the seating order
- the Main Committees elect their officers and the Chairs-elect may make statements

Neither Vice-Presidents-elect nor individual Member States make statements.

Seating in the GA Hall

On the day of the election of the PGA, the SG draws lots to determine which Member State will sit at the right end of the front row as seen from the Podium. The seating order then follows the English alphabetical order of country names. It is valid for the whole session and also applies to the formal meetings of the Main Committees.

The General Committee

The General Committee is chaired by the PGA, and its voting members consist of the 21 Vice-Presidents and the six Chairs of the Main Committees. It essentially deals with the agenda of the GA, making recommendations to the GA on the inclusion of items and their allocation to the Main Committees (see section 3.1). It also makes recommendations on organizational issues (see section 3.5), and on issues such as the conduct of meetings, meeting records, and documentation. The General Committee does not make declarations on political questions.

The Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee consists of nine members. The Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) consults Member States and suggests candidates to the PGA. The Committee's nine members are then proposed by the PGA and appointed at the beginning of each session by the GA. China, Russia, and the US have always been members of the Credentials Committee. The Committee makes recommendations to the GA regarding the credentials of the delegations of Member States (see section 2.1).

GA subsidiary bodies

The GA can mandate a subsidiary body to consider a particular issue or question and to submit reports with recommendations to the GA. The Main Committees can also establish subsidiary bodies.

Legally, all subsidiary bodies have the same standing. Politically, they do not. This might be reflected in the variety of their names: "Council" (Human Rights Council), "Committee" (Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations), "Commission" (Peacebuilding Commission), "Group" (Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly). Subsidiary bodies are established by a GA resolution/decision specifying their mandate and the duration of their work. Some are "open-ended" (i.e., all Member States can participate); others, such as the Special Committees on Peacekeeping Operations and Decolonization, the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission or the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, are not. Subsidiary bodies can have formal and informal meetings. Many of them are public. Some of them adopt resolutions/decisions recommended for adoption by the GA.

In principle, a subsidiary body elects a Chair, one or more Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur. There are many different arrangements.

2030 Agenda

In September 2015, world leaders meeting at a UN Summit adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and protect the planet. They are detailed in 169 targets and 232 indicators. The framework for financing the SDGs is laid out in the accompanying Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The SDGs are not legally binding. Member States, including civil society and the private sector, are called to mobilize the resources necessary for implementation within the next fifteen years. The goals are:

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

1.6 The High-Level Political Forum

The broad reach of the UN "2030 Agenda" (see box) resulted in a unique structure for follow-up and implementation. Both the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC, 54 Member States) and the GA take a role. The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) convenes each year at UN Headquarters in

New York under the auspices of ECOSOC and every four years under the auspices of the GA. The task of HLPF is to keep the 2030 Agenda on track and to avoid overlap with existing structures, entities and bodies. HLPF meetings of ECOSOC carry out thematic and voluntary national reviews. They are preceded by the Financing for Development Forum, which assesses available resources and financial gaps for implementing the 2030 Agenda. The HLPF meetings of the GA provide high-level political guidance and mobilize further actions.

1.7 The UN System and the GA

"UN System" is an umbrella term for all intergovernmental bodies and institutional entities of the UN. The organizational chart of the UN can be found on the UN website.

The UN system has two distinct but interlinked spheres: the UN's intergovernmental bodies and the UN's institutional entities. The UN intergovernmental bodies consist of some or all of its Member States and, depending on their mandates, set policy, define international norms and standards and govern UN institutions. The UN institutional entities support the intergovernmental processes and some also engage in operational activities around the world.

The GA is at the center of the UN system. Different parts of the UN System have different relationships with the GA.

1 The United Nations

The United Nations in the strictest sense is what is established by the Charter, i.e., the Organization's membership and its principal organs (see section 1.1) as well as the subsidiary bodies of the principal organs.

The UN Secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General, is one of the principal organs of the UN. It provides support for the UN intergovernmental processes. The UN Secretariat has an operational role in selected areas, such as the implementation of peacekeeping mandates or the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

Secretariat vs. secretariat

Do not confuse the UN Secretariat (capital "S"), headed by the SG, with the secretariat of the GA (DGACM) and the secretariats (small "s") of UN conferences or processes. Any part of the UN can be designated by Member States as a secretariat providing support for an intergovernmental process. Colloquially all are called "the secretariat."

2 UN Funds and Programmes

UN Funds and Programmes, such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and UN Women, are a special type of subsidiary body of the GA. They are fully developed institutions engaged in operational activities and funded through voluntary contributions by Member States. They have distinct intergovernmental governing structures, for example executive boards, that report through ECOSOC to the GA. GA resolutions are binding on the Funds and Programmes. On administrative matters the heads of the Funds and Programmes report to the Secretary-General.

3 Specialized Agencies

Specialized Agencies such as ILO, WHO or FAO, are UN bodies with their own intergovernmental structure separate from the GA. GA resolutions are not binding on Specialized Agencies. Many of

UN Vocabulary

The UN System and its parts are referred to by various, sometimes interchangeable terms. The following terminology is based on practice and is not a legal interpretation.

UN organs and UN bodies

"UN organs" is understood to be shorthand for "the principal organs of the UN." The term "UN bodies" generally encompasses all UN intergovernmental bodies, i.e., the UN's principal organs as well as all their subsidiary bodies such as executive boards, committees, commissions, working groups, etc. If applied strictly, the term does not include the intergovernmental structures of the Specialized Agencies and the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs).

UN entities

"UN entities" is widely used and understood as a generic term for all institutional entities of the UN System, i.e., all UN Offices, Departments, Funds and Programmes and Specialized Agencies. From a legal perspective, "entity" implies a separate legal mandate and would thus exclude the Secretariat. A legal interpretation is also likely to exclude the Specialized Agencies and the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), as they have been created through different intergovernmental processes.

UN System

"UN System" is an umbrella term encompassing the intergovernmental bodies and the different institutions of the UN: the principal organs, the Funds and Programmes, the Specialized Agencies and other bodies related to the UN.

The wider UN System

"The wider UN System" is used to underline the inclusion of the Specialized Agencies and the other related bodies in the UN System.

UN family

"UN family" is a very informal term used interchangeably with "UN System" to convey the sense of a common cause.

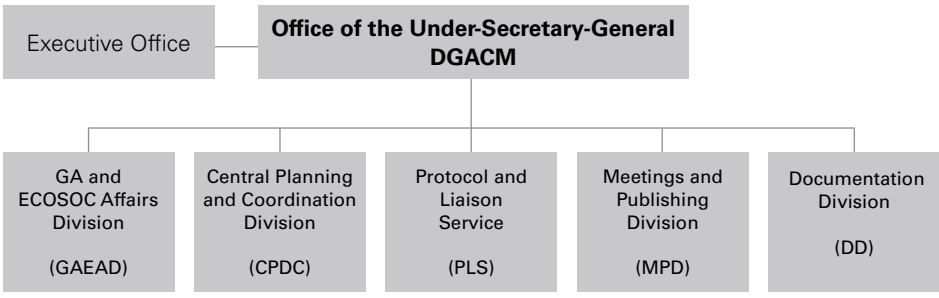
the Specialized Agencies predate the UN. They have entered into formal relationships with the UN but retain their own intergovernmental structures. For example, the World Health Organization is governed by the World Health Assembly in a similar way as the UN is governed by the GA.

The heads of Specialized Agencies are not accountable to the Secretary-General. Many of them recognize the Secretary-General's coordinating role within the UN System, particularly his/her role as the Chair of the Chief Executives Board (CEB).

4 Other bodies related to the UN

There are other intergovernmental bodies which have established looser forms of relationships with the UN than the Specialized Agencies. Two such bodies are the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Trade Organization. The latest example is the International Organization for Migration.

The basic structure of DGACM



(A complete organizational chart of DGACM and its divisions can be found on the DGACM website).

1.8

1.8 DGACM

The GA could not function without the interpretation and translation of speeches or documents, without someone scheduling meetings, and without documentation being prepared for meetings — all done by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM).

Among its many other functions DGACM provides conference services and technical secretariat support for the GA Plenary and its committees and supports the work of the PGA and his/her Office.

General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division (GAEAD)

GAEAD is the division within DGACM most directly involved with the GA. It also works very closely with the Office of the PGA, providing invaluable support and advice throughout the GA session.

GAEAD drafts the agenda of the GA as well as its programme of work and discusses the scheduling of GA meetings with the PGA.

For each GA meeting, GAEAD prepares the script for the PGA — a detailed sequence of the proceedings and suggested remarks — and supports him/her during the meetings with advice on the application of the GA Rules of Procedure. GAEAD is also respon-sible for maintaining the list of speakers for GA meetings.
GAEAD briefs the SG on substantive developments within the GA and notifies UN entities of the implications of recently adopted GA decisions and resolutions including the allocation of author departments for the drafting of Secretary-General reports.

Meeting Management Section, Central Planning and Coordination Division (MMS, CPCD)

MMS manages conference services, such as the allocation of conference rooms and interpretation services. CPDC includes the Journal Unit, which publishes the *Journal of the UN*.

Meetings and Publishing Division (MPD)

MPD provides meeting services, such as seating arrangements, distribution of speeches in the conference room, escorting speakers to the rostrum, technical support and simultaneous interpretation of all statements and speeches at UN meetings into and from the six official UN languages, as well as verbatim records of meetings.

MPD also formats, proofreads, and finalizes all official UN documents, UN correspondence, and UN publications. It provides publication services including the dissemination of documents at Headquarters and globally, and the posting of the electronic versions of official documents on the UN's Official Documents System (ODS) and on various UN websites.

Documentation Division (DD)

The Documentation Division is responsible for the translation of all official UN documents, meeting records, and correspondence at Headquarters from and into the six official UN languages, and for the editing of official UN documents and publications. The division also prepares the summary records of meetings.

Protocol and Liaison Service (PLS)

Apart from providing protocol services to the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, PLS liaises with the Permanent Missions of Member States (and Observer Missions) and the host country, assists with the preparation of official visits to Headquarters by Heads of State, Heads of Government, or other dignitaries and advises on the practice and norms of UN protocol and diplomatic etiquette (see section 6.7).

PLS also publishes an up-to-date, comprehensive list of the diplomatic personnel of all Permanent and Observer Missions (the "Blue Book") and maintains a very useful website (see Appendix I).

The Executive Office

The Executive Office is responsible for all financial, personnel, and general administrative matters concerning DGACM, including the Office of the PGA (see Chapter 6).

Participation and Credentials

2 Participation and Credentials

In addition to the Member States, Observers, UN entities, and civil society organizations contribute to the GA's work as non-voting participants. This chapter describes the criteria for participation.

2.1 Member States

To fully participate in the GA, a State must attain UN membership, submit credentials, and obtain accreditation for its delegation.

Membership

Membership in the United Nations "is open to all peace-loving States that accept the obligations contained in the United Nations Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able to carry out these obligations" (UN Charter).

Admission

In order to gain admission, the candidate submits an application to the Secretary-General, including a letter stating that it accepts the obligations of membership under the UN Charter. The Secretary-General informs all Member States of the application. Next, the Security Council considers it. A recommendation for admission from the Council requires the vote of at least 9 of the 15 members. A permanent member can block the recommendation by a veto. If successful in the Council, the application is then considered by the GA, where it must receive a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting (see section 3.5). Membership becomes effective on the date the GA resolution for admission is adopted.

Suspension

The Charter allows for the possibility of suspending the voting rights or the membership of a Member State. Suspension of membership is initiated in the Security Council and then follows the same procedure as for admitting a new Member State. To date, no UN Member State has ever been suspended and only one Member State has temporarily chosen to withdraw from the UN. A Member State in arrears with the payment of its contributions has its voting rights in the GA suspended unless the GA decides otherwise.

Credentials

For each GA session, Member States have to formally notify the Secretary-General of who is entitled to speak on its behalf. These representatives include Heads of State and Government, government Ministers, Ambassadors and other officials. The "delegation" of a Member State consists of up to five representatives, five alternate representatives, and as many advisers and experts as required. The GA formally acknowledges the representatives of the Member States by approving their credentials.

Member States are also requested to notify the Secretary-General of their delegations to each of the GA Main Committees.

i

Switzerland joins

On 10 September 2002, Switzerland joined the UN as the 190th Member State after 54 years as an Observer State. SG Kofi Annan greeted Switzerland with the words: "The Swiss are here. We have been waiting for a long time." Switzerland was the first country to put UN membership to a popular vote.

The credentials procedure

Credentials are issued either by the Member State's Head of State or Government or by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, and are sent to the Secretary-General. The credentials are first considered by the Credentials Committee, which then reports its recom-mendations to the GA, usually in December (thus allowing for late submissions of credentials by Member States). Based on this report, the GA decides on the credentials before the main part of the session ends.

The consideration of the credentials by the Credentials Committee is normally a formality. But if the legitimacy of a delegation is contested, its credentials are sometimes challenged by another Member State. In such cases, the good offices of the PGA may be called upon to help resolve the matter before a formal meeting of the Credentials Committee is scheduled. In these situations, the PGA is assisted and advised by DGACM and by the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA). Representatives whose credentials have been challenged retain all their rights until, and unless, they are revoked by a GA decision.

Accreditation

Accreditation pertains to the diplomatic status of the delegation and staff of a Member State's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York. Decisions regarding accreditation are governed by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and involve the Member State, the UN Secretariat, and the host country, i.e., the United States Government.

Permanent Missions to the UN

Every Member State of the UN maintains a Permanent Mission to the UN in New York. A Permanent Mission to the UN is the equivalent of an embassy to another country.

Each Permanent Mission is headed by a Permanent Representative (PR) to the UN, who holds the rank of ambassador. Some of the larger Permanent Missions may have more than one ambassador, but there is only one Permanent Representative per Member State.
Most Permanent Missions operate with a mix of diplomats (delegates), posted for a period of two to five years, and long-term support staff. The size of the Missions varies greatly, from a single delegate for the smallest to dozens for the larger. During peak times of the GA session additional delegates may be sent from their capitals to reinforce their Permanent Missions.

The all-State formula

Not all states are members of the United Nations. This is at times taken into consideration in organizing events. UN conferences sometimes use the "all-State formula," which includes the Holy See, the State of Palestine, the Cook Islands and Niue as full participants.

2.2 Observers

The granting of observer status is not addressed in the Charter. Participation in the GA as an Observer has developed through practice. The first country to be recognized as an Observer was Switzerland in 1946.

Observer status is granted by a GA resolution based on the recommendation of the Sixth Committee. Admitted Observers have a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and the work of the GA. Three categories of Observers can be distinguished:

- non-Member States with a Permanent Observer Mission at UN Headquarters in New York. To date, the Holy See and the State of Palestine are Observers under this category.
- intergovernmental organizations. There are approximately 85 intergovernmental organizations with observer status, about 20 of which maintain permanent offices in NY.
- other entities with permanent offices at the UN. There are currently five such entities including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

In 1994, the GA adopted a decision to limit a proliferation of Observers, stating that "the granting of observer status in the GA should in the future be confined to States and to those intergovernmental organizations whose activities cover matters of interest to the Assembly."

Different ways of participating

Not all Observers have been granted the same rights. The Holy See and the State of Palestine can participate in all aspects of the GA's work but do not have the right to vote or to table resolutions. However, they can co-sponsor resolutions, have the right of reply and the right to raise points of order on issues concerning the Holy See, Palestine and the Middle East respectively. They can usually also attend closed GA meetings.

The participation of other Observers is more restricted. They can speak in formal meetings but are not always invited to participate in closed meetings. They cannot co-sponsor resolutions and cannot raise points of order, nor do they have the right of reply.

In formal GA meetings, the EU speaks among Member States who represent groups. Other Observers always speak after the Member States and in the following order: Holy See, State of Palestine, followed by other Observers.

EU observer status

In May 2011 the GA adjusted the observer status of the European Union. The changes include an upgraded speaking slot, a limited right of reply and the permission to orally present draft resolutions and amendments on behalf of the EU Member States. The EU cannot vote, call for a vote or raise points of order. No draft resolution can be tabled in the name of the EU.

2.3 UN Entities and Civil Society

The UN Secretariat and the UN system provide inputs for Secretary-General reports and play a role in the implementation of GA resolutions. The participation of civil society in the GA, unlike its participation in ECOSOC, is not addressed in the Charter. It has increased in the recent past, mostly by participation of organizations with ECOSOC consultative status.

UN entities and civil society can participate in open GA meetings. The term "participation" has different meanings: it can refer to attending, i.e., simply being present in the room, or to speaking.

DGACM (see section 1.7.) directly supports the work of the GA and thus participates in all GA meetings. DGACM speaks only if requested to provide clarification on procedural questions and on administrative matters.

Participation of UN entities and civil society in GA meetings:		
	CAN THEY ATTEND?	CAN THEY SPEAK?
Formal GA meetings **UN entities**	Yes, if the meeting is open and seating is available	In the Plenary, only the SG or a member of the Secretariat designated by him speaks. The heads of other UN entities need a special agreement, e.g., a GA resolution. In the Main Committees, other UN Secretariat officials and the heads of some subsidiary bodies can be invited to speak.
Civil society	Yes, if the meeting is open and seating is available	In the Plenary civil society representatives can only speak if specified in a GA resolution/decision. In some of the Main Committees, civil society representatives can be invited to speak.
Informal GA meetings **UN entities**	Yes, if the meeting is open and seating is available	It is at the Chair's discretion to give the floor to UN entities. The Chair may also choose to invite UN representatives as keynote speakers or panelists.
Civil society	Yes, if the meeting is open and seating is available	It is at the Chair's discretion to give the floor to civil society representatives. The Chair may also choose to invite civil society representatives as keynote speakers or panelists.

(See section 5.4 for the participation of UN entities in GA high-level meetings).

Badges

The color-coded letter on the UN grounds-pass (badge) identifies role and rank. Together with the "Blue Book" (the directory of the Permanent Missions to the UN) and the UN Telephone Directory, these badges are key to the "who is who" at the UN (see Appendix VIII).

FUNCTION	LETTER ON THE BADGE
PGA	
PGA-elect	**D (obtained through the Permanent Mission)**
PGA in office	**No badge (escorted)**
Permanent Missions	
VIP	**White badge with or without photo**
Permanent Representative	**Gold D**
Deputy Permanent Representative	**Silver D**
Minister Counsellor	**Yellow D**
Counsellor, First Secretary, Second Secretary, Third Secretary, Adviser, Attaché	**Red D**
Support Staff	**White D**
Observers	
Head of Observer delegation	**Gold O**
Observer delegates	**Red O**
UN Entities	
SG/Deputy SG	**No badge (escorted)**
UNDP Administrator	**Yellow S**
Under-Secretary-General (USG)	**Yellow S**
Assistant Secretary-General (ASG)	**Yellow S**
Directors D1 and D2 Professional Staff P1-P5	**White S**
General Service Staff G1-G8	**White S**
Civil Society	
Accredited NGOs	**Brown N**
Affiliated NGOs	**Brown A**
Media	
Accredited press	**White P**
Affiliated press	**Green P**

3

The General Assembly at Work

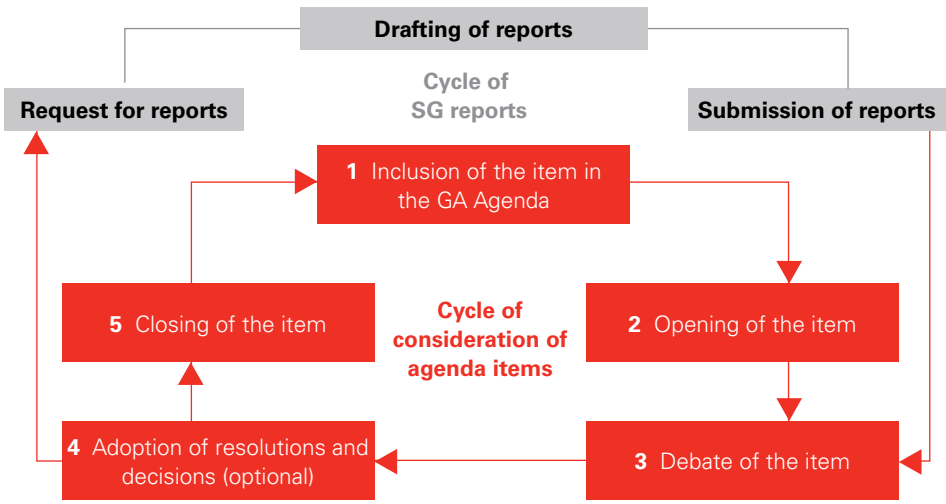
3

3 The GA at Work

During a session, the GA considers all items on its agenda. "Considering" an agenda item usually includes debating the item and adopting one or more resolutions and/or decisions. Much of the work of the GA follows a cycle of debate, decision, implementation and reporting.

Debates of an agenda item are informed by reports submitted by the Secretary-General, a subsidiary body of the GA or another principal organ. The resolutions or decisions adopted can include policy recommendations and identify actions to be taken by Member States and by the UN System. Resolutions/decisions can request further Secretary-General reports.

The cyclical work of the GA



3.1

3.1 The GA Agenda

Establishing and adopting the agenda is the first order of business in each GA session. The agenda must be adopted by Friday of the first week of the GA session for any subsequent meetings to take place. Most of the more than 170 items on the agenda are considered on a regular basis, and only a few new items are added or deleted each year.

In establishing the GA agenda, the UN Secretariat first compiles a series of preparatory documents leading up to the draft agenda (see Appendix II). Then, the General Committee discusses the draft agenda and submits its recommendations to the GA, which adopts the agenda.

Agenda items

The UN Secretariat compiles a preliminary list of mandated, recurring and new agenda items.

Mandated agenda items are mentioned in the Charter, the GA Rules of Procedure or GA resolutions establishing subsidiary bodies. They are, for example, reports by the principal organs of the UN, reports by the subsidiary bodies of the GA, elections to be held, and all items pertaining to the budget.

Recurring agenda items have been called for in previous GA resolutions. A request for a Secretary-General report is considered an implicit request for the inclusion of the item in the agenda of a future session. The GA regularly makes efforts to rationalize and streamline the agenda. This can be done by making the item a "sub-item" under a related agenda item, by considering the item only every second, third or fourth year or by deleting the item from the agenda altogether.

New agenda items can be proposed by a Member State, one of the other principal organs of the UN, or the Secretary-General.

The list of agenda items is organized under headings that correspond to the biennially approved "Priorities of the Organization", which can be summarized as follows:

- promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences
- maintenance of international peace and security
- development of Africa
- promotion of human rights
- effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts
- promotion of justice and international law
- disarmament
- drug control, crime prevention, and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations
- organizational, administrative and other matters

The role of the General Committee

The General Committee formally meets for the first time the day after the opening of the new GA session (see sections 1.5 and 5.1). It usually works by consensus. If it decides by a vote, a simple majority rule applies. All Member States can attend the meetings of the General Committee. Non-members of the Committee who have proposed new agenda items can participate in the relevant discussions. They cannot vote.

During its first meetings, the General Committee discusses the draft agenda and the organization of the session and immediately submits its report to the GA. This report contains recommendations on the inclusion of agenda items, on the allocation of agenda items and on the organization of work of the GA.

PGA's baptism by fire

At the first formal General Committee meeting, the PGA reads out the list of all agenda items proposed for the session. This can take several hours.

Recommendations on the inclusion of items
The mandated standard items and recurring items are always recommended for inclusion in the agenda.

Newly proposed items can be recommended for rejection or for inclusion in the agenda. Some items are included with an understanding that no consideration will take place until further notice. Others can be recommended for inclusion in a future session. Finally, the consideration of the proposal can be postponed to a later date.

Introducing a new agenda item
The formal submission of an agenda item is done by letter, accompanied by an explanatory memorandum (called an "annex") and possibly a draft resolution. Member States address the letter to the SG. The SG and the other principal UN organs address the letter to the PGA.

Only items of "urgent and important character" can be proposed less than 30 days before the opening of the session.

New items proposed during the session are rare and their inclusion in the agenda is individually approved, usually based on a recommendation by the General Committee.

Non-GA meetings in the GA Hall

When not in use by the GA, the GA Hall is a UN conference room like any other and can be used for non-GA events. Such events only look and feel like GA meetings, but they are not.

Recommendations on the allocation of items
Each agenda item is allocated to a Main Committee of the GA (see Chapter 4) or to the Plenary. There are no set rules. The alloca-tions are based on well-established practice, and agenda items almost never "change committees." The allocation of new items is decided on a case by case basis.

Occasionally, an agenda item is allocated to more than one Main Committee, or to both a Main Committee and the Plenary. In such cases, the General Committee recommends in detail which aspect of an item should be considered by which body.

Recommendations on the organization of work of the GA
The General Committee suggests time frames for the work of the Main Committees, recommends voluntary time limits for speeches by Member States, and makes suggestions about other organizational matters based on the GA revitalization resolutions.

Opening and closing of the GA agenda

The adoption of the agenda opens all items for consideration. Items are usually closed by an oral decision whenever their consideration has been completed. Some items remain open until the last day of the session. Reopening a closed agenda item requires a separate GA decision.

3.2 GA Meetings

A GA session consists of a number of GA meetings. A standard GA meeting lasts three hours. Two plenary meetings can be scheduled on a given day. The morning meeting takes place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the afternoon meeting from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The only regular exceptions are the meetings of the general debate (see section 5.3).

Extending GA meetings incurs additional costs for interpretation and technical support. Extensions are very rare and granted on an ad hoc basis by the interpretation team at the request of the secretariat.

Formal and informal meetings

There are two types of GA meetings, formal and informal. Both the Plenary and the Main Committees, as well as working groups and ad hoc committees, hold formal and informal meetings.

Formal GA meetings consider only the items on the GA agenda. Debates, the adoption of resolutions/decisions and elections always take place in formal meetings. All formal GA meetings are governed by the GA Rules of Procedure. All formal GA meetings held during a session are numbered consecutively.

Informal GA meetings are held for a variety of purposes, such as briefings by the Secretary-General or the PGA, briefings by other UN entities, interactions with civil society, thematic debates, consultations and negotiations. Informal meetings are not governed by the GA Rules of Procedure, but are often guided by them. No decisions can be taken in informal meetings.

Open and closed meetings

In addition to being formal or informal, a GA meeting can be open (also called a "public meeting") or closed (also called a "private meeting"). All GA meetings are open unless decided otherwise. In recent years, formal meetings have always been open.

Open meetings are open to Member States and Observers, UN entities and civil society representatives, members of the general public, and the media. Attendance can be constrained by security measures and by seating availability. Open formal plenary meetings are webcast, and meeting records are available online (see Appendix V).

Closed meetings are attended by Member States, Observers, and invited participants. There are different levels of restriction: the most restricted closed meetings are only attended by Member States, the Holy See, the State of Palestine and the EU. A GA meeting is closed either by a provision in a GA resolution or by an oral decision. Some GA meetings, such as Secretary-General briefings and consultations on Security Council reform, are traditionally closed, and a formal decision to close them is not taken every time.

Many names for GA meetings

Although there are only two types of GA meetings, formal and informal, a variety of purely descriptive terms is in use, particularly for informal meetings. Examples are "interactive debate", "panel discussion", "thematic debate", "roundtable", "dialogue", and many more.

The *Journal of the UN* indicates which meetings are open and which are closed. However, a decision to close an open meeting can be taken during the meeting.

The cost of meetings

The UN budget includes provisions for two GA plenary meetings (formal or informal) on any given working day. This includes all conference services such as interpretation, documentation, meeting support and technical support. There are separate provisions for Main Committee meetings.

Any GA meeting held in parallel with another GA meeting will incur additional costs, due in particular to the additional interpreters and technical support staff needed. These are called "conference service implications." Parallel meetings occur almost exclusively during the high-level week (see sections 5.2 through 5.4).

The cost for one day of two additional GA meetings with full conference services is around 30,000 USD on a weekday, and close to 80,000 USD on a weekend (security costs not included). Sundays are more expensive than Saturdays. Costs can be cut by forgoing press releases (about 3,500 USD) and webcasting (close to 1000 USD). Due to the additional security requirements and the extended length of meetings during the general debate, the costs for a day of general debate taking place on a weekend can be more than 600,000 USD.

Who convenes GA meetings?

Formal GA meetings

By adopting the agenda, the GA mandates the PGA to convene all formal plenary meetings required for the consideration of the items on the agenda. The PGA can convene additional formal plenary meetings under an existing agenda item if a situation warrants it. For example, he/she could convene a meeting under one of the humanitarian relief agenda items when a natural disaster occurs. By a separate resolution/decision, the GA can mandate additional formal meetings such as high-level meetings (see section 5.4) and commemorative meetings (see section 5.7).

A Member State can request a formal plenary meeting to be convened without reference to an agenda item if its Head of State (but not its Head of Government) wishes to address the GA.

In the Main Committees, the Chair convenes formal meetings as necessary to accomplish the Committee's work.

The Secretary-General cannot convene formal GA meetings.

Informal GA meetings

In general, informal GA meetings are convened by the PGA or the Chairs of the Main Committees. The GA occasionally mandates an informal plenary meeting by a resolution/decision.

A Member State or the Secretary-General cannot convene an informal GA meeting, but can suggest to the PGA/Chair to do so. The decision is up to the PGA/Chair, who sometimes consults Member States on the issue.

How are GA meetings scheduled?

Both the Plenary and the Main Committees have a programme of work containing the schedule of formal meetings taking place during the main part of the session. Agenda items allocated to a Main Committee are scheduled both in the Plenary programme of work and in the Committee programme of work (see Chapter 4).

GA programme of work (Plenary)

The first draft of the GA programme of work including the schedule of plenary meetings of the GA during the main part of the session is issued in July as part of the Secretary-General's report on "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly." In the week of the general debate, the PGA circulates a note containing the final programme of work. The programme of work is constantly being reviewed and updated to reflect the progress of work in the Main Committees, the schedule of the PGA, and the meetings of other principal organs.

Whenever possible, formal GA meetings are scheduled on Mondays and Thursdays. Given the tight timetable for Secretary-General reports and GA documents, it is almost impossible to move a scheduled plenary meeting to an earlier date. Postponing meetings is easier. On all scheduling questions concerning the Plenary the PGA is the final arbiter.

Informal meetings are not included in the programme of work. They are scheduled as needed, based on the availability of conference services. They are announced in the *Journal of the UN* and, depending on the occasion, through a letter or a *note verbale* from the PGA or the Office of the PGA sent to Missions per email.

The *Journal of the UN*

The daily *Journal of the United Nations* contains the most up-to-date information on meetings scheduled at the UN in New York. It also includes procedural summaries of and links to the documents considered in formal meetings. Printed and online versions are available, the latter also on Twitter (@Journal_UN_ONU). For more information see Appendix I.

Requests to have an informal meeting listed in the *Journal* must be made to the editor at journal@un.org by no later than 6:30 pm the previous day.

Missed a meeting?

The Department of Public Information (DPI) posts press releases online for every open formal GA meeting as well as for thematic debates about two hours after the meeting (see *www.un.org/news*). The press releases are not formal records but they provide an excellent summary of the meetings. Consult Appendix V to see what meeting record is available for what type of meeting, where it is available, and how soon after the meeting it can be expected.

3.3 Conduct of Business

The proceedings of all formal GA meetings are governed by the rules set out in the section "Conduct of Business" in the GA Rules of Procedure. The PGA and the Chairs of the Main Committees with the support and advice of DGACM ensure compliance with these rules.

During a meeting Member States can request the application of a specific rule or they can raise a point of order to complain if they deem a rule is not being complied with.

The explanations in this and the following sections are offered as guidance. The GA Rules of Procedure are the only definitive source on the conduct of business.

Role of the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA)

OLA can be called upon by the PGA/Chair or by a Member State to provide clarification on any question pertaining to the GA Rules of Procedure. As the GA is the master of its own procedures, OLA only gives advice and does not make definitive pronouncements.

Addressing a point of order

If a Member State raises a point of order, the proceedings of the meeting are interrupted and the point of order is addressed immediately as follows:

- the PGA/Chair rules on the point of order and the meeting continues
- a Member State can challenge the ruling
- DGACM or OLA may be requested to provide clarification on the specific provision in the GA Rules of Procedure
- in rare cases, the challenge is put to a vote, carried by a simple majority; there is no debate on the point of order and there are no explanations of vote
- the meeting continues based on the outcome of that vote.

Points of order can also concern complaints about meeting services such as the temperature in the room, interpretation, documentation and the functioning of microphones. These do not require a ruling by the PGA/Chair.

Requesting the floor

Delegations press the button on their desk console to request the floor. The name of the Member State will then appear on an electronic list viewed by the President and the Secretariat. To cancel a request, the button is pressed again.

Rules concerning all formal GA meetings	
Quorum	The quorum is the number of Member States who need to be present for the PGA/Chair to open a meeting and for the GA to take decisions. The quorum for opening a GA meeting is one third of the Member States in the Plenary and one fourth of the Member States in the Main Committees. This rule is usually waived at the beginning of a session, based on the recommendation of the General Committee. The quorum for the adoption of resolutions/decisions and elections (see section 3.6) is a simple majority of Member States.
Point of order	Points of order can be raised by Member States at any point in the meeting.
Suspension of a meeting	A meeting can be suspended for a limited amount of time upon the request of a Member State or by the PGA. A suspended meeting is usually resumed on the same day.
Adjournment of a meeting	A meeting can be adjourned upon the request of a Member State or by the PGA. An adjournment calls a meeting to a close. Any continued consideration of an item will take place at another meeting usually on another day.
Adjournment of debate	Adjournment of debate ends parts or all of the consideration of the agenda item concerned. This can mean ending the debate, blocking action on a specific draft resolution/decision or ending the consideration of the item as a whole (i.e., closing the item for the remainder of the session). Member States requesting adjournment of debate specify which part of the consideration is to be ended. The motion to adjourn debate is put to an immediate vote, carried by a simple majority, after a maximum of two delegations have spoken in favor and two against.
No-action motion	The term "no-action motion" is used when a motion for adjournment of debate is made to block action on a specific draft resolution or decision.

(Rules 83–91 of the GA Rules of Procedure apply).

3.4 Debating GA Agenda Items

The consideration of an agenda item starts with a debate in a formal meeting. Only one debate is scheduled for each agenda item, either in the Plenary or in a Main Committee, with the exception of the few items allocated to more than one Main Committee or to a Main Committee and the Plenary. Once closed, a debate is usually only reopened if a new report is submitted or if a situation has changed. Related items can be the object of a joint debate. The length of debates varies from less than one full meeting to several days.

No delegation makes more than one statement in the same debate, with the exception of explanations of vote and the right of reply.

The PGA is free to speak in the Plenary whenever he/she chooses, but usually only makes statements on items of particular importance to him/her. The PGA addresses the Main Committees on the invitation of their Chairs.

The general debate at the beginning of the GA session is usually the first debate of the session and — with the exception of the high-level meetings — the only one in which Heads of State and Government regularly participate (see section 5.3 and section 5.4).

"Takes note of"

When the GA "takes note of" a report in a resolution, it acknowledges that it has received it. "Takes note" is a neutral term and does not indicate approval or disapproval of the report's content or recommendations.

The Genesis of an SG report

A GA session generates an average of 250 requests for SG reports, which are produced on a tight schedule. The basic steps are as follows:

- in January DGACM designates the author departments in charge of producing drafts
- depending on scope and mandate, the author department consults with Member States, other UN entities and within the UN Secretariat
- the draft is cleared by the Office of the SG
- ten weeks before the GA considers the related agenda item, the draft is submitted to DGACM. This gives DGACM four weeks to translate, edit and circulate the report. The "six-week-rule" requests that all official documents be available in the six official languages at least six weeks before a meeting.

This timeline makes it almost impossible to move a GA meeting to a date earlier than scheduled. Information on the status of the preparation of reports can be found in an addendum to the GA draft programme of work for the upcoming session, published in July.

Documents and reports

The debate on an agenda item is informed by all documents and reports requested and submitted under that agenda item. For any given agenda item, several reports may be submitted.

When are reports introduced?

The introduction of a report is an oral presentation of the content by its author. In the Plenary, reports are not introduced, with the exception of the Secretary-General's report on the "work of the Organization" at the beginning of the general debate and the reports by the principal organs (Security Council, ECOSOC, and the International Court of Justice), which are introduced by their respective Presidents.

The heads of the Human Rights Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency present reports based on a specific resolu-tion or agreement. The heads of the International Criminal Court, International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia and International Residual Mechanisms for Criminal Tribunals (residual issues of the former International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) do not technically introduce reports, but address the Plenary as the first speaker in the debate.

In the Main Committees, the author departments may be invited to introduce the Secretary-General's report in a formal meeting. Also, subsidiary bodies and experts who have a formal invitation or mandate to report to the GA introduce their reports. The introduction of a report may be followed by "question time" before the debate of the item begins.

Find GA documents

All documents listed under an agenda item are available online in the Official Document System (ODS, see Appendix III). Hard copies are only made available for formal plenary meetings taking place in the GA Hall. Main Committee documents are not available as hard copies.

Statements and speeches

The speakers list

The speakers list for all debates opens on the day the agenda is adopted and remains open until the PGA or the Chair of a Main Committee recognizes the last speaker for the debate on a given item.

Before the debate takes place, Member States and Observers register for the speakers list by contacting the secretaries of the Plenary or of a Main Committee by phone, through e-Speakers, or via letter or email. The Delegate's Handbook includes all contact details (see Appendix I). During the debate the Member States approach a GA Affairs officer, sitting next to the podium, to add their names to the list.

The speaking order in formal meetings is as follows: First, visiting Heads of State and Government or government Ministers speak, followed by the chairs of groups of Member States, speaking on behalf of the whole group (e.g., G-77, NAM), and the EU. Individual Member States follow on a first-come, first-served basis. Delegations can agree to switch speaking slots as long as they let the GA Affairs Officer know in advance. With the excep-tion of the EU, Observers speak after the Member States. The general debate follows a different order (see section 4.3).

Check against delivery

Paper copies of statements often bear the disclaimer "check against delivery" to allow for last minute adjustments and changes. The official verbatim record of the meeting reflects the speech as delivered (see Appendix V).

Get that picture

At every formal plenary debate in the GA Hall, UN Photo takes a picture and video of each speaker. Visuals are available at the UN Photo Library online or at their office upon presentation of a valid ID.

Length of speeches

There is a 15-minute time limit for speeches in the Plenary and in the Main Committees. For the general debate the time limit (traditionally also 15 minutes) is agreed upon at the beginning of each session. The PGA can call a speaker to order if he/she exceeds the agreed time limit.

Some of the Main Committees agree on shorter time limits, with an implicit tolerance for longer group statements. Due to time constraints the speaking time during high-level meetings is often limited to five minutes. Experience shows that speakers in such meetings tend to take closer to nine minutes on average.

Distribution of speeches

Delegations are urged to provide at least 6 paper copies of the text of a statement to interpreters and record keepers before the speaker takes the floor, and a minimum of 30 paper copies to a conference officer before the meeting.

Statements can be circulated electronically through the PaperSmart Portal. PaperSmart services are available for all plenary meetings and some informal GA meetings. To be circulated electronically in time, statements have to be sent to the Secretariat at least one hour prior to delivery.

Some Member States provide paper copies of the text for distribution in the room while the statement is made. In the Plenary 300 copies must be provided to conference officers, in Main Committees 250. Paper copies of statements are generally distributed only in formal meetings. In informal meetings distribution depends on the availability of conference services.

Speeches are not automatically uploaded on the GA website. This is done only for the general debate. All speeches in formal Plenary meetings are webcast and verbatim records are provided (see Appendix V).

Language and interpretation of speeches

Simultaneous interpretation of speeches is available to and from all six official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish). If a speaker wishes to deliver his/her statement in any other language, the delegation must provide either its own interpreter or a written translation of the text in one of the six official languages. In the latter case, the simultaneous interpretation into the other five languages will be based on that written text.

English and French are the two working languages of the UN Secretariat. In most cases, English or French will be the relay language between that of the speaker and of the listener (e.g., a speech delivered in Arabic may first be interpreted into French and only then into Chinese). Making a speech available to interpreters in advance greatly helps them do their work and ensures accurate interpretation.

Rules Concerning GA Debates	
Speeches	No Member State may address the GA without the permission of the PGA/Chair. The PGA/Chair may call a speaker to order.
Right of reply	A Member State can request to reply to a statement of another Member State. The request is made to the GA Affairs officer handling the speakers list, who will notify the PGA/Chair. The right of reply can also be requested in response to a statement made under the right of reply or an explanation of vote. A Member State cannot request the right of reply more than twice on the same agenda item on a given day. The first intervention is limited to 10 minutes, the second to 5 minutes. A statement under the right of reply is given from the floor at the end of the debate or at the end of the day.
Closure of the list of speakers	During a debate, the PGA/Chair can declare the list of speakers closed, if no Member State objects. After the closure of the list of speakers, the floor is given only to the remaining speakers and to Member States requesting the right of reply.
Closure of debate	A Member State may request closure of debate at any time, regardless of whether or not everyone on the list of speakers has spoken. The request is put to an immediate vote, carried by a simple majority, after a maximum of two delegations opposing the closure have spoken. If the motion passes, the PGA declares the debate closed. Otherwise, the PGA declares the debate closed after the last speaker has been given the floor. Usually, it is the main sponsor of a draft resolution/decision who requests the closure of debate to ensure that the adoption of the resolution/decision is not delayed.

(Rules 83–91 of the GA Rules of Procedure apply).

3.5 GA Resolutions and Decisions

The debate of an agenda item is usually followed by the adoption of resolutions/decisions. GA resolutions reflect the degree of intergovernmental agreement, the evolution of political ideas and the state of global cooperation on a given topic.

This section deals with the process leading to the adoption of a resolution or decision. It involves drafting a text, tabling a draft resolution and deciding ("taking action") on it. Various forms of consultations and negotiations take place during the process in an attempt to reach consensus or at least get as close as possible to it.

Consensus vs unanimity

In the GA, a decision made by consensus does not require a vote. A unanimous decision is a decision on which all Member States present vote the same way.

GA resolutions and GA decisions

GA resolutions and GA decisions have the same legal status. GA resolutions reflect the views of the Member States, provide policy recommendations, assign mandates to the UN Secretariat and the subsidiary bodies of the GA and decide on all questions regarding the UN budget.

With the exception of decisions regarding payments to the regular and peacekeeping budgets of the UN, GA resolutions/decisions are not binding for Member States. The implementation of the policy recommendations contained in resolutions/decisions is the responsibility of each Member State.

Most resolutions are recurrent, i.e., they are adopted every year or in a multi-year rhythm under the same agenda item.

GA decisions are divided into "elections" and "other decisions." Most "other decisions" pertain to procedural questions and are generally very short.

On simple procedural matters "oral decisions" can be taken. An oral decision is normally proposed by the PGA or the Chair of a Main Committee and is acted on immediately afterwards. Adoption is usually by consensus.

Drafting a resolution text

Most draft resolutions are initially written by a Member State. Upon request, the UN Secretariat may assist Member States in the drafting process. The Member State initiating and drafting a resolution text is called the "sponsor" of the resolution, or the "main sponsor" if there are co-sponsors. As recurrent resolutions contain only few changes from year to year, sponsors are strongly encouraged to to use track changes to highlight the parts of the texts that are different from previous resolutions.

Sometimes, reports of the Secretary-General or of a subsidiary body contain recommendations for draft resolutions.

Co-sponsoring

Upon invitation of the main sponsor, Member States can formally express their support for a draft resolution by "co-sponsoring" it. Co-sponsoring is done electronically, through the e-deleGATE portal (see Appendix I).

The "L-document" (see below) lists only the delegations who co-sponsor the draft before it is submitted to the Sectetariat for processing. An addendum to the "L-document" lists Member States who co-sponsor between the text's submission and adoption. Their names are read out by a GA Affairs Officer before the adoption of the resolution. The list is closed immediately after the resolution is adopted.

All co-sponsors will be included in the verbatim record of the meeting of the adoption. However, the list of co-sponsors is not part of the final published version of the resolution.

There are no co-sponsors of GA decisions and of draft resolutions/decisions tabled by the PGA.

Tabling the draft resolution (L-document)

"Tabling" is a technical term for formally submitting a draft resolution text to the GA. The GA Rules of Procedure refer to draft resolutions as "proposals."

Only Member States or the PGA can table draft resolutions. When a group of Member States tables a resolution, it is usually done by the group's chair on behalf of the group.

A draft resolution must be tabled under a specific agenda item. This is possible from the moment the GA agenda is adopted. No resolution can be tabled after the agenda item is closed, unless the GA formally decides to reopen it (see section 3.1). It is recom-mended that all draft resolutions be tabled before the debate on the respective item takes place.

To be tabled, the draft text needs to be submitted in person to a GA Affairs Officer in the GA Hall during any formal GA meeting or at the DGACM offices. The submission must include one electronic version and one hard copy of the draft text, signed and dated on every page. Before submission, main sponsors must initiate the text for e-Sponsorship in the e-deleGATE portal if they want co-sponsors to appear on the L-document.

The text also must indicate the agenda item under which the draft resolution is tabled. The draft text is considered formally submitted when the submission certificate has been signed by the sponsor and DGACM.

Once tabled, the text is formatted by the secretariat into an official GA document, called an "L-document", which is translated into all six official languages and circulated to all Member States. The sec-retariat requires a minimum of two full business days to process

L-document

The "L" in L-documents stands for "limited distribution." In the era before email, hard-copies of L-documents were only distributed to the Permanent Missions and not sent to Member States' capitals.

a draft resolution. L-documents of the Plenary are listed on the GA website.

Consideration and action on a draft resolution

Once issued as an L-document, a draft resolution/decision can be considered by the GA. This means that the L-document is introduced and a decision on its adoption is taken. The latter is called "taking action."

DGACM will consult with the sponsors to decide on the date of the formal plenary meeting that will consider the L-document. If there is more than one resolution introduced under the same agenda item, the resolutions are scheduled for action in the order they were tabled. Until action is taken, the main sponsor can withdraw the draft resolution/decision anytime, as long as no amendments have been proposed by another Member State. A withdrawn draft resolution can be reintroduced by another Member State.

The "24-hour rule" requires that a draft resolution be circulated to all Member States on the calendar day preceding the meeting scheduled for its consideration for adoption. This rule can be waived by an oral decision.

Formal introduction of the L-document

At the formal meeting considering the L-document, the sponsor of the draft resolution/decision can introduce the draft text, summarizing its content and purpose and pointing out possible spelling errors and other mistakes. The introduction can be followed by action on the draft resolution/decision. Taking action can also be deferred, if further consultations and negotiations are warranted. Usually there is no action on resolutions/decisions before the debate on the agenda item has been concluded.

In the Plenary, Member States do not make statements in response to the introduction of the L-document, with the exception of exercising the right of reply or if the debate on the item continues. Upon action on the draft resolution, explanations of vote can be made.

Taking Action

A draft resolution/decision can be adopted by consensus or by a vote. Decisions in the GA are taken by simple majority or by a two-thirds majority. The GA Rules of Procedure list " important questions" requiring a two-thirds majority:

- maintenance of international peace and security
- the admission of new members
- the suspension and expulsion of members
- all budgetary questions.

The GA decides by a simple majority to include additional issues among the "important questions."

A majority is calculated based on the number of "members present and voting" (i.e., casting an affirmative or negative vote).

Resolution numbers

When a draft resolution or decision is tabled, it is given an L-document number. Once adopted, the final version, which may have been amended, is given a different document number and may not be available for several weeks. Until then the L-document number remains the relevant reference number.

Voting on resolutions

Voting on resolutions/decisions is done electronically. The results are displayed on wall panels.

In conference rooms without electronic facilities, voting takes place by a show of hands or by "roll-call": the name of each Member State is read out and delegations answer "yes," "no" or "abstention."

Roll-call and voting by show of hands are very rare.

Rules Concerning the Adoption of GA Resolutions/Decisions	
Decision on competence	A Member State can request a decision on whether the GA has the competence to adopt a draft resolution/ decision on a given issue. The decision is carried by simple majority.
Voting on resolutions	It is assumed that all tabled draft resolutions/decisions will be adopted without a vote. A vote must be requested. Usually the PGA/Chair is informed of a vote beforehand.
Voting on amendments	Amendments to a tabled draft resolution/decision are either formally submitted and issued as L-documents by the day before the scheduled action, or proposed orally from the floor, if no Member State objects. If there are several amendments proposed, the PGA/Chair decides on the sequence of consideration. If amendments are adopted, the draft resolution will be considered as "draft resolution L.XX as amended."
Voting on paragraphs: "paragraph vote " "division of proposal" "divided vote" "separate vote"	A Member State can request a separate vote on parts of a draft resolution before the adoption of the whole text. This can pertain to parts of a paragraph, an entire paragraph or several paragraphs. If challenged, the request for a paragraph vote will be put to an immediate vote, carried by a simple majority, after a maximum of two delegations have spoken in favor of and two against the request. A paragraph vote will be immediately followed by the consideration of the whole draft resolution/decision. Adoption without a vote remains the assumption. If all operative paragraphs are rejected, the draft resolution/decision is considered rejected as a whole. These cases are rare.
Explanation of vote	Before and after action is taken on a draft resolution/decision, Member States can explain their vote or — in the case of an adoption by consensus — their position. The main sponsor and the co-sponsors of a draft resolution cannot make explanations of vote. An explanation of vote concerning a paragraph vote is made only after action is taken on the whole resolution/decision. Member States are asked to refrain from making explanations of vote on the same draft resolution/decision in both the Main Committee and the Plenary unless their vote has changed.
Reconsideration of an adopted resolution/decision	A Member State may request the reconsideration of a resolution or decision during the same GA session. The request will be put to an immediate vote, carried by a two-thirds majority, after a maximum of two Member States have spoken against the request.

(Rules 83–91 of the GA Rules of Procedure apply).

Abstentions are not counted as "voting." For majority require-ments in elections see section 3.6.

In the case of a tie in the Plenary, the vote is repeated once. The draft resolution/decision is rejected if the second vote also results in a tie. In the case of a tie in a Main Committee, the draft resolu-tion/decision is rejected without a second vote.

Negotiation and consultation practices

There is a myriad of practices for consulting Member States on a draft resolution or decision before its formal adoption. Three basic models can be distinguished.

Negotiations before tabling

The main sponsor consults with Member States and holds informal negotiations on the draft before tabling the "best version pos-sible." This allows for action to be taken immediately after the introduction of the L-document. This is the normal practice in the Plenary.

Negotiations after tabling

In the Main Committees, draft resolutions or decisions are usually tabled without prior consultations. After the introduction of the L-document, informal negotiations take place, led by either the main sponsor or by a facilitator appointed by the Chair of a Main Committee (for details see Chapter 4).

PGA-led consultations

GA resolutions can mandate the PGA to lead consultations on a specific issue or on resolutions/decisions such as an outcome document or the modalities for a high-level GA event. In such cases, the PGA appoints one or more Permanent Representatives as facilitators.

If consensus is reached, the PGA can table the resolution/decision in his/her name. If no consensus is reached, a procedural decision is adopted, sometimes requesting further consultations at a future session of the GA.

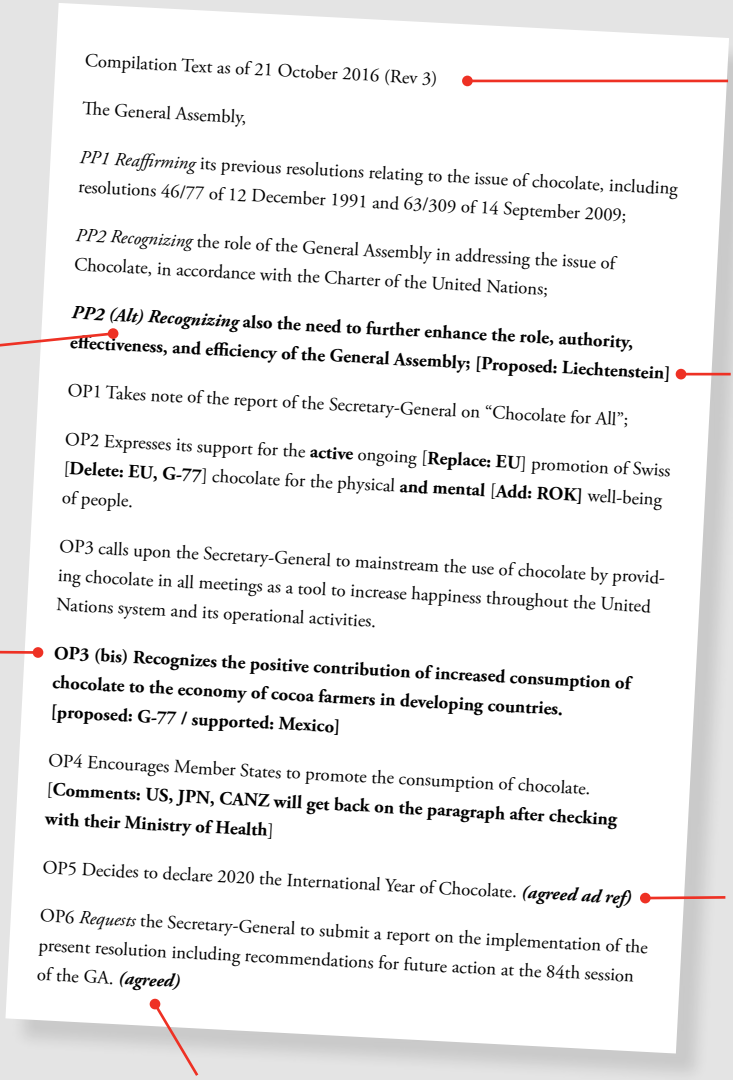
What is a PBI?

PBI is the acronym for "pro-gramme budget implications." A PBI is a statement prepared by the UN Secretariat detailing the administrative, financial and programmatic implications of the adoption of a draft resolution. The colloquial expression "this draft resolution has a PBI" means "the implementation of this resolution would involve expenditures not yet included in the programme budget." Draft resolutions sometimes use the phrase "within available resources" in order to avoid PBIs. However, this does not oblige the Secretariat to refrain from issuing a statement on PBIs, as there are limits to what can be absorbed in the existing budget of the UN. All draft resolutions with PBIs must be considered by the Fifth Committee before they can be adopted by the Plenary.

Compilation texts

During consultations, the facilitator or sponsor of a draft resolution can circulate "compilation texts" that reflect the evolution of the negotiations and the different positions of Member States in detail. After each round of negotiations, revisions of the text are compiled.

This illustration shows the standard elements for compilation texts. Please note that the example given here is completely fictional.



Compilation Text as of 21 October 2016 (Rev 3)

The General Assembly,

PP1 Reaffirming its previous resolutions relating to the issue of chocolate, including resolutions 46/77 of 12 December 1991 and 63/309 of 14 September 2009;

PP2 Recognizing the role of the General Assembly in addressing the issue of Chocolate, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

***PP2 (Alt) Recognizing* also the need to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness, and efficiency of the General Assembly; [Proposed: Liechtenstein]**

OP1 Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on "Chocolate for All";

OP2 Expresses its support for the **active** ongoing [**Replace: EU**] promotion of Swiss [**Delete: EU, G-77**] chocolate for the physical **and mental** [**Add: ROK**] well-being of people.

OP3 calls upon the Secretary-General to mainstream the use of chocolate by providing chocolate in all meetings as a tool to increase happiness throughout the United Nations system and its operational activities.

OP3 (bis) Recognizes the positive contribution of increased consumption of chocolate to the economy of cocoa farmers in developing countries. [proposed: G-77 / supported: Mexico]

OP4 Encourages Member States to promote the consumption of chocolate. [**Comments: US, JPN, CANZ will get back on the paragraph after checking with their Ministry of Health**]

OP5 Decides to declare 2020 the International Year of Chocolate. ***(agreed ad ref)***

OP6 *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution including recommendations for future action at the 84th session of the GA. ***(agreed)***

(Alt)
Alternative text to replace the original paragraph

(bis)
Additional paragraphs (bis, ter, quat, quin, etc.)

Third revision of the compilation text

[Square brackets]
Attribute proposals to Member States

"agreed ad referendum"
Paragraphs that have been agreed on in principle but are awaiting a final "ok" from delegations

(agreed)
Paragraphs on which consensus has been reached

Making a GA resolution

All GA resolutions relate to a GA agenda item, have a title, and contain a number of preambular paragraphs (informally called "PPs"), followed by a number of operative paragraphs (informally called "OPs"). The two illustrations on pages 57 and 60 show how a text evolves during negotiations, and how it looks as a GA resolution after adoption in the Plenary..

"Agreed language"

"Agreed language" refers to paragraphs, sentences, or expressions that are part of previously adopted resolutions/decisions. "Agreed language" is often the fallback position if no agreement on new text can be reached. "Agreed language" from subsidiary bodies of the GA with smaller memberships does not have the same standing as language from GA resolutions/decisions. "Agreed language" from a resolution that has been adopted by consensus carries more weight than language from a resolution that has been adopted by vote.

"Silence procedure"

At the end of negotiations on a resolution, when a tentative agreement has been reached, delegations may need to get final approval from their governments. The draft resolution is declared to be"in silence procedure" for a specified time. If no Member State puts forward an objection by the given deadline, the draft text is considered "agreed."

Adopted GA resolutions

Once adopted, the resolution will be issued as a GA document in all six languages and published on the Official Documents System (ODS — see Appendix V). Decisions are also available on the e-deleGATE platform soon after they are adopted. The definitive reference for all resolutions and decisions adopted during a session is called "Official Records of the General Assembly — session xx", which is always assigned the document number A/xx/49. It is published after the end of the period covered and contains three volumes:

- Volume 1: all resolutions adopted in the main part of the session.
- Volume 2: all decisions adopted in the main part of the session.
- Volume 3: all resolutions and decisions adopted during the resumed part of the session.

"Formal informals" and "informal informals"

Negotiations and consultations on draft resolutions/ decisions take place in informal meetings.

"Formal informals" are informal GA meetings convened by a facilitator appointed by the PGA or a Chair. These meetings may have interpretation, depending on availability.

"Informal informals" are convened by the main sponsor or by a facilitator. Technically, "informal informals" are not GA meetings. There are no meeting records and no interpretation.

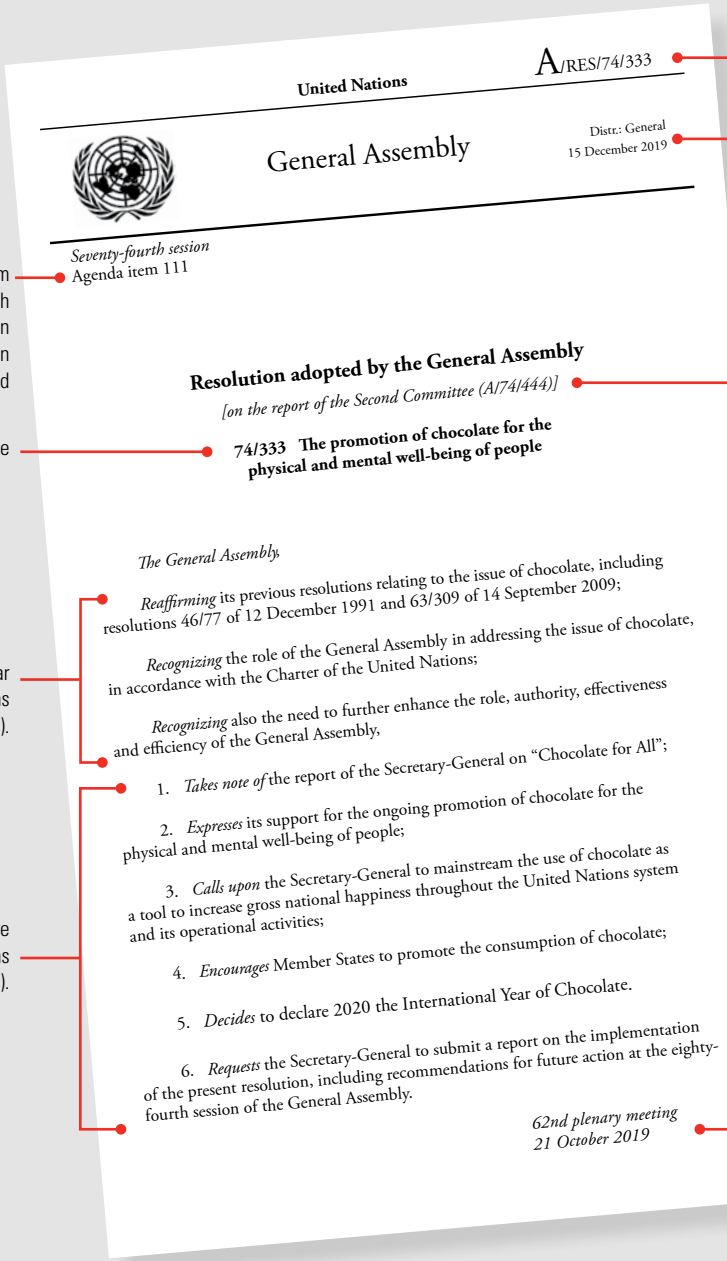
Mistakes in the final

Any technical mistake found in the final version of an adopted resolution must be brought to the attention of the General Assembly Affairs Branch of DGACM. Depending on the gravity of the mistake, the resolution may be "re-issued for technical reasons."

GA Resolution

All GA resolutions relate to a GA agenda item, have a title and contain a number of preambular paragraphs (PPs) followed by a number of operative paragraphs (OPs). PPs list related resolutions and make reference to the larger context. The present or past participle of a verb is generally used. PPs are not numbered. OPs deal mainly with the substance. They are numbered. OPs can "request" action by the SG or subsidiary bodies and "invite", "urge" or "encourage" action by Member States.

This illustration shows the different elements of a GA resolution. Please note that the example given here is completely fictional.



United Nations

A/RES/74/333

Document symbol

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 December 2019

Date of the submission for issuance of the final version of the resolution

Seventy-fourth session
Agenda item 111

Agenda item under which the resolution has been tabled

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/74/444)]

Reference, if the item has been allocated to a Main Committee

Number and title

74/333 The promotion of chocolate for the physical and mental well-being of people

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its previous resolutions relating to the issue of chocolate, including resolutions 46/77 of 12 December 1991 and 63/309 of 14 September 2009;

Recognizing the role of the General Assembly in addressing the issue of chocolate, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

Recognizing also the need to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly,

Preambular paragraphs (PPs).

1. *Takes note of* the report of the Secretary-General on "Chocolate for All";

2. *Expresses* its support for the ongoing promotion of chocolate for the physical and mental well-being of people;

3. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to mainstream the use of chocolate as a tool to increase gross national happiness throughout the United Nations system and its operational activities;

4. *Encourages* Member States to promote the consumption of chocolate;

5. *Decides* to declare 2020 the International Year of Chocolate.

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including recommendations for future action at the eighty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Operative paragraphs (OPs).

62nd plenary meeting
21 October 2019

Number and date of the formal plenary meeting when the resolution was adopted

3.6 Elections and Appointments

The General Assembly holds approximately a dozen elections of Member States or individuals to various UN bodies each year. The GA elects the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the members of ECOSOC and, jointly with the Security Council, the members of the International Court of Justice. The GA also elects the members of its own subsidiary bodies. It appoints, on the recommendation of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and elects the PGA and the Vice-Presidents (see section 1.3).

The General Assembly Affairs Branch (GAAB) in DGACM supports all elections and maintains a website called "Candiweb", about to be replaced by a new system called "Unite", which consolidates information on candidatures and elections. For all content relat-ing to candidacies, Candiweb depends on input from the regional groups and Member States.

Electoral parameters

Each of the current 193 Member States has one vote. Member States that are in arrears with their financial contributions can be suspended from voting (see section 2.1). All elections take place in formal plenary meetings. Some elections to subsidiary bodies first take place in the Fifth Committee and are subsequently confirmed by the Plenary.

Regional Groups and geographical representation

The distribution of seats among Member States is based on the principle of equitable geographical representation. In order to facilitate balanced distribution, Member States are informally divided into five regional groups: Group of African States, Group of Asia-Pacific States, Group of Eastern European States, Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), and Western European and Other States Group (Group of Western European and Other States) (see Appendix X).

For most bodies a specific number of seats is allocated to each regional group. The chair of each regional group maintains "election charts" containing all candidacies from that group.

While elections are intensely contested among Member States, regional groups often agree to present the same number of candidates as there are seats allocated to them. This is called a "clean slate." A regional group may choose to follow an internal rotation system for certain seats.

Majority

With the exception of the cases where absolute majorities are required, candidates are elected by the required majority of members "present and voting" (i.e., casting an affirmative or negative vote).

Abstentions and invalid ballots are not counted as "voting." A ballot is invalid if it contains more names of candidates than the number

Gender

While not mandated, an equal gender distribution of mandates and posts is a prominent concern in the United Nations. In the 71st session, the GA "invited" Member States to submit female candidates for PGA and expressed a need for gender balance in the Office of the PGA.

Women are underrepre-sented. No woman has ever been Secretary-General. As of September 2017, there were 147 male and 40 female Permanent Representatives to the UN in New York (6 posts vacant).

The tie-breaker provision

Under specific circumstances, the PGA draws lots to decide between two candidates. The so-called tie-breaker provision applies if there is only one seat to be filled by a simple majority and if two rounds of balloting have been inconclusive.

Tied votes in elections for non-permanent Security Council seats have occasionally been resolved by an informal agreement between two Member States to shorten the mandate to one year each.

of seats assigned to the regional group in question, or if all names on the ballot belong to the wrong geographic group.

There are different majority requirements for GA elections:

- a simple majority is required for the election of the PGA, the Vice-Presidents, all subsidiary bodies and the appointment of the Secretary-General
- a two-thirds majority is required for elections to the Security Council and ECOSOC
- an absolute majority (majority of all Member States, i.e., currently 97) is required for elections to the International Court of Justice and to the Human Rights Council.

Voting by ballot
Unlike votes on the adoption of GA resolutions, elections are held by secret paper ballot.

Ballot papers are distributed to delegations present in the room. If elections are based on a formal nomination process, the ballot papers contain the names of the nominees. Otherwise, ballot papers have blanks for all seats allocated to each regional group.

Once the ballots have been collected, they are counted by tellers. Tellers are delegates called upon and supported by the Secretariat. The PGA suspends the meeting during the counting and resumes it to announce the results.

Voting by acclamation (clean slates)
If a clean slate is presented for an election, the secret ballot can be dispensed of and the vote takes place by acclamation. This has become standard practice for the election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the GA and for elections to most subsidiary organs.

Elections to principal organs

For the election of the President and the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly see section 1.3 and 1.4.

Appointment of the Secretary-General
The Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Security Council. Thus, the election of the Secretary-General is subject to the veto of any of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5).
Since 1992, it has become customary for the Security Council to base its recommendation on informal secret test-ballots ("straw polls").
In 2015, the General Assembly decided to conduct informal dialogues or meetings (commonly known as "hearings") with candidates for the position of Secretary-General, without prejudice to any candidate who does not participate. In 2017, the GA decided to do the same with candidates for PGA.

No candidate for Secretary-General has ever been from one of the permanent members of the Security Council.

Hearings

The 2016 selection and appointment of a new Secretary-General (formally speaking, the SG is not "elected") took place in greater public circumstances than known heretofore. For the first time, the General Assembly engaged in the process before the Security Council had made its recommendation. Candidates were invited by the PGA to partipate in an interactive dialogue and all 13 decided to do so. Two separate rounds of "hearings" were conducted. The format was identical: Each candidate gave an opening statement outlining the vision, intentions and focus of his or her term in office, followed by a question-and-answer period. The meetings were open to Member States and civil society, which also participated from outside of UN Headquarters via video link. The discussion was moderated by the PGA. The meetings were webcast by UN TV.

The Charter and the GA Rules of Procedure neither specify the duration of a term nor limit the number of terms a Secretary-General may serve. To date, no Secretary-General has held office for more than two five-year terms.

Election of non-permanent members to the Security Council

The GA elects the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council. Five members are elected each year for a term of two years, and no immediate reelection is possible. The regional distribution of non-permanent seats is as follows:

- 5 seats for the African and Asia-Pacific States
- 1 seat for the Group of Eastern European States
- 2 seats for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC)
- 2 seats for the Western European and Other States Group

Election to the Security Council requires a two-thirds majority. Elections are held separately for each regional group. If the first round of balloting is inconclusive, the second round is limited to candidates who received the highest number of votes. The number of candidates going forward is restricted to twice the number of open seats. If necessary, this procedure is repeated two more times.

If a candidate is not elected after three such restricted rounds of balloting, the election reopens to other States from the same regional group for a maximum of three rounds of unrestricted balloting. This pattern is repeated until all seats are filled. The longest-ever election to the Security Council took place in 1979, when over the course of eleven weeks, 155 rounds of balloting remained inconclusive until both candidates withdrew.

Election of ECOSOC members

The GA elects the 54 Member States of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Eighteen members are elected each year for three-year terms. Members can immediately be reelected.

The regional distribution of the 54 seats is as follows:

- 14 seats for the Group of African States
- 11 seats for the Group of Asia-Pacific States
- 6 seats for the Group of Eastern European States
- 10 seats for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States
- 13 seats for the Western European and Other States Group.

For three decades all permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) have continuously been members of ECOSOC. Germany and Japan have a similar membership record.

Elections are held separately for each regional group. The election to ECOSOC requires a two-thirds majority. If the first round of balloting is inconclusive, the same procedure as described for Security Council elections applies.

The Arab Swing Seat

Since 1968, there has been an informal agreement that one of the five African-Asian seats is reserved for an Arab state, alternating between the Asian and African states. This seat is also called the "Arab swing seat."

Elections to the International Court of Justice
The International Court of Justice consists of 15 judges from different Member States who serve nine-year terms and can be reelected. Every three years, five judges are elected.

Although not binding, in practice the regional distribution of the 15 seats is as follows:

- 3 seats for the Group of African States
- 3 seats for the Group of Asia-Pacific States
- 2 seats for the Group of Eastern European States
- 2 seats for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States
- 5 seats for the Western European and Other States Group.

Usually, the permanent members of the Security Council are represented on the Court.

The nomination of candidates is not done by governments directly but either through the respective national groups in the "Permanent Court of Arbitration" in The Hague or by similar mechanisms. Elections are held simultaneously in the GA and the Security Council, in both cases by absolute majority.

Elections to subsidiary bodies

The GA elects the members of its subsidiary bodies such as executive boards, committees, commissions, councils, and others by simple majority, unless it is otherwise specified in the resolution establishing the subsidiary body. Two examples of subsidiary bodies are the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Election of Human Rights Council members
There are 47 seats on the Human Rights Council. Members are elected for three years and can serve two consecutive terms, after which immediate reelection is not possible. Members are elected by an absolute majority and election by acclamation is explicitly excluded. The number of members elected each year varies from 14 to 18.

The regional distribution of the 47 seats is as follows:

- 13 seats for the Group of African States
- 13 seats for the Group of Asia-Pacific States
- 6 seats for the Group of Eastern European States
- 8 seats for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States
- 7 seats for the Western European and Other States Group.

Candidates submit voluntary pledges and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights in advance of the elections. A Council member that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights may have its rights of membership suspended by a GA decision of two-thirds of all Member States.

Election of Peacebuilding Commission Members

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is a subsidiary organ of both the GA and the Security Council. The Organizational Committee of the PBC consists of 31 members, who serve renewable terms of two years. The composition of the Organizational Committee is as follows:

- 7 members selected by the Security Council, including the 5 permanent members
- 7 members elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- 5 of the top 10 contributors to UN budgets and to the UN Funds, Programmes, and Agencies
- 5 of the top 10 providers of military personnel and civilian police to UN missions
- 7 members elected by the GA.

Main Committees

The General Assembly allocates its work to six Main Committees and a large number of subsidiary bodies, some of which carry the name "committee" (see section 1.5). All Member States are mem-bers of all Main Committees.

Main Comittees elect their Bureaux (1 Chair, 3 Vice-Chairs, 1 Rapporteur). Geographical representation is taken into account, often according to informal patterns that follow the patterns of rotation decided on or suggested by the GA. The current rotation decision of the GA covers the period up to the 73rd session. GA guidelines propose patterns for the later years and suggest that the Rapporteur of a Main Committee come from the Member State that held the chair in the previous session.

4.1 The Work of the Main Committees

While the GA Rules of Procedure fully apply, each Committee has developed its own particular working methods, traditions and practices. The Main Committees consider only the items that have been allocated to them (see section 3.1). On each of these items the Main Committees adopt draft resolutions and decisions and submit a report to the Plenary. These reports include when the Main Committee debated the item, what official documents were considered, who was invited to speak besides Member States, and all resolutions or decisions that the Main Committee recom-mends to the Plenary. The processing of a Main Committee's reports for the Plenary usually requires a few weeks.
Based on the Committee report, the Plenary proceeds without debate to the adoption of the recommended resolutions and decisions. If adopted by consensus in the Committee, the Plenary decides by consensus as well; likewise, if adopted by a vote in the Committee, the Plenary votes on the resolution or decision in question (see section 3.5). All Main Committee resolutions/deci-sions have to be confirmed in the Plenary.

In the Main Committee a simple majority decides all votes. In the Plenary a two-thirds majority carries votes on "important questions" and all other questions are decided by a simple majority (see section 3.5).

All formal meetings of the Main Committees are webcast.

Negotiating practices

Main Committee negotiations are conducted after an L-document is introduced (see section 3.5). If consensus is reached, the negotiated text will replace the original draft. This is done in two ways. Either the sponsor withdraws the original L-document, and a new L-document is issued after a Bureau member has tabled the negotiated text. Or, the sponsor submits the negotiated text as a revision of the original L-document (issued as L.xx/Rev.1). In both cases, the resolution/ decision is normally adopted by consensus.

If the negotiations do not result in consensus, the sponsor can either request action on the original L-document or on the

1, 4, 2, 3, 5, 6

In official UN documents the Fourth Committee is some-times listed after the First Committee. This has a histori-cal reason. An unnumbered "Special Political Committee" used to be listed right after the First Committee. In 1993 the GA decided to merge the "Special Political Committee" and the Fourth Committee, which originally dealt with Trusteeship and Decolonization matters only. The "Special Political and Decolonization Committee" retains the name "Fourth Committee" but is officially listed in the second place of the Main Committees. Today many publications list the Main Committees in chronological order.

negotiated text (issued as L.xx/Rev.1). In both cases, the draft resolution/ decision is normally submitted to a vote, often accompanied by proposals for amendments and requests for paragraph votes.

The work of the Main Committees is facilitated by QuickPlace, a web-tool hosted by *www.un.int* (about to be migrated into e-deleGATE). It provides L-documents, compilation texts, the schedule of negotiations and contact information of sponsors and facilitators. Each Committee has its own login. In order to gain access to the site, each delegate must have a password, which must be requested from the Committee secretariat. L-documents of the Plenary are listed on the GA website.

The Main Committees' work calendar

The Main Committees meet mostly during the main part of a session (mid-September to December). The time frame for their work is decided by the GA at the beginning of each session. A programme of work for each Main Committee (i.e., the schedule of formal meetings) is issued as an information note by its secretariat at the beginning of that Committee's work. While the exact dates change every year, the following parameters remain the same:

- Committee work begins only after the general debate ends
- The work of the First Committee and the Fourth Committee are never scheduled simultaneously
- The Fifth Committee is always the last to conclude its work
- Usually only the Fourth and the Fifth Committees reconvene during the resumed part of the session.

There are no meeting services or support available to a Main Committee beyond its recess date without an approved extension. All requests for extensions have to be formally made in writing by the Chair of the Main Committee to the PGA, who will propose an oral decision to the GA at the next formal meeting.

During the main part of the session, the PGA meets regularly with the Main Committee Chairs.

4.2 FIRST COMMITTEE (C1)
Disarmament and International Security Committee

The First Committee considers disarmament and international security matters. It is one element of the wider "UN disarmament machinery" that was created in 1978 by a Special Session of the GA. The First Committee works in close cooperation with the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (a permanent multilateral negotiating forum) and the UN Disarmament Commission (a subsidiary body of the GA).

Scope and organization of work

The agenda items allocated to C1 are considered under seven thematic clusters: nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass

destruction, outer space (disarmament aspects), conventional weapons, regional disarmament and security, other disarmament measures and international security, and the disarmament machinery. A joint panel discussion of C1 and C4 on security challenges in outer space is scheduled for the 72nd session.

Schedule
An organizational meeting is usually held at the end of September. C1 usually finishes its work by the end of October or early November.

Bodies reporting to C1
- Conference on Disarmament (CD)
- Disarmament Commission (DC)
- Expert groups established based on a recommendation of C1

Debates and discussions
A general debate of usually eight days at the beginning of the Committee's work is followed by two weeks of thematic discussions on each of the seven clusters. These include exchanges with high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament, including the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBT-O) and the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Some discussions are organized as panel discussions. The Committee also holds interactive discussions with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs (formal) and with representatives of other disarmament entities (both formal and informal).

The SG reports on the activities of the Regional Centers of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (Lima, Lomé, and Kathmandu) are introduced by their respective heads during the thematic discus-sion segment.

Resolutions and decisions
C1 adopts 50–70 resolutions and a few decisions annually. About half the resolutions are adopted by consensus. Usually, draft resolutions are first negotiated parallel to the general debate in informal meetings under the facilitation of the sponsor and tabled when the texts are ready for adoption.

Tools
C1 is the only Main Committee entitled to verbatim records coverage. C1 uses e-Speakers and e-Sponsorship for speakers inscription and the introduction of draft resolutions and decisions, and an internal web board, available through the e-deleGATE portal (the former QuickFirst) for the exchange of procedural and organizational matters.

Side Events
Interested NGOs organize side events on specific issues.

Civil Society participation
On the last day of the General Debate there can be informal interactions with civil society organizations.

Elections
Chair 72nd session: Asia-Pacific States; 73rd session: Eastern European States

Chair rotation according to GA guidelines: 74th session: Latin American and Caribbean States; 75th session: Western European and other States; 76th session: African States; 77th session: Asia-Pacific States; 78th session: Eastern European States; 79th session: African States

The Rapporteur is usually elected from the group that held the chair in the previous year.

Support
The Office for Disarmament Affairs provides substantive support to the Committee, and the Disarmament and Peace Affairs Branch (DPAB) in DGACM provides secretariat support.

Delegates
The heads of the delegations to the First Committee are in many cases the representatives to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

4.3 SECOND COMMITTEE (C2)
Economic and Financial Committee

The Second Committee discusses economic growth and develop-ment issues in the broadest sense. It covers part of the same ground as the Economic and Social Council, a charter organ with limited membership.

Scope and organization of work
The agenda items allocated to C2 are organized in 11 clusters: macroeconomic policy; operational activities for development; financing for development; groups of countries in special situations; globalization and interdependence; eradication of poverty; sustainable development; information and communication technologies for development; agriculture development, food security and nutrition; human settlements and sustainable urban development; and sovereignty of the Palestinian people over their natural resources. In addition, the Committee considers the issue of global partnership on a biennial basis.

Schedule
The Committee normally begins its work in early October and aims to conclude it in the last week of November. Short extensions are often granted until early to mid-December.

Bodies reporting to C2
The United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Governing Councils of the three Rio Conventions (Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification) and of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) report to the General Assembly through C2.

Debates and discussions
After a general debate at the beginning of the Committee's work, the individual items are debated during the first four weeks of the session. Immediately before general discussion of an item, SG reports can be introduced by the author department and followed by a dedicated "question time." The Committee also meets annually in a joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council. Negotiations on draft proposals are conducted throughout the duration of the Committee's session.

Resolutions and decisions
C2 adopts about 35–45 resolutions, mostly by consensus. The majority of these are tabled by the Chair of G-77 and China, with a smaller number also tabled by individual States or a number of States. To assist negotiations, the Chair of the Committee assigns a facilitator or co-facilitators for each draft resolution. Delegates co-sponsor draft resolutions electronically through the e-deleGATE portal.

Tools
The Committee has an internal web board (the former QuickPlace), available through the e-deleGATE portal. It is used for circulation of messages from the Chair, advance drafts, information on programme budget implications, updates to the programme, etc.
The Online Annex to the annual report of the ECOSOC Interagency Task Force on Financing for Development provides an up-to-date picture of the status of global development financing. It is continu-ally updated.

Side Events
The Bureau traditionally organizes side events, usually in the form of a discussion. While GA decision 65/530 provides for a maximum of six side events at the 72nd session, the number was reduced to three. In addition, a dialogue with the executive secretaries of the five regional commissions is held annually.

Civil Society
Meetings of the Committee are as a rule open to participation by those possessing valid grounds passes and are also webcast. During the 70th session, the Committee held an informal meeting with civil society to review the agenda and methods of work.

Elections
Chair 72nd session: Eastern European States; 73rd session: Latin American and Caribbean States

Chair rotation according to GA guidelines: 74th session: African States; 75th session: Asia-Pacific States; 76th session: Western European and other States; 77th session: Eastern European States; 78th session: Latin American and Caribbean States; 79th session: Asia-Pacific States.

Rapporteur: no fixed rotation pattern.

Support
The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) provides most of the substantive support for the work of the Second Committee. On some agenda items, other UN entities take the lead in providing substantive support (see Delegate's Handbook). The ECOSOC Affairs Branch (EAB) in DGACM provides procedural and technical advice and support. EAB also acts as the conduit for advice on potential PBI of draft resolutions provided by the Office of Programme Planning Budget and Accounts.

Delegates
Delegates dealing with the Second Committee often also cover the work of ECOSOC, its subsidiary bodies and the Funds and Programmes.

4.4 THIRD COMMITEE (C3)
Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

The Third Committee deals with human rights, humanitarian affairs and social issues. This includes questions relating to the advance-ment of women, the protection of children, the treatment of refugees through the elimination of racism and discrimination, the promotion of fundamental freedoms and the right to self-deter-mination, indigenous issues and a range of social matters such as issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.

Scope and organization of work
Of the dozen agenda items allocated to C3, "Promotion and protection of human rights" is considered the most important and makes up about half of the work of the Committee.

The Report of the Human Rights Council is a shared agenda item, i.e., allocated to the Plenary and to C3. The division of responsibility is spelled out in the recommendations of the General Committee (see section 3.1).

Schedule
Traditionally, C3 concludes its work before Thanksgiving Day.

Bodies and mechanisms reporting to C3
There are no subsidiary bodies reporting through C3. However, the Special Procedures of the Geneva-based Human Rights Council
(i.e., special rapporteurs, independent experts or chairs of working groups) report to the Third Committee and engage in interactive

dialogues with it. Most human rights treaty bodies are invited to present an oral report and engage in an interactive dialogue with C3.

Debates and discussions
There is no general debate at the beginning of the Committee's work. The agenda items are debated individually during the first part of its work. Immediately before the debate on an item, SG reports are introduced by the author department and may be followed by "question time." Each year, interactive dialogues take place with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Refugees.

Resolutions and decisions
The Third Committee adopts about 60 resolutions. About a third are adopted by vote.

Most draft resolutions are tabled by Member States with one or two main sponsors and a group of co-sponsors. States co-sponsor draft resolutions through the e-deleGATE portal. Negotiations are usually facilitated by the main sponsor.

After the tabling of the draft resolution, negotiations continue, based on the tabled draft resolution (the L-document). The outcome of the negotiation is tabled as a revised L-document and scheduled for action. Oral amendments can be made from the floor before the adoption of the resolution.

Tools
C3 uses PaperSmart, an online platform providing delegates with access to relevant documents (e.g. resolutions, statements and reports). The Committee has an internal web board (the former QuickPlace), available through the e-deleGATE portal .

Side Events
The Bureau does not organize side events. Member States do.

Civil Society
There are no particular exchanges of C3 with civil society organizations.

Elections
Chair 72nd session: Western European and other States; 73rd session: Asia-Pacific States.

Chair rotation according to GA guidelines: 74th session: Western European and other States; 75th session: Eastern European States; 76th session: Asia-Pacific States; 77th session: Latin American and Caribbean States; 78th session: Western European and other States; 79th session: African States.

Following the current rotation agreement that ends with the 73rd session, the Rapporteur is elected from the regional group that held the chair in the previous year.

Support
The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is the main substantive secretariat to the Committee. Depending on the agenda item, other UN entities take the lead in providing substantive support (see Delegate's Handbook). The ECOSOC Affairs Branch (EAB) in DGACM provides secretariat support.

Delegates
Delegations of Member States to C3 often include delegates from capital and Geneva-based delegates to the Human Rights Council in addition to New York-based delegates. Likewise, national delega-tions to Human Rights Council meetings in Geneva often include delegates from capital and New-York-based C3-delegates.

4.5 FOURTH COMMITTEE (C4) Special Political and Decolonization Committee

The Fourth Committee covers a diverse set of issues, the two major ones being "decolonization" and "the Middle East."

Scope and organization of work
The scope of the Committee's work includes a cluster of five decolonization- related items; the effects of atomic radiation; questions relating to information; a comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions; the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); the report of the Special Committee on Israeli Practices; and international coopera-tion in the peaceful uses of outer space. Under the last item, a joint panel event of C1 and C4 is scheduled to discuss challenges to space security during the 72nd GA session.

Schedule
The work of the Committee usually runs from late September to mid-November. The Committee reconvenes briefly in spring (after the meeting of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Opera-tions) to adopt the resolutions and decisions relating to peace-keeping. The debate on the same agenda item takes place in the main part of the session.

Bodies reporting to C4
The following subsidiary bodies report through the Fourth Committee:
- Committee on Information
- Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)
- Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (also called "C-34")
- Special Committee on Decolonization ("Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", also called "C-24")

- Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for State of Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR).

Debates and discussions
There is no general debate at the beginning of the Committee's work. All items on decolonization are debated jointly. The representatives of subsidiary bodies usually introduce their reports, and the author departments of SG reports can also be invited to do so. These presentations are sometimes followed by a question-and answer session. Petitioners (civil society representatives and other stakeholders) are allowed to address the Committee on decolonization issues.

Resolutions and decisions
The Committee usually adopts about 30-35 draft resolutions and several draft decisions annually. All draft resolutions related to the questions of UNRWA and Israeli practices and some under the decolonization cluster are adopted by vote. Draft proposals submitted under the other agenda items are mostly adopted by consensus. Resolutions are usually first negotiated and then tabled. When the draft text is related to the work of a subsidiary body, the Member State chairing the subsidiary body often facilitates the negotiations of the text. Delegates co-sponsor draft resolutions electronically through the e-deleGATE portal.

Tools
C4 uses PaperSmart, an online platform providing delegates access to relevant documents (resolutions, statements and reports). The Committee has an internal web board, available for delegates through the e-deleGATE portal (the former QuickPlace). It uses the e-Speakers, e-Sponsoring and e-Petitioner portals.

Side Events
Member States organize side events. The Bureau does not.

Civil Society
Civil society organizations do not participate in C4, with one exception: Under the decolonization item ("Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples"), the Committee organizes hearings of petitioners from the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories of the UN. In these hearings, civil society organizations and private individuals can be heard.

Elections
Chair 72nd session: Latin American and Caribbean States; 73rd session: African States

Chair rotation according to GA guidelines: 74th session: Asia-Pacific States; 75th session: African States; 76th session: Latin-American and Caribbean States; 77th session: African States;

78th session: Asia-Pacific States; 79th session: Eastern European States

C4 follows the rotation arrangement outlined by the GA.

Support
Depending on the agenda item, different UN entities take the lead in providing substantive support (see Delegate's Handbook). The Disarmament and Peace Affairs Branch (DPAB) in DGACM provides secretariat support.

Delegates
The delegates to the Fourth Committee are Middle East experts, military advisers, and others.

4.6 FIFTH COMMITTEE (C5)
Administrative and Budgetary Committee

The Fifth Committee prepares the GA resolutions on how much each Member State pays to the UN and how these resources are allocated. It considers the programme budget of the UN (biennial), the peacekeeping budgets (annual) and human resources issues. It also defines the share each Member State is obliged to pay to the regular and peacekeeping budgets of the UN. These "scales of assessment" are considered in depth every three years. The Committee is informed about the planning of Funds and Programmes and about extra-budgetary activities of the Secretariat. The Fifth Committee is also responsible for administrative matters. It considers management reform, governance, oversight and accountability issues.

Scope and organization of work
The GA does not decide on every aspect of UN activities, but all decisions on the regular UN budget are to be taken by the GA. This makes the task of C5 difficult. All draft resolutions with budget implications must be examined by C5 before they can be adopted in the Plenary. Therefore, it is always the last of the Main Committees to complete its work, very often in all-night and weekend meetings. C5 considers draft resolutions on the basis of a report by the Secretariat and an assessment report by the Advisory Committee on Adminstrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), a body of experts.

Schedule
C5 works in three sessions. The main part of the session ends in late (often very late) December, as the regular budget of the UN has to be decided on before the end of the calendar year. There are two resumed sessions: the first one takes place in March to consider any items not concluded in the main part of the session; the second one, in May, is devoted to UN peacekeeping. The Bureau meets regularly once a week during the session and one or more times per day towards the end of the session.

Bodies reporting to C5
The following subsidiary bodies report through the Fifth Committee:

- Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)
- Board of Auditors
- Committee on Conferences
- Committee on Contributions
- Committee on Programme Coordination (CPC)
- Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC)
- International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)
- Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

Debates, consultations and resolutions
C5 works differently from the other Main Committees. Relevant reports on an item are introduced in a formal meeting, followed by a discussion in an informal meeting. "Coordinators", agreed on by the Bureau with respect to geographical distribution, act on behalf of the Chair as facilitators for the respective items. Informal consultations usually begin with a question and answer session in the presence of high-ranking officials of the Secretariat or the UN entities concerned. Following this, the coordinator, after consulting the secretariat, distributes a skeleton draft resolution and sets a "language deadline" by which time or date Member States propose additional paragraphs in writing. The draft resolution is then considered in informal consultations, also called first and second readings, and if no progress can be achieved, in "informal informals." If consensus is reached, the proposal is first adopted informally, then tabled by the Chair and formally adopted by the Committee.

C5 works by consensus and only rarely votes. There is no co-sponsorship.

Tools
Hardcopy parliamentary documentation is provided in the meeting room upon request. Committee members are provided access to eRoom, an electronic documentation tool, with a password given to the Permanent Mission. eRoom is soon to be replaced.

Side Events
There are no side events.

Civil Society
There is no civil-society participation.

Elections
C5 elects the members of the following subsidiary bodies:

- The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
- The Board of Auditors
- The Committee on Contributions
- The Investments Committee
- United Nations International Civil Service Commission

- United Nations Staff Pension Committee
- Independent Audit Advisory Committee

Chair 72nd session: African States; 73rd session: Western European and other States.

Chair rotation according to GA guidelines: 74th session: Asia-Pacific States; 75th session: African States; 76th session: Eastern European States; 77th session: Western European and other Sates; 78th session: African States; 79th session: Latin American and Caribbean States.

The Rapporteur is normally elected from the regional group that held the chair in the previous session. Occasionally, elections of the Bureau chair have been delayed and may take place at the opening of the session over which they will preside.

Support
The secretariat of C5 in the Department of Management (DM) provides substantive and secretariat support.

Delegates
Most of the delegates to the C5 are diplomats. Some delegations include Finance and Defense Ministry staff.

4.7 SIXTH COMMITTEE (C6)
Legal Committee

The promotion, codification and progressive development of international law is mandated by the UN Charter, and the Sixth Committee is the primary forum for the consideration of international law and other legal matters concerning the UN. The highlight of the Sixth Committee's work is the "International Law Week" beginning at the end of October, when top Legal Advisers from Member States' capitals meet in New York to consider the report of the International Law Commission.

Scope and organization of work
Issues allocated to C6 include the promotion of justice and international law, accountability and internal UN justice matters, drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism. Counter-terrorism issues are also dealt with by other UN bodies, not all of which report to the GA.

The Committee also considers requests for observer status in the GA.

Core items of the Committee's work are the reports of the various subsidiary organs, ad hoc Committees and expert bodies dealing with legal matters under the purview of the GA. Some items are considered on an annual basis, others biennially or triennially or staggered over a longer period. The Committee establishes working groups as appropriate.

Schedule
The Committee meets for about six weeks during the regular session of the GA, usually beginning its work after the general debate and finishing in mid-November. After the regular session, the bodies dealing with legal matters under the Committee's charge meet and report back at the next session. Occasionally, on the decision of the GA, C6 reconvenes to address a substantive question, and it reconvenes for elections.

Bodies reporting to C6
The following subsidiary bodies report through the Sixth Committee:
- Committee on Relations with the Host Country
- International Law Commission
- Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization
- United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
- United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination, and Wider Appreciation of International Law
- Ad hoc Committees established by the GA in the context of the work of C6, such as the Ad Hoc Committee on measures to eliminate international terrorism.

Debates and discussions
There is no general debate at the beginning of the work of the Committee. All agenda items are debated one by one, following a program of work adopted at the first meeting. SG reports are introduced by the representative of the SG on an ad hoc basis. The reports of subsidiary bodies, ad hoc Committees and expert bodies are introduced by their chairs or their representatives. The report of the International Law Commission is introduced by its Chair, in clusters of issues. C6 also holds an interactive dialogue with members of the Commission.The topics are identified in consultation with Member States.

The President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has a standing invitation to address C6 during "International Law Week." However, there is no debate on the ICJ in the Committee, as the agenda item on ICJ is allocated to the Plenary.

Resolutions and decisions
On average, the C6 adopts about 15-25 draft resolutions and decisions. Draft resolutions are sponsored by Member States or coordinated and tabled on behalf of the Bureau by a Member State. Negotiations are usually conducted as informal consultations before tabling. Draft decisions tend to be tabled by the Chair following consultations with delegations.

Tools
Plenary debates are webcast. To facilitate communication among delegations and with the Secretariat, C6 uses various tools, such as PaperSmart, Unite Connections and a C6-website (6th commitee@un.org). Some are password-protected. The Codification Division of OLA maintains websites relating to the work of C6 and its related bodies.

Side Events
Two afternoons at the beginning of the "International Law Week" are earmarked for meetings of Legal Advisers, who may discuss a variety of legal issues. During "International Law Week" a lot of side events are organized by Member States, and often in connection with upcoming elections to judicial UN bodies. Some side events are held in cooperation with non-governmental organizations involved in international law.

Civil Society
Participation in C6 meetings is open to organizations with Observer Status with the GA. On some occasions where C6 was engaged in processes ruled by their own rules of procedure (for example the establishment of the International Criminal Court), civil society participated in the Committee's work.

Elections
Chair 72nd session: Asia-Pacific States; 73rd session: African States.

Chair rotation according to GA guidelines: 74th session: Eastern European States; 75th session: Latin American and Caribbean States; 76th session: Asia-Pacific States; 77th session: African States; 78th session: Latin American and Caribbean States; 79th session: Western European and other States

Support
The Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) provides both substantive and secretariat support. Before C6 begins its work, usually before the high-level week, the Secretariat, with the support of the Bureau, organizes informal briefings on issues before the Committee. It also assists in facilitating briefings between sessions, including the work of the International Law Commission.

Delegates
The delegates of the Sixth Committee are legal advisors or diplomats with solid knowledge of legal matters. About half of them are also the counter-terrorism "focal points" of their Permanent Missions.

Key General Assembly Events

5.1 The Opening Week

The regular annual session of the GA begins on Tuesday of the third week in September, when its first formal meeting is held. The day before, on Monday, the last formal meeting of the previous session takes place.

Monday: Last formal plenary meeting of the old GA session

The last plenary meeting usually deals with a large number of agenda items and formally closes the session. The proceedings are as follows:

- outstanding draft resolutions are acted on and the corresponding agenda items are closed
- agenda items that have not been considered and that are to be included in the next agenda are formally deferred by an oral decision
- agenda items that have been considered but have remained open are closed in one single gaveling
- the outgoing PGA makes a concluding statement, taking stock of his/her presidency.
- the new PGA takes the oath of office.
- a minute of silent prayer or meditation is observed
- the PGA ceremoniously hands over the gavel to the next PGA and declares the session closed

Member States do not usually take the floor after the PGA's concluding statement.

Tuesday: First formal plenary meeting of the new GA session

The first meeting of the Plenary is quite short, typically only 45 minutes. The proceedings are as follows:

- the new PGA declares the session opened
- a minute of silent prayer or meditation is observed
- the PGA makes a statement, outlining the upcoming work, scheduled GA events, mandates and priorities for his/her presidency
- housekeeping matters are dealt with, e.g., the appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee and the granting of permission to some subsidiary bodies to meet during the main part of the session
- the PGA adjourns the meeting.

Member States do not usually take the floor in the first meeting.

Wednesday: General Committee meetings

The General Committee considers all organizational matters of the new session (see sections 1.5 and 3.1).

Friday: Second formal plenary meeting of the GA session

The second plenary meeting deals with the report of the General Committee and adopts the agenda for the new session (see section 3.1). The moment the agenda is adopted, all agenda items are formally opened. No formal GA meeting can take place before the adoption of the agenda.

The Oath of Office

"I solemnly declare that I shall truthfully perform my duties and exercise the functions entrusted to me as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations in all loyalty, discretion and conscience, and that I shall discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interest of the United Nations only in view and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly, without seeking or accepting any instruction in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other source external to the Organization."

UN Days

UN Days (or UN Weeks, Years and Decades) focus attention on issues of importance to the UN. They are established by a GA resolution. They are widely observed by Member States, civil society and UN entities. Related formal GA meetings and additional funding for related UN activities have to be mandated by the GA. A complete list of UN observances is available on the UN website.

5.2 The High-Level Week

"High-level week" is a descriptive term for the second week of the GA session, when Heads of State and Government attend the general debate. In recent years one or several GA high-level meetings have been scheduled during the high-level week. The following formal meetings are scheduled in the first weeks of the session:

	THIRD WEEK IN SEPTEMBER
Monday	Closing of the previous session of the GA
Tuesday	**Opening of the new GA session**
Wednesday	General Committee meeting
Thursday	General Committee meeting, continued (if needed)
Friday	Adoption of the agenda
	FOURTH WEEK IN SEPTEMBER
Monday	
Tuesday	**Opening of the General Debate**
Wednesday	General Debate
Thursday	General Debate
Friday	General Debate
	FIFTH WEEK IN SEPTEMBER
Monday	General Debate
Tuesday	General Debate
Wednesday	General Debate
Thursday	General Debate (if needed)
Friday	General Debate (if needed)

High-level week

Logistics during the high-level week

Most high-level delegations schedule bilateral meetings, group meetings, and side events, etc., in addition to attending the general debate and GA high-level meetings. Conference rooms are booked months in advance, and dozens of temporary cubicles ("booths") are set up for bilateral meetings.

DGACM issues an information note in August on the organizational aspects of the high-level week. There are also two very informa-tive informal briefings in early September: one on the work of the GA organized by DGACM, the other on the priorities and schedule of the Secretary-General organized by the Department of Public Information.

Traditional events during the high-level week

Every year the Secretary-General hosts a lunch for Heads of State and Government on the occasion of the opening of the general debate.

The President of the United States, the host country, traditionally hosts a reception on the evening of the first day of the general debate.

Side events

Side events are unofficial events taking place at the UN and are organized and convened by Member States or UN entities. Civil society organizations can hold side events at the UN only in collaboration with a Member State or a UN entity. Most side events take place in the margins of an official UN event. Events organized by the SG are called "SG events" and often have high-level attendance.

5.3 The General Debate

The general debate is the annual meeting of Heads of State and Government at the beginning of the GA session — one of the highlights of the UN year.

The general debate opens on the Tuesday after the opening of the new GA session. The opening of the general debate is normally the third formal meeting of the GA. The dates of the general debate can be changed only by a decision of the GA.

According to the GA Rules of Procedure, the general debate is to be held without interruption for nine working days. However, in practice, seven days is usually sufficient to accommodate all speakers. The morning meeting runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the afternoon meeting from 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on the first day and to 9 p.m. on the remaining days.

Due to the large number of VIPs attending, additional security measures are taken in and around the UN premises. Access to the UN is more restricted than usual, and only a limited number of access passes to the GA Hall area are given to each delegation (see Appendix VIII).

The theme of the General Debate

The President-elect of the GA suggests a topic/theme of global concern for the upcoming general debate, based on informal discussions with Member States, the current PGA, and the Secretary-General.

Shortly after his/her election, the PGA-elect sends a letter to all Member States announcing the theme for the upcoming general debate and inviting them to focus their speeches on the proposed theme.

Statements and speeches at the General Debate

The speakers list for the general debate formally opens for signing up at the end of May. Member States are informed by a *note verbale* from the SG. Delegations inscribe in the speakers list through e-Speakers in the e-deleGATE portal.

Speaking Order

The speaking order of the general debate is different from the speaking order of other GA debates (see section 3.4).

Speaking order of the General Debate	
PGA	The PGA calls the meeting to order.
SG	The SG introduces the "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization" (technically, not part of the general debate).
PGA	The PGA opens the general debate and makes a speech.
Brazil	Since the tenth GA in 1955, Brazil has always been the first Member State to speak in the general debate (regardless of the level of representation). The practice does not extend to any other GA debates.
USA	Based on established practice, the USA as the host country is the second Member State to speak (regardless of the level of representation).
Member States	For all other Member States, the speaking order is based on level of representation, preference and other criteria such as geographic balance.
Observers	Only the Holy See, the State of Palestine and the EU are invited to participate in the general debate and their speaking slots are determined by the level of representation.

Length of speeches

Based on the recommendations of the General Committee, the GA traditionally agrees at the beginning of each session on a voluntary 15-minute time limit for statements. A set of three coloured lights (green, yellow, and red) on the rostrum alerts speakers if they exceed this limit. The lights switch from green to yellow after 14 minutes and from yellow to red after 15 minutes.

During the general debate, each meeting lasts until all scheduled speakers have spoken. Depending on how closely speakers comply with the recommended time limit, the morning meetings often run into the lunch break, and the afternoon meetings well into the night.

Distribution of speeches

For distribution of a statement during the general debate 350 copies (a larger number than for normal debates) has to be provided in advance to the designated document receiving area at the rear of the GA Hall. Member States can also request to have their statement posted on the PaperSmart portal (see section 3.4).

The right of reply

The right of reply in response to a statement is made in writing by a Head of State. The letter is addressed to the Secretary-General, who will circulate it to all Member States. During the general debate, statements in exercise of the right of reply to any other speaker are made at the end of each day (see section 3.4).

Walkout

A delegation, or a group of delegations, may demonstrate their disagreement with a speaker by getting up simultaneously and leaving the GA Hall during a speech.

Navigating the general debate as a speaker
A Protocol or Conference Officer will escort speakers from their delegation seat to room GA-200 and guide them to the podium at the appropriate time.

After delivering their speech, Heads of State shake hands with the PGA and the Secretary-General on the podium. All speakers are escorted back to room GA-200.

If a delegation is not ready or not present in the GA Hall at the scheduled speaking time, the next speaker is invited to speak. The delegation who did not speak can reschedule with a GA Affairs Officer.

GA-200

GA-200 is a suite of rooms behind the podium of the GA Hall. GA-200 contains meeting rooms for the PGA and the SG, as well as a waiting and preparation area for Heads of State and Government and government Ministers addressing the GA. The renovation of GA-200 was Switzerland's accession gift to the United Nations.

5.4

5.4 GA High-Level Meetings

A GA high-level meeting is a GA event on a specific issue or topic with the participation of Heads of State, Heads of Government and government Ministers. Because they are not part of the regular GA agenda, high-level meetings must be mandated by a GA resolution or decision. In these resolutions/decisions high-level meetings are sometimes given other descriptive names. They are chaired by the PGA. Sometimes, the outgoing and the incoming PGA are both invited to co-chair a high-level meeting that takes place at the beginning of a GA session.

GA high-level meetings consist of formal plenary meetings and informal meetings and can last from one to several days.

How is a GA high-level meeting arranged?

The scope and purpose of each high-level meeting is different. There are no firmly established practices for defining the modalities of a high-level meeting. The following elements need to be considered: theme, date and duration, location (if not in NY), preparation, outcome document, participation, format, cost (see Appendix VII).

The modalities are subject to the agreement of Member States. A first proposal is usually requested from either the Secretary-General or the PGA and can be dealt with as follows:

- it can be accepted by a GA decision
- it can be redrafted based on feedback from Member States and then accepted by a GA decision
- it can serve as a basis for further negotiations among Member States. Such negotiations are usually led by a facilitator appointed by the PGA and result in a modalities resolution.

When can a GA high-level meeting be scheduled?

High-level meetings are ideally scheduled during the resumed part of the session (January to mid-September). When deciding on the date, the UN Calendar of conferences and meetings may be consulted.

Scheduling a high-level GA meeting during the main part of the session (October–December) is very difficult, given the heavy GA schedule.

Scheduling high-level meetings during the high-level week is even more difficult but attractive due to the presence of numerous Heads of State and Government and government Ministers. The following constraints need to be taken into account:

- no formal GA meeting can take place before the GA Agenda has been adopted. In practical terms, this means that no high-level meeting can be scheduled during the first week of the new GA session
- meetings on Saturday/Sunday will incur additional costs, and possibly have a programme budget implication (PBI) (see section 3.2)
- no two formal GA meetings can take place at the same time. However, an informal GA meeting can take place at the same time as a formal meeting; and two informal GA meetings can take place at the same time. Parallel meetings will incur additional costs, and possibly have a programme budget implication (PBI) (see section 3.2)
- the date of the beginning of the general debate can only be changed by a decision of the GA. Four days of general debate are normally needed if Heads of State and Government are all to speak during the high-level week
- given the high profile of the opening day of the general debate, no other meetings are scheduled on that day
- a high-level meeting can take place on any other day of the general debate, but its formal parts must take place before and after the general debate. For example, a high-level meeting could formally open in the GA Hall before the general debate begins, and formally close in the GA Hall after the last speaker of the general debate has spoken. This can be well after 10:00 p.m. The informal parts (panels, roundtables) take place in another conference room in parallel to the general debate.

UN Conferences and Summits

UN conferences are mandated by GA resolutions, but they are not GA events. They adopt their own rules of procedure and have their own bureau and designated secretariat. The mandating resolution can request the GA to conduct elements of the preparatory process such as meetings of the Preparatory Committee ("PrepCom") or civil society hearings. The GA may choose to endorse the conference outcome document.

A summit is a descriptive term used for intergovernmental meetings attended by Heads of State and Government. UN Conferences and GA high-level meetings can be "summits."

5.5 Thematic Debates

Thematic debates are informal meetings of the GA convened by the PGA. They are also called "interactive dialogues" or "interactive debates." Most thematic debates take place during the resumed part of the session (January to mid-September). They usually are one-day events, but occasionally have lasted several days. Thematic debates often include keynote speakers and panel discussions followed by interventions from the floor.

Thematic debates are an instrument for the PGA to create opportunities to listen to experts, to discuss new topics and to address controversial issues outside the constraints of the formal agenda and without the pressure of a negotiated outcome. In recent revitalization resolutions the GA has encouraged the PGA to continue

this practice. Most thematic debates are initiatives of the PGA but occasionally mandated by a GA resolution/decision. Recent thematic debates have focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (see section 1.6). In its 71st session, the GA has requested to limit them to "current issues of critical importance to the inter-national community".

The Office of the PGA takes the lead in organizing thematic debates. There are no standard practices and many decisions are at the discretion of the PGA. Appendix VI provides practical les-sons learned from previous thematic debates.

How interactive are thematic debates?

With the intention to allow for broader, more flexible and spontaneous exchanges, thematic debates are "interactive": the speaking order does not necessarily follow rank and status, and interventions from civil society and UN entities are welcomed. Ideally, speakers in an interactive setting respond to panelists and other participants.

In practice there is rarely enough time for this. Also, many delegates prefer to deliver prepared statements, particularly on issues perceived as sensitive. Yet another constraint is the often busy schedule of Permanent Representatives, who can rarely attend a meeting from beginning to end. Sometimes, in the interest of time the Chair may ask delegates to read abridged versions of their statements, and to post the longer versions on the PaperSmart portal (see section 3.4)

Experience shows that thematic debates are most successful if some of these practices are followed:

- hiring a professional moderator who animates the debate and manages an ad hoc speakers list
- offering to post the full speeches of participants online, allowing interventions to be limited to comments and questions
- indicating in the invitation letter that civil society representatives and UN entities will be allowed to speak and that the standard speaking order will not be followed
- informing civil society and UN entities that neither attendance nor an informal agreement guarantees that they will be given the floor
- ensuring that all participants, including keynote speakers and panelists, adhere to agreed time limits.

NGLS

The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) promotes and facilitates relations between the UN and civil society. NGLS is an inter-agency programme funded by a number of UN agencies, Funds and Programmes, private foundations and the governments of several Member States. Among its many other activities, NGLS facilitates the selection and participation of civil society representatives in GA meetings.

5.6

5.6 Civil Society Hearings

Civil society hearings (also called civil society dialogues) are informal meetings of the GA which can sometimes be opened by a short formal meeting. They give civil society the opportunity to engage with Member States on a specific issue.

Civil society hearings can be part of the preparatory process for a GA high-level meeting or a UN conference. In these cases the

hearings are usually mandated by a GA resolution. The PGA can also take the initiative to convene a civil society hearing.

Working with the substantive office responsible for a given issue and the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), the PGA proposes a balanced and representative list of civil society participants and drafts the modalities for the event.

The format of civil society hearings often involves opening remarks by the PGA and the Secretary-General or their representatives, followed by keynote speakers and interactive elements, such as moderated panel discussions and exchanges with participants. All civil society participants have the explicit right to ask for the floor. The substantive office and/or NGLS may post speeches on their websites.

Member States are consulted by the PGA on the modalities and the list of civil society participants, usually on a non-objection basis.

5.7 Commemorative GA Meetings

Commemorative meetings are formal GA meetings on the occasion of anniversaries and remembrances. Such meetings require a GA resolution or decision. Commemorative meetings are ceremonial in nature.

Individual Member States usually do not speak at commemorative meetings. The standard format is as follows:

- statement by the PGA
- statement by the Secretary-General
- statements by the Chairs of the regional groups
- statement by the host country.

A formal commemorative meeting is sometimes preceded or followed by an informal meeting which can include statements of Member States and prominent civil society representatives, film screenings, and other elements.

INFORMATION
TOURS
INFORMATION
OFFICER
UNITED NATIONS

The Office of the PGA

6

6 The Office of the PGA

In executing his/her duties, the PGA is supported by the Office of the President of the General Assembly (Office of the PGA, or OPGA). The team supporting the PGA is also called "the Cabinet of the PGA." Although the Office of the PGA is independent in the execution of its mandate, for administrative purposes it is attached to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM). The administrative arrangements for the Office of the PGA are subject to change and details should be confirmed with the UN Secretariat.

There are no formal terms of reference for the Office of the PGA. However, the GA has made many specific demands on and recommendations to the PGA and his/her office. Its main tasks have evolved through practice, and relate to GA processes, communication (see Chapter 6), specific initiatives and the PGA's travel.

The Office of the PGA:

- briefs the PGA on all issues pertaining to his/her activities
- advises the PGA on GA processes
- provides substantive support to PGA-appointed facilitators
- drafts the PGA's speeches
- organizes thematic debates and briefings (see section 5.5)
- makes arrangements, for the PGA's travels, including briefings and schedule.

The work of the Office of the PGA is supported by the General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division (GAEAD) in DGACM. GAEAD is often simply referred to as "DGACM."

DGACM briefs and advises the PGA and his/her team on all matters pertaining to the GA including ongoing and new mandates given to the PGA by GA resolutions/decisions.

For each GA meeting DGACM prepares a procedural script for the PGA and arranges for the translation of his/her speeches and remarks.

When the PGA presides over a meeting, an officer of DGACM sits on his/her left to provide support on the proceedings throughout the meeting (see section 1.7).

6.1

6.1. The Code of Ethics

By GA decision, the PGA and members of his/her office are to "observe the highest standards of ethical conduct" as laid out in a "Code of Ethics". It obliges the PGA to:

- avoid the use of his/her office and its resources for private gain
- avoid conflicts between his/her interests and the interests of the Presidency

- remain impartial
- engage constructively with Member States but refrain from receiving instructions
- show "greatest possible transparency" in discharging his/her functions, in "any external activity" and in commercial dealings
- refrain from holding commercial offices during his/her term as PGA.

6.2 The PGA Team

Each PGA decides on the organizational structure of his/her Office and selects most of the staff. Over the years, the posts of Chef de Cabinet, Deputy Chef de Cabinet and Spokesperson have become standard.

The total number of staff varies. In the last five years it was between 20 and 42. Staff members come from a variety of countries. In the interest of enhancing the Office of the PGA's institutional memory, and to facilitate the transition, some staff members are generally retained from one PGA team to the next.

Access

Depending on their contracts, the members of the PGA team have either UN staff or delegates grounds-passes. An additional "DGACM All Areas" pass allows access to GA-200.

Who can work in the Office of the PGA?

Staff in the Office of the PGA can be on four different types of contract: regular UN budget posts, additional UN posts funded through the PGA Trust Fund, Secondees, and Associate Experts. The rules, entitlements, and job conditions vary for the different contract types (e.g., UN staff are not tax-exempt).

Regular UN budget posts

A total of ten posts are provided by the UN Secretariat:

- four professional posts (consisting of two D-2 posts, one D-1 post, and one P-5 post) and one General Service post are covered by the Organization's budget. The PGA is free to select these staff members, but the UN's internal criteria for post grades should be taken into consideration. These five staff members start receiving a UN salary at the beginning of the session.
- two DGACM General Service staff members (one Administrative Assistant to the President and one Administrative Assistant) are assigned to the Office of the PGA. They liaise with DGACM on all administrative matters. As they usually stay for several presidencies, they constitute an important part of the institutional memory of the Office of the PGA.
- one Spokesperson and sometimes one Assistant to the Spokesperson are provided to the PGA by the Department of Public Information (DPI). The PGA can select the Spokesperson based on the recommendations of DPI.
- three DGACM staff members (one P-4 post and one P-2 post) are specifically assigned to support the Office of the PGA. All are located in DGACM.

Additional UN posts funded through the PGA Trust Fund
Additional staff on UN contracts can be funded through the PGA Trust Fund (see section 5.4). The selection rests with the PGA, but UN internal criteria apply in the assessment of the post grade of a proposed staff member.

Staff on UN contracts funded through the PGA Trust Fund start receiving a UN salary at the beginning of the session.

Secondees
Member States can second staff to the Office of the PGA. Seconded staff are fully integrated into the Office of the PGA, but retain their contracts and diplomatic status with the Permanent Mission of the respective Member State. As their starting date is more flexible than that of staff on UN contracts, secondees are particularly useful during the transition period before the start of the new session.

Associate Experts
The PGA can request additional support from the Associated Experts Programme. This programme is funded by Member States through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and gives young professionals a chance to work for the UN for two to three years, generally in P-2 posts. The selection of Associated Experts rests with DESA. The Associated Experts Programme is similar to the better known Junior Professional Officer (JPO).

Transition period
The transition period for the PGA-elect starts aseveral months before the opening of the session. DGACM provides support in arranging temporary offices and pays for basic office supplies.

6.3

6.3 Office and Infrastructure

The PGA has offices at UN Headquarters. They are located on the second and third floors of the Conference Building. Additional offices are on the 15th floor of the Secretariat building.

The PGA and his/her team also have use of room GA-200, adjacent to the GA Hall. The space is used primarily for the PGA's official meetings during the high-level week. For access restrictions see Appendix VIII.

6.4

6.4 Technical Support

Getting the necessary technical support is crucial for a successful transition period of a PGA-elect. The PGA's administrative assistant is key in liaising with the service providers within the UN. Arrangements are different for the transition period and for the GA session.

IT Support
During the transition period, IT equipment and IT support are provided by two different offices, the former by the Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) and the latter by the Information and Communication Technologies Service (ICTS), which is part of DGACM. During the session, ICTS provides both equipment and support.

A designated desktop computer is assigned to each staff member. Email can be accessed via smartphones and tablets, but log-in to the full UN user account is only possible from the designated computer.

Computers assigned during the transition period are temporary. New computers are assigned when the PGA team moves into the PGA offices on the first day of the session. Email addresses do not change.

As the desktop computers in the PGA offices have to be reset for the new PGA team, the allocation of office desks is shared with ICTS in early September.

The email software currently used is Lotus Notes. Backups are made each night. Lotus Notes automatically deletes any emails that are not archived after three months. Deleted emails cannot be retrieved. Individual exemptions from the automatic deletions are possible, though rarely granted, by requesting a special waiver from ICTS. Lotus Notes is about to be replaced by a new system, Unite Mail.

Means of communication

Smartphones
During the transition period, the PGA-elect can request smartphones from DGACM for his/her staff. At the beginning of the GA session, upon request of the Chef de Cabinet OICT provides new smartphones with new numbers for the duration of the session. The phone bills are charged to the regular budget of the Office of the PGA. The PGA can determine restrictions of use and service for staff members.

Desk phones
Each staff member has a personal desk phone. Desk phones (and their numbers) assigned during the transition period are temporary and change when the PGA team moves into the PGA offices on the first day of the session. As the desk phones in the PGA offices have to be reset for the new PGA team, the allocation of office desks is shared with the Executive Office of DGACM in early September.

Com Center (fax)
The PGA circulates letters and *notes verbales* to the Permanent Missions in New York through the UN's e-Correspondence Unit. The correspondence is sent by email to the GA Affairs Branch of DGACM for transmission. Requests for same-day transmission should be made no later than 5 p.m. ComCenter services are not available to Member States.

Mail Services
The UN Mail Operations Unit delivers inter-office mail and correspondence to the Permanent Missions within one to two working days, or on the same day for urgent documents. External mail is

processed through the same unit and postage costs are charged to the PGA budget.

Business cards and letterhead stationery

Business cards
All PGA staff members are entitled to UN business cards, provided by DGACM upon request of the Chef de Cabinet. Business cards are produced after the desk phone numbers have been assigned, and printing takes some time. iSeek, the intranet of the Secretariat, gives access to the "Business Card Generator" which produces a printer-friendly PDF of a United Nations business card.

Letterhead stationery
Stationery with the letterhead of the PGA and stationery with the letterhead of the Office of the PGA are both available from the UN printing service, upon request to DGACM, but are not available electronically.

During the transition period, the PGA-elect may either use the letterhead of his/her Permanent Mission or create a letterhead using the designation "President-elect of the xxth session of the General Assembly."

The flag
The Department of Safety and Security (DSS) provides the Office of the PGA with the flag of the PGA's home country as well as the flag of the UN. Both are displayed in his/her office throughout the session. Flags for GA-200 are provided by the Protocol and Liaison Service.

6.5

6.5 Funding and Finances

Funding sources
The PGA has two direct funding sources at his/her disposal:

Regular budget of the Office of the PGA
In 1998, Member States approved the establishment of an annual budget for the Office of the PGA. The budget has not changed since 1998, except for inflation adjustments. For the 2016/17 biennium it is $326,400.00.

The regular budget covers the PGA's hospitality, official travel including travel expenses for UN security personnel accompanying the PGA and other expenditures relating to the PGA's official responsibilities. Mobile phone use and postage for the Office of the PGA are also charged against this budget.

Trust Fund in support of the Office of the PGA
In support of the Office of the PGA, a Trust Fund was established in 2010. Member States and others may contribute to the Trust Fund. So far, the Fund has mainly been used for staff costs and to fund office travel and thematic debates. The GA wants contributions to the Office of the PGA to be channeled through the Trust Fund and all contributions to the Trust Fund by Member States to be vetted by the Ethics Office.

The Trust Fund is administered by DGACM in accordance with UN financial rules and regulations, and all contributions are subject to "program support costs" (i.e., an overhead charge) of 7 percent. In addition, the Trust Fund is charged 1 percent of the remuneration

or net salary of every person that it funds. This reserve is for coverage against claims for service-incurred deaths, injuries or illness. It is not refunded to donors.

Salary and entitlements of the PGA

The PGA is not a UN employee and does not receive a UN salary. There is no official UN residence for the PGA.

UN Transportation provides a car and driver to the PGA for official activities in New York.

The Permanent Mission of the PGA's government may make arrangements for his/ her accommodation and personal expenses. The Code of Ethics sets the rules for the PGA's unofficial activities.

6.6 Safety and Security

The UN Department of Safety and Security (DSS) takes measures for the protection of the PGA. Security is provided by the Security and Safety Service (SSS) within DSS.

The level of daily protection provided to the PGA is based on a Threat and Risk Assessment (TRA) conducted by DSS. The PGA is entitled to a close protection officer at all times while acting in official capacity.

When traveling on official visits, the PGA is accompanied by a security officer as determined by the TRA. This service is provided by SSS, who coordinates with the Permanent Missions of the Member States to be visited. The travel expenses for security personnel are charged to the regular budget of the Office of the PGA.

To ensure a smooth departure from and entry into the United States, the PGA Office informs the US State Department's Diplomatic Security Service of the PGA's travel schedule and requests escort screening courtesies (i.e., "V.I.P." treatment) at the airport. The State Department forwards the request to the Transportation Safety Authority (TSA). They are separate government entities, and a State Department request does not guarantee that the TSA will provide an escort, particularly in cases when the request is not received 72 hours in advance of travel. Without escort screening courtesies, the PGA undergoes the regular airport screening.

6.7

6.7 Protocol Services

The Protocol and Liaison Service provides a range of specific services to the PGA and his/her Office, including:

- advice on matters of protocol and diplomatic etiquette, as well as on seating arrangements for meetings and social events
- escort to special events taking place at UN Headquarters, such as official ceremonies and concerts. The Chief or Deputy Chief of Protocol walks besides the PGA and advises him/her on who is who and where to go during the event. The Office of the PGA is requested to advise protocol on whether the PGA will be attending a particular event.
- protocol passes for guests and speakers at thematic debates. The Security Event Planning Unit issues their badges upon request of the Office of the PGA. Government officials participating in thematic debates are accredited with the Protocol and Liaison Service upon request of their Permanent Missions via e-Accreditation online.

The PGA's spouse and other family members

The PGA's spouse is issued a "gold courtesy pass" by the Chief of Security. It has the same expiration date as the pass of the PGA. If his/her spouse resides outside New York, the Chef de Cabinet of the Office of the PGA can request a "gold courtesy pass" specifying the dates of his/her visit. Other direct family members of the PGA (children and parents) can be issued temporary passes to attend events at UN Headquarters upon written request of the Office of the PGA to the Chief of Security.

The Office of the PGA is requested to inform the Protocol Office in advance if the PGA's spouse will be present at GA meetings and special events. Protocol will reserve a seat and provide an escort, if necessary. During the general debate, the spouse of the PGA is seated in the V.I.P. section, where the spouses of Heads of State and Government and of government Ministers are accommodated.

At the end of his/her mandate, the PGA is entitled to a V.I.P. pass, issued by the Protocol Office and valid for five years, upon request by the Chef de Cabinet to the Chief of Protocol before the end of the GA session.

6.8

6.8 Official Travel

Travel by the PGA

The PGA usually visits a number of countries in his/her official capacity, generally on a written invitation by the host government or by an international organization. Most of the PGA's travels take place during the resumed part of the GA session.

For all official travel upon written invitation, the Office of the PGA informs on the source of funding. If not provided by the host, it can either be from the regular budget or from the Trust Fund (see

section 6.4). In the latter case, all airplane or train tickets must be obtained through the UN in-house travel agency.

The Executive Office of DGACM processes the necessary travel authorizations. The PGA is reimbursed for the expenses incurred during the trip according to UN rules and regulations.

If on official business upon written invitation, travel of the PGA between New York and his/her home country is reimbursed by the budget of the Office of the PGA. The PGA's travel to UN Headquarters at the beginning of the GA session and his travel back home at the end of the session are not reimbursed by the OPGA budget. Nor does the budget reimburse travel expenses of the PGA's spouse.

The PGA travels first class.

Travel by PGA Office staff

The PGA determines the size of his/her delegation on official visits. Up to two members of the accompanying team can travel on the budget of the Office of the PGA. All arrangements and reimbursements of costs for such travel are processed by DGACM in accordance with UN rules and regulations (e.g., economy-class tickets for trips under nine hours or under eleven hours for multi-leg journeys).

Other funding sources, including from the host country or host organization, may be used for official staff travel. For secondees, funding can also come from their Permanent Missions and for Associated Experts, from the Associated Experts travel/training budget.

Things to do during the transition period
(around three months before the opening of the session):

- staff selection
- preparations for office transition
- bilateral meetings with Member States
- meetings with each regional group
- meetings with key UN officials
- briefing with DGACM on administrative issues and GA procedures as well as PGA mandates for the upcoming session
- meetings with the current PGA
- letter to Member States on theme for general debate and on priorities for the upcoming session
- informal meeting with the incoming General Committee
- induction programme organized by DGACM with participation of key Secretariat offices.

Visa of the PGA

The PGA is not a UN staff member. His/her status derives from the Member State that sends him/her to UN Headquarters. The PGA's accreditation with the host country is the responsibility of the Permanent Mission of his/ her home country. The PGA needs a G1 visa for the United States.

KANDT
Katharina
DGACM
12 Sep 2017

Information and Communication

7

7 Communication

Information technologies, communication practices and channels for reaching out to get a political message across are rapidly changing, and the UN — a large organization with complicated staffing and management rules — is trying to keep the pace. While traditional means of communication, in particular radio, remain important communication instruments in large parts of the world, new media are replacing them in others.

The UN uses the whole spectrum of communication tools available. Radio and TV programming of the UN News Centre is produced daily in eight languages and weekly in four more. Speeches, events and meetings are webcast online, sometimes reported on in multimedia formats. All UN bodies have a substantial online presence. Many UN officials, starting with the Secretary-General, are using social media, at present mostly Twitter.

7.1

7.1 Information and Communication

The PGA is the face of the GA and its main communicator. Communication is central to his/her role. Several GA resolutions specifically request more public visibility of the work of the GA and the PGA. The Department of Public Information (DPI) the Secretary-General and the PGA work together to follow up on this mandate.

The GA also requests transparency on the activities of the PGA. He/she is obliged to produce a written handover document for his/her successor, to preserve the records in the UN archival system and to provide financial disclosure information in line with UN rules at the beginning and the end of his/her term.

7.2

7.2. Communication tools

The most important tool for communicating and reaching out is the website of the PGA. It is part of the GA website, designed by DPI and updated by the Office of the PGA. Each PGA can choose what information to share and is responsible for content. Elements regularly included are the PGA press kit, pictures and names of the team members, statements and speeches, letters, updates on thematic debates, and contact information. Currently, the PGA website publishes detailed information about all aspects of the PGA's activities, including staffing, travel itineraries, expense details and origins of resources outside of the regular budget.

The use of social media is of increased importance. Currently, Twitter is the most prominent tool employed. The PGA's Twitter account had grown to almost 60,000 followers by the end of the 71st GA session. Recently, the Office of the PGA has actively reached out to the social media community (see section 7.6).

Other forms of communication of the PGA are speeches, statements, interviews with media, lectures and personal interactions.

The PGA communicates with Member States, with the UN System, with the media and with the wider public.

Speeches, statements, remarks and "messages"
The most official forms of the PGA's communication are his/her statements and speeches. Some of the key statements include the acceptance speech after the election, the speech at the opening of the GA session and in particular the speech on the occasion of the general debate. Speeches that are less formal and usually much shorter are also called "remarks." Statements made on the occasion of a commemorative or ceremonial event without the PGA's participation are called "messages." Occasionally, statements or messages are prerecorded to be broadcast. Statements,speeches, remarks and messages are circulated to Member States and accredited media.

Over the course of the session, the PGA makes about 300 statements and speeches, holds press conferences, and gives numerous interviews and lectures.

7.3 The PGA and the Member States

The PGA works on behalf of the Member States and is in constant contact with them from the day of the election until the end of the GA session. The PGA consults them on specific topics and informs them of developments and initiatives. Consultations with Member States are either part of a structured process where the PGA may appoint facilitators (see section 3.5) or very informal, with the PGA "taking the pulse" on a specific topic by talking with Member States. Written communications from the PGA to Member States include letters and notes verbales (unsigned letters written in the third person). Currently, all letters of the PGA are sent electronically to Member States, then posted on the PGA website, followed by a tweet notifying of the post.

The PGA is encouraged to periodically hold briefings for Member States on his/her activities, travels and upcoming events. These briefings are held either separately for each regional group or in a single open-ended meeting for all Member States.

The noon briefing
The Spokesperson of the SG holds a daily press briefing at noon in the Press Briefing Room in the Secretariat building. The Spokesperson of the PGA has a standing invitation to participate in the noon briefing.

7.4 The PGA and the Media

There are about 120 resident media correspondents accredited at the UN. They are offered working space in the Secretariat building. In addition, more than 5,000 correspondent accreditations are granted by the Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit each year, about half of them for high-level week. Media can be accredited on

an ad hoc and temporary basis. Social media representatives are not accredited as media correspondents.

The PGA is free to decide how to relate to the media. Most PGAs have regular exchanges in the form of interviews, "stakeout" appearances, formal press conferences or online media. Stakeouts are brief encounters with the media at the end of meetings or events. There are designated stakeout locations in front of the GA hall, at the delegates' entrance, and outside of the Security Council. Press conferences are longer, more formal exchanges. They take place in the Press Briefing Room of the Secretariat building. Stakeout comments and press conferences are "on the record" (i.e., can be quoted verbatim and attributed to the PGA).

All arrangements for press conferences and stakeouts are made with the Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General. Press conferences of the PGA are often scheduled immediately after the noon briefing. Press conferences are open to accredited media but not open to Member States or NGOs.

The role of the Spokesperson

The PGA has his/her own Spokesperson, seconded from DPI. The Spokesperson advises the PGA on media and communication issues and organizes the PGA's interactions with the media. He/she issues press releases, liaises with the media at the UN and outside, provides updates on the main activities of the PGA such as bilateral meetings, events and travels, and coordinates on the PGA's schedule with DPI and the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General. Currently, the spokesperson is assisted by a social media expert funded from external resources.

Official coverage

Some but not all activities of the PGA are covered by DPI, which produces press releases on all formal GA meetings and thematic debates as well as verbatim transcripts of press briefings and press conferences. UN TV and UN Radio cover all formal GA plenary meetings, providing footage for interested media. Other GA activities are covered according to available resources and newsworthiness. All meetings covered by UN TV are webcast, and archived online. UN Photo covers all of the PGA's meetings with Heads of State and Government at Headquarters. All official pictures are available from the UN photo library. The PGA's travel is covered by UN TV only if the Office of the PGA pays the expenses.

The PGA's Sermon

Every year, shortly after the opening of the GA session, the PGA is invited to deliver a sermon at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York. Traditionally every PGA, regardless of his/her religion, has agreed to be a guest preacher and to share an "inspirational overview of the value of the UN's role in the world", as the invitation states.

7.5 The PGA and the other Principal Organs

The PGA regularly meets with the Secretary-General on current affairs and to coordinate schedules, usually on a monthly basis, and ad hoc if the need arises.

To ensure increased cooperation and coordination among the General Assembly, the Security Council and ECOSOC, the GA urges the respective Presidents to meet regularly. The PGA usually meets the Presidents of the Security Council at the beginning of

their monthly terms and sometimes issues a short press release on these informal meetings. The PGA meets with the President of ECOSOC and sometimes the ECOSOC Bureau. Occasionally, the Presidents of the GA, the Security Council and ECOSOC meet with the Secretary-General for an exchange of views. The PGA also meets with the President of the International Court of Justice (based in The Hague) when possible.

7.6 Outreach

Following the mandate to improve the visibility and the profile of the GA, the PGA reaches out to civil society. Examples are accepting invitations to speak at select civil society events, giving lectures at universities both in the host country and in the countries he/she visits, engaging with Model-UN students and writing on a topic of particular interest.

The UN Non-Government Liaision Service (NGLS — see section 5.5) provides advice and facilitates outreach to civil society organizations.

Recently, the Office of the PGA has started to engage social media in its outreach efforts. A number of social media "influencers" were invited as guests of the PGA to participate in an "SDG media zone" during high-profile GA events. Located in a tent outside of the GA Hall, the zone offered a program of commentary and interactive discussion about the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (see page 19). It reached 30 million unique users.

Appendix I — Where to look it up

This list contains some useful sources of information for anyone working at, for, or with the GA.

deleGATE
www.un.int
Password-protected

UN website specifically aimed at the information needs of delegates working at UN Headquarters in New York. Includes links to essential information resources as well as delegate-specific tools and content. Hosts some of the restricted-access content for the GA and Main Committees (e-Speakers, e-Cosponsoring) and Candiweb. The website includes instructions on how to get a password.

Website of the UN Protocol Office
www.un.int/protocol

Contains information such as:
- Protocol Manual
- List of Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs for all UN Member States (with correct spelling and titles)
- List of Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers
- List of Senior Officials of the UN
- List of communications sent to Missions by the Protocol and Liaison Service
- the Blue Book (continuously updated).

Website of the PGA
www.un.org — General Assembly/President
The PGA website is a sub-site of the official GA website. Contains press releases, PGA speeches, travel details, letters to Member States, information on issues and meetings and on the PGA and his/her team.

Journal of the UN
Online: www.un.org/en/documents/journal.asp; Facebook; email subscription; @Journal_UN_ONE;
Hard-copy: available for delegations only

One of the most useful publications for the daily work of UN Delegates. Includes:
- The most up-to-date information on all intergovernmental meetings scheduled at the UN in New York
- Procedural summaries of the formal meetings of the previous day
- Links to the documents considered in formal meetings
- List of current chairs of the Regional Groups.

The Journal is issued daily in all six official languages during the main part of the GA, and in English and French during the resumed part.

The Blue Book ("Permanent Missions to the United Nations")
Online: Protocol website (*www.un.int/protocol/*); downloadable PDF

Hard-copy: issued once a year; UN Bookshop; Protocol and Liaison Service

The directory of the Permanent Missions, Observer Missions and Liaison Offices. Includes name, rank and phone number of all UN Delegates (but not their email addresses). Updated continually.

The UN Telephone Directory
Online: deleGATE (restricted)
No hard copy; available as PDF on request from Office of Central Support Services (Administrative, Finance and Personnel Section)

The UN staff equivalent of the Blue Book. Lists names, office phone numbers and office addresses (but no email addresses).

Good to know: iSeek (UN intranet) provides electronic contacts. It can be accessed from the computers in the Dag Hammarskjold Library

The New Zealand Handbook ("United Nations Handbook")
Online: App (#UNHandbookApp) and as PDF (www.mfat.govt.nz)
Hard-copy: UN Bookshop; Mission of New Zealand
Published annually by the New Zealand Government as a reference guide to all UN bodies.

The Delegate's Handbook
Online: www.un.int; ODS (ST/CS/60)
Hard-copy: UN document booth; DGACM

The Delegate's Handbook is published annually by DGACM before the beginning of the new GA session. Contains updated practical information regarding the session (contact details of General Affairs Officers, conference services, facilities for delegates, etc.)

NGO Handbook ("Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the UN — a guide") Online: www.un-ngls.org
Hard-copy: UN Bookshop; NGLS

Published by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), the NGO Handbook provides an overview of UN processes and avenues for civil society engagement as well as information on the accreditation procedures. The current edition dates from 2007.

UN "How To" App @UN-Howto
Developed by UNITAR with sponsorship by the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN, the information in this app ranges from basic administrative forms to a vast breadth of UN research tools and documentation. Intended particularly as a service for LDCs, SIDS and members of FOSS.

@PermrApp (password-protected)
Photos and biographies of the Permanent Representatives of the Member States. Developed by the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands, which provides a password (www.netherlandsmission.org).

Appendix II — A guide to GA Agenda documents

The agenda documents for each GA session have the same document numbers which helps recognizing and searching for the following agenda documents:

Preliminary list of items (A/--/50)
The "Preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the General Assembly" includes all items proposed for inclusion in the agenda. Issued early in the year (usually in February).

Annotated preliminary list of items (A/--/100)
The "Annotated version of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the General Assembly" gives the history of each item proposed for inclusion in the agenda, lists selected documents from the previous session and projects major documents (reports, etc.) to be submitted for discussion under the individual items. Issued in mid-June.

Provisional agenda (A/--/150)
The "Provisional agenda of the xxth annual session of the GA" includes all new items that have been proposed up to sixty days before the opening of the session. Issued in July.

Supplementary list of items (A/--/200)
The "Supplementary list of items proposed for inclusion in the agenda" includes all new items that have been proposed after the issuance of the provisional agenda and up thirty days before the opening of the session. Issued thirty days before the opening of the session, i.e., in mid-August.

Draft Agenda contained in Memorandum of the Secretary-General (A/BUR/--/1)
The "Memorandum of the Secretary-General on the Organization of the xxth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items" is submitted to the General Committee and is the basis for its deliberations. The memorandum includes the draft agenda. Some of the listed items may be deleted or deferred (see section 3.1). Issued in mid-September.

Report of the General Committee (A/--/250)
The "Report of the General Committee" (based on the SG memorandum) includes recommendations on the items to be included in the agenda, on the allocation of items to the Plenary or the Main Committees and on organizational aspects of the GA session.

Adopted Agenda (A/--/251)
The "Agenda of the xxth session of the GA", as adopted by the Plenary, is the basis for the work of the GA session. Additions made after the adoption are issued as Addenda to the Agenda.

Allocation of agenda items (A/--/252)
The "Allocation of agenda items for the xxth session of the GA" is the final allocation of items to the Plenary or one of the Main Committees based on the recommendations of the General Committee. Changes or additions made after the adoption are issued as Corrigenda or Addenda to the Agenda.

Note: Numbering of agenda items
The numbering of the agenda items in the preliminary list of agenda items and the provisional agenda can be different from the numbering in the adopted agenda because new items proposed may be included or rejected. The item numbers on documents issued before the adoption of the final agenda make reference to the item numbers of the provisional list and not of the final agenda.

Appendix III — GA Documents

All UN official documents carry a unique document symbol composed of numbers and letters. The different components of the document symbol identify which principal organ and which subsidiary body the document is associated with and indicate the nature of the document. Some recurring documents always carry the same document number (see Appendix II). All language versions of a document carry the same symbol. The following tables explain the componens of GA document symbols and give an example for each document type.

Decoding GA document symbols

COMPONENT	WHAT IT INDICATES	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
First	Principal organs	A = GA ST = Secretariat
Secondary	Subsidiary body or GA committee	C1-C6 = Main Committees BUR = General Committee
Special	Nature of the document	L. = limited distribution RES = resolution PV. = verbatim record SR. = summary record INF = information series CRP = conference room paper
Final	Modifications to the original text	Add. = addendum Corr. = corrigendum Rev. = revision
Session	Session the document was issued	A/74/ = 74th regular session A/S-401= 40th special session A/ES-201= 20th emergency special session
Sequential number	Document number (within one document type)	Numeric 1-9999

Examples

DOCUMENT TYPE	SYMBOL	DECODED
Reports	A/74/447	Document number 447 of the 74th session of the GA
Resolutions	A/RES/74 /333	Resolution 333 adopted at the 74th session of the GA
Draft resolutions	A/C.2/74/L.44	Draft resolution 44, tabled in the Second Committee during the 74th session of the GA
Meeting records	A/74/PV.33	Verbatim record of the 33rd formal Plenary meeting during the 74th session of the GA
	A/C.3/74/SR.6	Summary record of the sixth formal meeting of the Third Committee during the 74th GA

Key GA information documents:
At the beginning of each session a number of information documents are published in preparation for the upcoming session.

- "Opening dates of the forthcoming regular session of the General Assembly and dates of the general debate" (usually A/INF/xx/1 — issued by the UN Secretariat).
- "Programme of work of the General Assembly: schedule of plenary meetings" (contained in a note by the PGA).
- "Arrangements for the general debate of the xxth session of the General Assembly, United Nations headquarters: Information note for delegations."
- "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly: Report of the Secretary-General." The report also contains an Addendum "status of documentation for the xxth session of the General Assembly" as well as the "draft programme of work of the xxth General Assembly."

Where to find UN Documents:
Most searches for recent GA documents can be done online. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library provides an online research guide for UN documents as well as training courses and research assistance.

UN Documents (www.un.org/en/documents)
UN Documents is the umbrella website for all document-related queries with links to UN-I-QUE, UNBISnet and UN ODS.

UNBISnet: UN Bibliographic Information System
UNBIS is the catalogue of UN documents and publications indexed by the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Library of the UN Office at Geneva. It also hosts two specialized searchable databases: "Index to Speeches" and "Voting Records." UNBISnet is the most comprehensive search engine for UN documents.

UN ODS: UN Official document System ODS is the official UN document repository and pro-vides full text search of all official documents issued since 1993 and all resolutions since 1946. Digitization of older documents is ongoing.

UN-I-QUE: United Nations Info Quest
UN-I-QUE is a search tool specifically designed to search for the document symbols of reports of a recurring nature and the document symbols for GA general debate speeches (e.g. the reports of the Main Committees). It does not provide links to the actual documents.

Appendix IV — Formal and informal GA meetings

This table summarizes information contained in sections 3.2 and 3.4.

	FORMAL MEETING	INFORMAL MEETING
Chair	PGA, Committee Chairs.	PGA, Committee Chairs, Facilitators, Co-chairs, etc.
Purpose	Consideration of items on the GA agenda.	Various, including thematic debates, consultations and negotiations.
Rules	The GA Rules of Procedure apply.	The GA Rules of Procedure do not apply but often inspire the way the meetings are conducted.
Scheduling	All formal GA meetings are scheduled in the GA's programme of work, and updates are announced in the *Journal of the UN*. Only one formal meeting can take place at a time (see section 3.2).	Whenever possible, scheduled when there is no formal meeting at the same time. Meetings are announced in the *Journal of the UN* or by a note from the PGA/Chair.
Location of Meeting	GA Hall (default location for Plenary meetings). Designated conference rooms (default location for Main Committees meetings).	Large conference room.
Position of Speakers	In the Plenary, speakers make statements from the rostrum but speak from the floor on procedural issues. In the Main Committees, all speakers speak from the floor.	Speakers speak from the floor.
Seating	Seats are assigned for the duration of the session.	Seating can be assigned or open.
Speakers	Only the PGA, SG, Member States, and Observers speak in the Plenary. Other speakers require a GA decision to address the Plenary and an invitation to address the Main Committee.	It is at the Chair's discretion to also give the floor to UN entities and/or civil society representatives.
Speakers list	A formal speakers list is maintained.	An ad hoc list is maintained during the meeting. The speaking order is usually based on the order of requests from the floor.
Meeting records	Official records.	No official records — the PGA may choose to issue an unofficial summary after informal meetings such as thematic debates.
Secretariat support	Full meeting support.	Depends on the nature of the meeting.
Language used	Very formal and ceremonial.	Simpler.

Appendix V — Meeting records

All formal GA meetings are consecutively numbered. The meeting number can be found in the *Journal of the UN*. Dates and numbers of meetings are key to finding records.

Official records

Verbatim records (PV)
Verbatim records (also called "procès verbal") are word for word records of what is said during a formal Plenary or First Committee meeting. Verbatim records are prepared by the Meeting and Publishing Division in DGACM and are available on the Official Document System (ODS) several months after the meeting.

Summary records (SR)
Summary records are summaries of proceedings and statements made during a formal meeting of the General Committee or of a Main Committee (except the First Committee). Summary records are prepared by the Document Division in DGACM and are available on the Official Document System (ODS) several months after the meeting.

Voting records
Voting records are distributed to all Member States in the General Assembly Hall immediately after the vote. Copies can also be obtained from DGACM or online at *http://www.un.org/en/ga/documents/voting.asp*. The verbatim records of the meeting contain the official records including clarifications by Member States if their vote was not recorded as intended.

Other records

Press releases
DPI prepares summaries of all formal GA meetings and thematic debates for the press. Press releases are available one to two hours after the meeting on *www.un.org/en/unpress*.

PGA summaries
The PGA may prepare and circulate a summary of a thematic debate. Such summaries are usually available on the PGA website a few weeks after the event.

Audiovisual coverage
All open formal GA Plenary meetings are covered by UN TV and available as live streams and subsequently on-demand on *http://webtv.un.org/*. Sound recordings in all six official languages are also available upon request from the Meetings and Publishing Division in DGACM. Informal meetings are not verbatim-recorded. Their webcasting is subject to ad-hoc negotiations between OPGA and DPI.

Journal Summaries
The Journal of the UN contains procedural records of all formal GA meetings of the previous day. The procedural records are prepared by the Secretariat unit supporting the meeting and include a summary of proceedings including who spoke, who exercised the right of reply, etc.

Appendix VI — The organization of thematic debates

The information and recommendations below draw on the experiences and lessons learned over the last few years regarding the timeline and the logistics of organizing thematic debates. The timeline is a generic example based on a mid-April scheduling of a thematic debate.

Timeline

September/October Select idea/topic	Brainstorming, consideration of related UN events and documents, discussions with key actors etc.
November Select substantive partner	For most thematic debates, the PGA's Office works with a substantive partner who has the necessary expertise and provides support on the topic. Past partners include the UN Secretariat, other UN entities, civil society organizations, think-tanks, etc.
December Draft concept paper	A short concept paper (1–3 pages) spells out the scope and the main issues to be addressed. Often, a first draft is jointly prepared by the substantive partner and the PGA office.
Draft programme	The draft programme outlines the format, the number of panels, keynote speakers, possible side events, etc.
January Prepare list of panelists	Possible panelists and keynote speakers (and alternates, in case first choices are not available) are identified.
Set date and book room	Possible dates are discussed with DGACM to avoid scheduling conflicts with other UN events and to ensure the availability of conference rooms and an interpretation team. This is a good occasion to discuss logistics.
Update website	The PGA's website is used to give advance notice of the upcoming thematic debate.
Invite panelists	Invitations to panelists and keynote speakers are issued as letters from the PGA.
March Invite Member States	Member States are invited by a letter from the PGA (which may include background documents).
Invite other participants *(if applicable)*	Invitations to other participants such as civil society representatives are coordinated by the PGA Office with the substantive partner and/or the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS).
Meet with DGACM	A week before the event, DGACM convenes a coordination meeting with all involved meeting support units.
April Announce debate in the *Journal*	The *Journal of the UN* announcement is usually published about a week before the thematic debate.
THEMATIC DEBATE TAKES PLACE	
Circulate summary	A PGA's Summary of the event, usually drafted by the substantive partner, can be circulated to Member States shortly after the thematic debate has taken place and can be posted on the PGA website.
May Send summary as an official document	It is possible to issue the summary as an official GA document in the six official languages. This requires an accompanying note by the PGA. Translation and preparation will take time.

Logistics

Secretariat support
DGACM provides procedural support and technical services, protocol services, interpretation, conference room services, and assistance to the PGA/Chair during the meeting.

Venue
Thematic debates are usually held in larger conference rooms, with smaller conference rooms sometimes used for workshops or roundtables associated with the debate. Not all conference rooms have the same facilities (see Appendix IX).

Participation and access
Thematic debates are informal meetings and it is at the discretion of the PGA to invite UN entities, civil society and the media.

Most thematic debates are open meetings and all UN grounds-pass holders can attend. The PGA usually approves a proposed list of other participants who will be given day passes to attend the event.

Day passes have to be obtained from security, or guests can be signed in as escorted visitors by PGA Office staff (see Appendix VIII). Protocol will organize passes for Ministers and VIP guests.

Seating arrangements (floor)
The limited seating capacities in the conference rooms severely restrict attendance and require either a pre-arranged allocation of seats or close monitoring of the number of participants who enter the room.

Although there is no obligation to follow the formal assigned seating arrangement (with name plates) during an informal meeting, thematic debates tend to do so.

The remaining seats in the conference room are distributed among Observers, UN entities, civil society, the invited panelists and their entourage, VIPs, and special guests of the PGA.

It is recommended that Conference Services be involved early in the planning, as they can advise on the number of seats needed. If the number of expected participants from civil society is likely to significantly exceed the number of available seats, UN Security requires crowd-control measures. The three most common ones are:

First-come, first-served: Security will allow a certain number of civil society representatives to enter the room, based on the order in which they arrive. This is the case for most thematic debates.

Ticketing: Security will prepare a pre-determined number of tickets for civil society participants. Some of these are given in advance to selected civil society representatives and the rest are handed out at the door of the conference room on a first-come first-served basis.

Registration: If a large civil society turnout is expected, all participants with the exception of Member States and Observers can be requested to register. If there are more registrations than seats, a selection will be made based on a drawing of lots, a set of criteria (geographic representation, gender balance, etc.), or on a "first-registered, first-served basis." Registered and confirmed participants can pick up their event passes in front of the conference room or in a designated area.

Tickets or event passes do not give access to the UN grounds. They are to be used in addition to grounds-passes, protocol passes or day passes.

The office of the PGA can also request an overflow room for thematic debates, which will be allocated on an as available basis. There may be additional costs involved.

Seating arrangements (Podium)
A representative of DGACM is seated to the left of the PGA on the podium. For opening segments where the Secretary-General or his/her representative participates, he/she is seated to the right of the PGA. There are no more than seven seats on the podium.

In most cases, keynote speakers and panelists have to move to different seats during different parts of the programme. Conference Services can assist with the seating arrangements.

Media Coverage
For each thematic debate, the PGA decides on the level of media coverage. A closed thematic debate has no media coverage. An open thematic debate may have some or all of the following: audio-visual coverage, media presence in the room, press confer-ences or press stake-outs.

Panelists and keynote speakers
Travel and accommodation for panelists and keynote speakers are arranged by the Office of the PGA through the Executive Office of DGACM or sometimes directly through the substantive partner.

Cost
As long as thematic debates are not taking place in parallel with another GA meeting, there are no additional costs for regular conference services (including interpretation and webcast). However, there are other costs associated with thematic debates:

- travel and accommodation for keynote speakers and panelists
- additional conference services that may be needed, such as manual camera coverage (in rooms without automated camera coverage), interpretation into non-UN languages, mobile microphones, etc.
- "overflow rooms" for additional participants
- lunch for keynote speakers, panelists, and VIP guests.

The PGA'sTrust Fund can be used for the financing of thematic debates (see section 6.4).

All travel and accommodation arrangements for keynote speakers and panelists funded through the Trust Fund are subject to UN rules and regulations. Exceptions (such as flight upgrades) have to be requested individually.

Appendix VII — Modalities of high-level meetings

The information below draws on previous modalities resolutions for GA high-level meetings. The list is not comprehensive, and modalities resolutions do not have to address all of the elements mentioned.

Scheduling

Date and duration
In a first step, often two to three years in advance the GA decides during which session a given high-level meeting will take place. The exact date and duration is then agreed on in a subsequent GA decision (see section 5.4).

Location
The default location for high-level meetings is UN Headquarters in New York. A GA resolution/decision is required if the high-level meeting is to take place elsewhere. Holding it at a different location will incur significant additional costs.

Preparations and support

Preparatory process
A high-level meeting may include a preparatory process. The GA resolution may mandate some of the following:

- consultation process on the detailed modalities of the high-level meeting (e.g., requesting the SG to include a proposal in his/her report, requesting the PGA to hold consultations, etc.)
- consultation process for drafting and developing the outcome document (e.g., requesting the PGA to consult Member States or to submit a first draft, etc.)
- holding of civil society hearings or dialogues
- holding of regional consultations

The resolution may also request the PGA to finalize "outstanding organizational matters" — i.e., anything not covered in the resolution.

UN support
For each high-level meeting, a UN focal point (usually the UN Secretariat but sometimes another UN entity) is designated to provide substantive support.

The UN focal point coordinates the other UN entities involved in the preparations (side events, substantive inputs in SG reports, etc.) and oversees the logistics of the organizational arrangements along with DGACM.

The UN focal point supports the Chairs and Co-chairs of the round-tables, panels etc.

Outcome document

Negotiated
If the high-level meeting has a negotiated outcome document, the modalities resolution usually requests the PGA to conduct consultations and may also specify where the first draft text will originate.

It has become common practice for the PGA to appoint two facilitators (one from the North and one from the South) to conduct the negotiations on the outcome document with Member States. Outcome documents can be called "Political Declaration," "Action Plan", "Review" or can have any other descriptive names.

Non-negotiated
High-level meetings can also have a non-negotiated outcome in the form of a "summary." This option is often chosen when the high-level meeting complements another ongoing intergovernmental process. The modalities resolutions may specify the author of the summary (usually the PGA) and indicate how the summary is going to be transmitted to other (ongoing) intergovernmental processes.

Participation

Member States
The modalities resolution may indicate the anticipated level of participation of Member States (e.g., Heads of State, Heads of Government, ministerial level, etc.).

If there are parts of the high-level meeting with limited participation (e.g., roundtables), the modalities resolution may spell out criteria for the distribution of seats among regional groups.

Member States can be assigned roles as Chairs or Co-chairs of the informal parts of the high-level meeting. The distribution of roles is traditionally based on equitable regional representation. Ideally, the criteria for the selection of Co-chairs are specified in the modalities resolution. This prevents last minute complications such as deciding on how to distribute four Chairs of roundtables among five regional groups.

Observers
If there are parts of the high-level meeting with limited participation (e.g., roundtables), the modalities resolution may spell out criteria for the the participation of Observers.

Participation by UN entities
The modalities resolution may extend an invitation to UN entities to participate in the high-level meeting and define the criteria for the selection of UN entities who can attend and those who can speak at the meeting. The UN focal point usually deals with the UN internal selection of participants on behalf of the PGA.

Civil society participation
In most high-level meetings the participation of civil society is welcome. The modalities resolution may define the criteria and the process for the selection of civil society representatives who can attend and those who can speak at the meeting.

The UN focal point or the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) can be requested to convene a "civil society task-force" to propose a list of possible civil society participants for the consideration of the PGA. The PGA will then consult with Member States, usually by circulating the list and setting a deadline for any objections. Depending on the scope of the meeting the task-force may be requested to propose one list for the whole event or several lists for different parts of the event.

High-level meetings consist of a series of formal and informal meetings and the same rules for civil society participation apply as for regular GA meetings (see section 2.4).

Format

Opening/Closing plenary (formal)
High-level meetings are opened and closed in a formal GA plenary meeting by the PGA.

If the opening or closing includes speakers other than the PGA and the Secretary-General (or his/her representative), the modalities resolution must specify who the other speakers are.

The closing plenary meeting may include oral summaries of roundtables or panels by the respective Chairs or Co-chairs.

Plenary debate (formal)
A plenary debate is a formal meeting where Member States and Observers make statements. It is very similar to the general debate.

The modalities resolution may include:

- the length of statements
- specific arrangements for the speakers list (stipulating the order of precedence)
- whether civil society representatives are to be included in the speakers list.

Enough time needs to be allowed for all Member States to be able to speak.

Roundtables (informal)
Roundtables ("thematic interactive roundtables") usually focus on a specific aspect of the topic of the high-level meeting. The themes for roundtables may be included in the modalities resolution.

Roundtables are chaired or co-chaired by Member States and can have limited, usually predetermined participation: the number of Member States from each regional group and the number of Observers, UN entities, and civil society participants are decided some time before the meeting.

Roundtables do not have a formal speaking order. Depending on the Chair and the mandate, civil society participants can be included in the discussion.

The Chair or Co-chairs of a roundtable can be asked to report back to the formal plenary meetings (e.g., at the closing meeting) to present an oral summary of the roundtable.

Interactive dialogue (informal)
An interactive dialogue is a form of informal plenary debate where the Chair or Co-chairs can give the floor not only to Member States and Observers but also to representatives of civil society and UN entities. In addition to the Chair or Co-chairs, there may also be one or more keynote speakers. The modalities resolution may define the theme of the dialogue and the participation.

Interactive dialogues do not have a formal speaking order, and, depending on the Chair and the mandate, civil society participants can be included in the debate.

The Chair or Co-chairs of an interactive dialogue can be asked to report back to the formal Plenary.

Panel discussions (informal)
Panel discussions are moderated by Member States, and include two or more panelists. A discussion among panelists is followed by an interactive debate with Member States, Observers, and civil society. Occasionally, there have been "panel discussions" without any panelists. The modalities resolution may define the theme of the discussion as well as the participation.

Panel discussions do not have a formal speaking order, and, depending on the moderator and the mandate, civil society participants can be included in the debate. Panel discussions at high-level meetings are very similar to thematic debates (see section 5.5).

The moderator of a panel discussion can be asked to report back to the formal Plenary.

Costs

Additional cost
GA high-level meetings can be costly, in particular if they are scheduled in parallel with other GA meetings (see section 3.2).

Modalities resolutions may request a high-level meeting to be held "within existing resources." However, the capacity of the UN to absorb additional costs is limited and a high-level meeting may still have programme budget implications (PBI).

Trust Fund
The modalities resolution may request that a Trust Fund for the high-level meeting be set up. Voluntary contributions from Member States and others can be accepted and managed through such a Trust Fund. Trust Funds are rare for GA high-level meetings, but are more common for UN conferences.

Modalities resolutions for recent GA high-level Meetings

Name of high-level meetings (the full meeting name is contained in the resolutions/ decisions — the list uses the keywords commonly used to refer to the meetings)	Date(s)	Document symbol
Africa's Development Needs	22 September, 2008	A/RES/62/242
Anti-microbial resistance	21 September, 2016	A/RES/70/297
Biodiversity	22 September, 2010	A/64/555; A/64/203
Children	11–12 December, 2007	A/RES/61/272
Desertification	20 September, 2011	A/RES/65/160
Disabilities	23 September, 2013	A/RES/66/124
Financing for development	7–8 December 2011	A/RES/65/314
Financing for development	7–8 October, 2013	A/RES/67/300
HIV/AIDS	2 June, 2005	A/RES/65/180
HIV/AIDS	22 September, 2003	A/RES/58/313
HIV/AIDS	8–10 June, 2011	A/RES/65/180
Information Society	15–16 December, 2015	A/RES/68/302
Intercultural Understanding	4–5 October, 2007	A/RES/61/269
Least Developed Countries	19–20 September, 2006	A/RES/ 60/228
Migration	3–4 October, 2013	A/RES/67/219
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	20–22 September, 2010	A/64/555; A/RES/64/184; A/RES/63/302
Millennium Summit	6–8 September, 2000	A/RES/54/281
Non-communicable diseases	10–11 July, 2014	A/RES/68/271
New Partnership for Africa's Development	16 September, 2002	A/RES/57/308; A/RES/57/299; A/RES/56/511
Population and development	22 September, 2014	A/RES/67/250
Racism (Durban follow-up)	22 September, 2011	A/RES/65/240
Rule of law	24 September, 2012	A/RES/66/102
Small Island Developing States	24–25 September, 2010	decision 64/55; A/RES/64/199
Trafficking	13–14 May, 2013	A/RES/67/260
Trafficking	27–28 September, 2017	A/RES/71/287
Youth	25–26 July, 2011	A/RES/65/267

Appendix VIII — Access

Nobody can access the premises of the UN Headquarters in New York without a UN grounds-pass ("badge"), a special day pass or by being escorted. Delegates, UN Staff, accredited civil society and media representatives all have UN grounds-passes.

Visitors to the GA

Visitors attending a GA meeting who do not have a UN grounds-pass can access the premises in one of three ways:

- VIP guests, panelists and keynote speakers invited by the PGA are issued a protocol pass by the Protocol Office upon request from the PGA Office. A memo from the Chef de Cabinet as well as a passport-size photo of the guest has to be sent to the Chief of Protocol about a week in advance. Note: Government officials representing a Member State are not issued a protocol pass. Their passes are requested by their respective Permanent Missions.
- Other participants invited by the PGA to attend a GA meeting are provided regular day passes by UN Security. An official request together with a list of invited participants should be sent to the Chief of the Event Planning Unit of the Safety and Security Service several days in advance of the event. The day passes have to be picked up from the UN Pass and ID Unit by the PGA Office the day prior to the event/meeting.
- Staff of the PGA Office can sign in a limited number of guests as "escorted visitors" at the designated desk in the visitor's entrance.

Arrangements during the general debate

Additional color-coded passes are needed to access different parts of UN Headquarters during the high-level week and until the end of the general debate. Only VIP pass holders (e.g. Heads of State and Government) and Permanent Representatives are not required to wear an additional pass.

- An "unlimited" secondary pass is needed to access conference rooms and the GA Hall. The office of the PGA usually receives six of these passes, the same number as is issued to Permanent Missions.
- A "limited" secondary pass allows access to the second floor of the GA Hall only. The PGA Office does not usually get such passes; Permanent Missions get four.
- A "GA-200 pass" is needed for PGA Office staff to access GA-200. The PGA office usually gets four or five of these passes.

Courtesy tickets

The seating in the GA Hall's VIP section and on the 3rd floor gallery is limited. Protocol Office issues courtesy tickets for the general debate, GA meetings and other meetings/special events taking place in the GA Hall (excluding concerts) for these seats.

These tickets do not replace grounds-passes or day passes. A request for such tickets needs to be made at least one week in advance of the event, specifying for which meeting the tickets are to be issued (a.m. or p.m.) and including a list of names of the people who will be attending. The tickets are available at the Protocol Office the day prior to the meeting.

Appendix IX — Conference Rooms

GA meetings take place in the GA Hall and in conference rooms. Conference rooms vary in size, number of seats and technical equipment. Conference rooms need to be booked.

How to book a conference room:
For all formal GA meetings conference rooms are automatically booked by DGACM. For informal plenary meetings the PGA Office books rooms through DGACM. Member States who wish to book a conference room should contact the Meetings Management Section of DGACM and use eMeets (*available on https://icms.un.org*). However, there are restrictions on the use of UN conference rooms for non-UN meetings. Please see document ST/AI/416.
A conference room reservation for an informal meeting or a non GA-meeting does not automatically include an interpretation team.

Seating arrangements in conference rooms:
There are three types of seating arrangements for Member States:

- Free seating: Member States pick up their name plates at the door
- A-Z seating: seats are assigned to Member States alphabetically, starting with "A."
- GA seating: seats are assigned the way they are in the GA Hall.

If seating is assigned, the Holy See is seated after Member States and the State of Palestine is seated after the Holy See, followed by the EU and other Observers.

Good to know

- The total seating capacity of the GA Hall including the two balconies is 1912.
- "Adviser" seats are behind the "Delegate" seats and do not have microphones.
- "Observers" refers to anyone who is not entitled to sit in a Delegate/Adviser seat e.g., UN staff, civil society, invited guests.
- Tables in conference rooms 8, A, B, C, D, E and F do not have a designated podium.
- All conference rooms with the exception of rooms A, B, C, D, E and F have interpretation booths.
- There are no microphones and no audio-visual technologies in conference rooms A, B, C, D, E and F. Audio-visual coverage from these rooms (audio reinforcement, digital name plates, voting, live text captioning, audio and video capture) will incur costs.

Overview of conference room capacities
Notes on the table (figures accurate as of April 2011).

	DELEGATE	ADVISER	PODIUM	PODIUM (BACK)	OBSERVERS	GUESTS & GALLERY	TOTAL
GAH	612	612	3	-	104	509	**1840**
ECOSOC	54	108	7	14	202	162	**547**
TCC	200	200	7	14	48	162	**631**
CR 1	200	200	9	14	50	50	**523**
CR 2	200	200	9	14	48	50	**521**
CR 3	200	200	9	14	48	70	**541**
CR 4	200	200	9	13	50	259	**731**
CR 5	60	45	5	-	-	-	**110**
CR 6	68	41	5	-	-	-	**114**
CR 7	60	39	5	-	-	-	**104**
CR 8	33	56	-	-	-	-	**89**
CR 9	21	21	3	-	-	-	**45**
CR 10	33	6	-	-	-	-	**39**
CR 11	80	45	5	-	-	-	**130**
CR 12	80	43	5	-	-	-	**128**

CR = Conference Room

Appendix X — Groups of Member States

The Member States are organized in formal and informal groups with a variety of different purposes and memberships. The list below is not comprehensive and focuses on the types of groups relevant to and active in the GA.

Regional Groups

The regional groups were formed to facilitate the equitable geographical distribution of seats among the Member States in different UN bodies. To date the groups are as follows:

- Group of African States (54 Member States)
- Group of Asia-Pacific States (54 Member States)
- Group of Eastern European States (23 Member States)
- Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, GRULAC (33 Member States)
- Western European and Other States Group, WEOG (28 Member States + USA)

The USA is not an official member of any group. They participate as an observer in the Group of Western European and Other States meetings and are considered a member of Group of Western European and Other States for electoral purposes. Turkey is a member of both the Asia-Pacific Group and the Group of Western European and Other States, and for electoral purposes is considered a member of the Group of Western European and Other States only. The Holy See participates in Group of Western European and Other States meetings as an observer.

While the regional groups formally exist for electoral and ceremonial purposes, some also choose to coordinate on substantive issues and/or use the group structure to share information.

The Chairs of the regional groups rotate on a monthly basis. Their names can be found in the *Journal of the UN*. The Chairs are invited to speak on behalf of the group on ceremonial occasions (such as commemorative meetings).

Main political groups

The list below includes only groups that regularly make joint statements in formal GA meetings. Not all members of these groups are UN Member States. The information provided is based on the websites of the groups. Groups who convene around one specific item only are not listed.

Group of 77 and China (G-77)

G- 77 is an organization of developing countries designed to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations. It currently has 134 members. The Chair rotates every year starting on 1 January. In the GA the G-77 coordinates on all Second and Fifth Committee issues as well as some Third Committee and Plenary items relating to economic issues and development. The G-77 maintains an office at UN Headquarters.
www.g77.org

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of States who do not consider themselves aligned formally with or against any major power bloc. The NAM currently has 118 members and 18 observers. A NAM summit takes place every three years. The host country of the summit is automatically the Chair until the next summit. The "NAM Troika" consists of the current, previous and incoming Chair. In the GA the group coordinates on peace and security issues as well as on First, Fourth, Sixth and some Third Committee issues. The Permanent Mission of the NAM Chair is the focal point for all communication with the group. The Chair in 2017 is Venezuela.

Joint Coordination Committee (JCC)

The JCC is a coordination and harmonization mechanism for NAM and G-77, reinforcing cooperation and coordination in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of work between the two. Joint NAM and G-77 statements can be made in the name of JCC.

European Union (EU)

The EU is an integrated economic and political partnership between 28 European countries. The EU has its own diplomatic service and a permanent office, the Delegation of the European Union, in New York. The EU has an enhanced observer status in the GA and coordinates on the entire range of UN activities. The EU presidency rotates every six months.
www.europa.eu

African Union (AU)

The African Union has 55 members. The African Union has observer status and maintains a permanent office in NY. The AU and the Group of African States work closely together on GA issues. The AU Delegation in New York provides conference facilities for the Group of African States. It is usually the Group of African States that speaks in the GA and not the African Union.
www.au.int

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

AOSIS is an alliance of 42 small island states and low-lying coastal countries. It has 38 members and 5 observers. Its Chair rotates every three years. *http://aosis.org*

ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has ten members. The Chair rotates annually.
www.aseansec.org

CANZ

On certain issues Canada, Australia and New Zealand coordinate their positions and may authorize one among them to speak or negotiate on behalf of all three.

CARICOM

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an organization of 20 Caribbean nations and dependencies: 15 Member States and 5 Associate Members. Its Chair rotates on a quarterly basis among its members.

CARICOM has observer status and maintains a permanent office in NY.
www.caricom.org

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
GCC is a group of 6 countries, with an office for its Permanent Observer in New York http://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/Pages/default.aspx)

CELAC
CELAC is the Community of Latin American and Carribean States (formerly the "Rio Group"). It has 33 Member States. http://celacinternational.org/

Least Developed Countries (LDCs)
The LDCs are a group of countries whose membership is based on a set of criteria defined by the GA. There are currently 48 LDCs. The Chair of the group rotates every three years.
www.unohrlls.org

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)
There are 32 LLDCs. The special situation of LLDCs is recognized by the GA. The Chair rotates every two years.
www.unohrlls.org

League of Arab States
The League of Arab States (sometimes called "the Arab League") is a regional organization. It has 21 members and four observers. Its Chair rotates on a monthly basis. The League of Arab States coordinates on Fourth Committee and Middle East issues. The League of Arab States has observer status and maintains a permanent office in NY.
www.arableagueonline.org

Nordic Countries
The Nordic co-operation involves Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden as well as the three autonomous areas. Its presidency rotates annually.
www.norden.org

Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)
The OIC is an organization with 57 Member States. The host country of the Islamic Summit Conference assumes the chair of the organization for three years. The OIC has observer status and maintains a permanent office in NY.
www.oic-oci.org

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)
The Pacific Islands Forum is a political grouping of 16 independent and self-governing states. The host country of the annual Forum is also the chair for the year following the Forum.
www.forumsec.org.fj

Pacific Small Island Developing States (Pacific SIDS)
Pacific SIDS is a group of Pacific Island countries focused on advocating for their members, particularly on issues of climate change and sustainable development.

Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group
ACT is a cross-regional group of 27 small and mid-sized countries working to improve the accountability, coherence and transparency of the UN Security Council.

A note on JUSCANZ: JUSCANZ is an informal group of Member States that originally consisted of Japan, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (hence the name). The group has expanded and now includes other countries that do not belong to the G-77, NAM or the EU. JUSCANZ coordinates mainly on Second and Third Committee issues. Its membership and the scope of coordination are different for the two committees.

A note on "Major Groups": This term is used in the context of Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) when referring to civil society organizations. There are nine major group sectors: Business and industry, Children and youth, Farmers, Indigenous peoples, Local authorities, NGOs, Scientific and technological community, Women, and Workers and Trade Unions.
www.un.org/esa/dsd/

Source Notes

Source notes are organized by chapter, section and page number. Key words or key phrases are cited followed by the source reference. Sometimes a sample resolution is given to illustrate a certain precedent. These are indicated by "e.g." The acronym RoP is used for the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.18). B indicates text in boxes.

1 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ITS PRESIDENT

Page 13
"Each Member State has one vote": UN Charter, Article 18.
"World Summit outcome": A/RES/60.1.
"the GA has a President": UN Charter, Article 21.
"twenty-one Vice-Presidents": RoP, Rule 30.
"six Main Committees": RoP, Rule 98.
"General Committee": RoP, Rule 38.
"Credentials Committee": RoP, Rule 28.
"subsidiary bodies": UN Charter, Article 7.

1.1 Mandate of the GA

Page 13
"may discuss and make recommendations on…": UN Charter, Article 10.
"receives and discusses reports issued by…": UN Charter, Article 15.
"may discuss functions and powers of other…organs": UN Charter, Article 10.
"approves the budget of the UN and…": UN Charter, Article 17.
"elects and appoints…": UN Charter, Articles 23, 61, 86 and 97.

Page 14
"GA revitalization": A/RES/69/321, A/RES/70/305 and A/RES/71/323.

1.2 GA Sessions

Page 14
"The regular annual session…": UN Charter, Article 20; RoP, Rules 1–6.
"A special session of the GA…": UN Charter, Article 20; RoP, Rules 7–9.
un.org/en/ga/sessions/special.shtml

Page 15
"Emergency special session…": RoP, Rule 8; RES 377A(V).
un.org/en/ga/sessions/emergency.shtml

B "tenth emergency special session": ES-10/18.

1.3 The President of the GA

Page 15
"the Member State of the PGA cannot … hold the office of…": RoP, Rule 38.
"The Presidency…rotates among the five regional groups": A/RES/33/138.
www.un.org/en/ga/president/index.shtml

Page 16
"the PGA is elected by simple majority vote": UN Charter, Article 18.
"the election can take place by acclamation": RoP, Annex V, para. 16.
"The PGA is elected at least three months before…": A/RES/58/126, Annex, sect. B.
"the PGA does not have a vote in the GA": RoP, Rule 37.
"The Charter … only establishes the function of the PGA": UN Charter, Article 21.
"the exact role and mandate of the PGA…": RoP, Rules 30–37; A/63/959 , A/RES/69/321, A/RES/70/305.
B "The default location for all GA...": RoP, Rule 3.
B ""GA meeting ... took place in Geneva.": A/43/PV.77-82; A/S/24/PV.1–10.
"According to the Rules of Procedure, the PGA shall…": RoP, Rule 35.
"…hold thematic debates": A/RES/60/286.
"…suggest the theme for the general debate": A/RES/58/126.
"...organize hearings for the election of the SG": A/RES/69/321 and A/RES/70/305.
"…preserve records and prepare a report on best practices…": A/RES/60/286.and A/RES/70/305.
"…enhance public visibility of the PGA and the GA": A/RES/60/286.
"…meet regularly with…": A/RES/60/286.
"...brief Member States periodically...including on official travels...": A/RES/70/305.
"...provide financial disclosures...": A/70/305.62.

Page 17
"...observe a code of ethics", RoP, Annex XI.
"…have contacts with … civil society": A/RES/60/286.

1.4 The Vice-Presidents of the GA

"…the GA elects the twenty-one Vice-Presidents…": RoP, Rule 30.

"…to ensure balanced geographic representation…": A/RES/33/138.
"…one less vice-presidential mandate": A/RES/33/138.
"…Vice-Presidents are members of the General Committee": RoP, Rule 38.
"…acting President of the GA": RoP, Rule 32.

1.5 The GA Committees

Page 17 "General Committee": RoP, Rule 38.
"Credentials Committee": RoP, Rule 28.
Page 18 "The Main Committees consist of all Member States of the GA": RoP, Rule 100.
"the six Main Committees roughly correspond…": RoP, Rule 98. "…
elected on the same day as the PGA…": A/RES/58/126.
"The elections of the Chairs of the Main Committees": RoP, Rule 30.
"…Main Committee chair rotates…": A/RES/48/264.
"…Main Committee … bureau": RoP, Rule 103.
Page 18 B "…elections take place … in the following order": RoP, Rule 30.
Page 19 "The General Committee…": RoP, Rule 38, Rule 40.
"The Credentials Committee…": RoP, Rule 28.
",,,subsidiary bodies" UN Charter, Article 22; RoP, Rules 96–97.
"…the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the GA…": A/RES/70/305.
"… subsidiary body elects one Chair, one or more Vice-Chairs…": A/RES/70/305.

1.6 The High-Level Policial Forum

Page 19 "…2030 Agenda…" A/RES/66/288, A/RES/67/290, A/RES/68/1, A/RES/70/1, A/RES/70/299.

1.6 The UN System and the GA

Page 22 "The UN Secretariat is one of the principal organs of the UN": UN Charter, Article 7.
"Funds and Programmes … such as … UNDP/UNFPA…": RES 2029 (XX), A/RES/48/162.
"Funds and Programmes … such as … UNICEF…": RES 57 (I), A/RES/48/162.
"… UN Women…": A/64/289
"Funds and Programmes … such as WFP…": RES 1714 (XVI), A/RES/50/8.
"Specialized Agencies … relationship with the UN": UN Charter, Article 57.
"Other bodies related to the UN": UN Charter, Article 57.

1.7 DGACM

Page 24 *http://www.un.org/Depts/DGACM/*

2 PARTICIPATION AND CREDENTIALS

2.1 Member States

Page 28 "Membership in the United Nations is open to…": UN Charter, Article 4.
"In order to gain admission…": RoP, Rules 134–136.
"Membership becomes effective…": RoP, Rule 138.
"…suspending the membership of a Member State": UN Charter, Article 6.
"…each Member State … who … speak on its behalf": RoP, Rule 27.
"The delegation of a Member State consists of…": RoP, Rule 25.

Page 29 "Credentials are issued…": RoP, Rule 27.
"The credentials are … considered by the Credentials Committee": RoP, Rule 28.
"A representative whose credentials have been challenged…": RoP, Rule 29.
"host country": *www.usun.state.gov/about/host_aff/*

2.2 Observers

Page 30 "Observer status is granted by a GA resolution…": A/RES/54/195.
"Holy See": A/RES/58/314, A/58/871.
"Palestine": A/RES/52/250; A/52/1002. A/67/19.
"EU": A/RES/65/276.

2.3 UN Entities and Civil Society

Page 31 "…participation of (NGOs) in ECOSOC…": UN Charter, Article 71.
"…only speak if specified in a GA resolution/decision": e.g., A/RES/69/244

3 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT WORK

3.1 The GA Agenda

Page 37 B "…reading out the whole list of agenda items…": e.g., A.BUR/71/SR.1.
"agenda is organized…": A/RES/58/316.
"the biannual 'priorities of the Organization'": A/RES/69/17.

"the General Committee": RoP, Rules 38–44.
"Member States can attend … General Committee": A/RES/51/241, Annex, para. 33.
"rationalization and streamlining": A/RES/58/126, Annex, sect.B., A/RES/70/305.
"recommended not to be included": e.g., A/71/250, para. 59.

Page 38 "recommended for inclusion in a future session": e.g., A/71/250.
"included with an understanding ... new information is available": e.g., A/71/250.
"the consideration of the inclusion ... can be referred to a later date": e.g., A/71/250.
"allocation of agenda items": A/RES/51/241.
"allocated to more than one Main Committee...": e.g., A/71/250, paras. 71 (b), 67 (i).
"...makes suggestions about ... organizational matters": RoP, Rules 99 and 41.
"introduction of a new agenda item": RoP, Rules 13–15.
"reopening a closed agenda item…": RoP, Rule 81, A/RES/51/241, Annex, para. 23.

3.2 GA Meetings

Page 39 "a standard GA meeting...": e.g., A/71/250.
"...GA meetings are "open" unless decided otherwise": RoP, Rule 60–61.
B "...the GA Hall is considered a "normal" UN conference room ...": ST/AI/416.
Page 40 "...a formal plenary meeting ... if its Head of State...": e.g., A/64/PV.105.
"... the cost of meetings..." internal information from the Secretariat.
Page 41 "...the GA's programme of work": e.g., A/INF/71/3.
"...formal GA meetings are scheduled on Mon. and Thurs.": A/RES/58/316.
http://www.un.org/en/ga/info/meetings/index.shtml

3.3 Conduct of Business

Page 44 "Conduct of business in the GA's Rules of Procedure": RoP, Rules 63–81.
"...a point of order": RoP, Rule 71
Page 45 "Quorum": RoP, Rule 67.
"Quorum ... waived...": e.g., A/71/250.
"Point of order": RoP, Rule 71.
"Suspension of a meeting": RoP, Rule 76.
"Adjournment of a meeting": RoP, Rule 76.
"Adjournment of the debate": RoP, Rule 74.
"No-action motion" RoP, Rule 74.

3.4 Debating GA Agenda Items

Page 46 "six-week-rule": A/RES/ 49/221 B.
"The status of the preparation of reports...": e.g., A/64/854/Add.1.
Page 47 "The introduction of a report may be followed by "question time": A/RES/58/316.
Page 48 "...time limits for speeches": A/RES/ 51/241; e.g., A/71/250, para. 26.
"speaking time ... high-level-meetings": e.g., A/64/184, Annex I, para. 8.
"language and interpretation": RoP, Rule 53.
Page 49 "Closure of the list of speakers": RoP, Rule 75.
"right of reply": RoP, Rule 73, Annex V, para. 8–11.
"Closure of the debate": RoP, Rule 75.

3.5 GA Resolutions and Decisions

Page 52 "draft resolutions ... written by Member States": A/RES/60/286, Annex, para. 23.
Page 54 "...withdraw the draft resolutions/decisions": RoP, Rule 80.
"24 hour rule": RoP, Rule 78.
Page 55 ""Decision on competence": RoP, Rule 79.
"voting on resolutions": RoP, Rules 82–95.
"voting on amendments": RoP, Rule 90.
"voting on paragraphs": RoP, Rule 99.
"explanation of vote": RoP, Rule 88, annex IV, paras. 72–74; Annex V, paras. 6, 7, 11.
"reconsideration of an adopted resolution/decision": RoP, Rule 81.
"Simple majority and two-thirds majority": RoP, Rules 83–86.
Page 56 "In the case of a tie in the Plenary...": RoP, Rule 95.
"In the case of a tie in a Main Committee...": RoP, Rule 133
Page 57 "PGA-lead consultations…facilitators": A/RES/55/285, Annex, para.19.
Page 60 "QuickPlace": see e-deleGATE.

3.6 Elections and Appointments

Page 61 B gender Blue Book No. 306, online update as of 2 September, 2017
Page 62 "...simple majority...": RoP, Rule 84.

"...two-thirds majority...": RoP, Rule 83.
"...members present and voting": RoP, Rule 85.
B "the tie-breaker provision": RoP, Rule 93.
"Abstentions and invalid ballots": RoP, Rule 86.
"Voting by ballot": RoP, Rule 92.
"Voting by acclamation": RoP, Annex V, para. 16.
"appointment of the Secretary-General": RoP, Rule 141.
"..."hearings" (with SG candidates)..." : A/RES/69/321 , A/RES/70/305.36.
Page 63 "...duration of term ... number of terms a Secretary-General": Resolution 492 (V).
"...number of terms a Secretary-General": RES 492 (V).
"...duration of term ... Secretary General": A/RES/51/241, Annex, para. 58.
"election of non-permanent members of the Security Council": RoP, Rules 142–144.
"the regional distribution ... in the Security Council": Resolution 1991 (A) (XVIII).
"If the first round of balloting is inconclusive": RoP, Rules 93–94.
Page 64 "election of the members of the International Court of Justice": RoP, Rules 150–151, A/69/230.
"Election of Human Rights Council members": A/RES/60/251, A/69/230.OP7.
Page 65 "Election of Peacebuilding Commission...": A/RES/60/180, A/RES/60/261,A/RES/63/145.

4 MAIN COMMITTEES

Page 68 "All Member States are members of all Main Committees": RoP, Rule 98.
"...webcast": A/RES/66/246.
"...patterns of rotation...": Decision 68/505; A/RES/68/307 Annex "guidelines". B
"In 1993 the GA decided to merge...": A/RES47/233.

4.1 The Work of the Main Committees

Page 68 "…each Committee has developed its own working methods…": A/58/CRP.5.
Page 69 "committee works begins … after the general debate": A/RES/51/241, Annex, para. 31.
"...the First Committee and the Fourth Committee scheduled...": A/RES/51/241.
"...in the Main Committees ... decided by a simple majority": RoP, Rules 125. C1 working methods: A/RES/59/95.
Page 71 C2 working methods: Decision 65/530. and A/C.2/L.1.
Page 73 C3 working methods: A/C3/68/CRP.1.
Page 75 C4 working methods: A/58/CRP.5
Page 77 "All draft ... budget implications..." RoP, Rule 153; Annex V, para. 13 (a).
planning and budget process see:ST/SGB/2016/6.
C5 working methods: A/58/CRP.5.
Page 79 C6 working methods: A/58/CRP.5.

5 KEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY EVENTS

5.1 The Opening Week

Page 84 "The GA's regular annual session begins on...": RoP, Rule 1.
"a minute of silent prayer or meditation is observed": RoP, Rule 62.
"the appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee": RoP, Rule 28.
"granting of permission ... to meet during the main part...": A/RES/ 40/243; e.g., A/65/337.
"report of the General Committee": e.g., A/71/250.

5.2 The High-Level Week

Page 85 "Opening of the General Debate": A/RES/57/301.
"DGACM issues an information note... ": e.g., A/INF/65/4.

5.3 The General Debate

Page 86 "The general debate opens on...": A/RES/57/301.
"the general debate ... nine working days": A/RES/57/301.
"...a topic/theme of global concern for the general debate": e.g., A/RES/70/305.12.
Page 87 "The SG introduces the "Report...": A/RES/51/241.
"...Holy See and Palestine ... participate in the general debate": A/RES/52/250, A/RES/58/314.
"...a voluntary 15-minute time limit for statements": e.g., A/71/250, para. 26.
"...until all scheduled speakers have spoken": A/RES/51/241, Annex, para. 20.
"The right of reply ... is made in writing.": P.V. 2377th meeting (30st GA).

5.4 High-Level Meetings

Page 88 See Appendix VII.

5.5 Thematic Debates

Page 89 "...encouraged the PGA to continue this practice": A/RES/60/286, A/RES/63/309, A/RES/64/301, A/RES/70/305.

5.6 Civil Society Hearings

Page 90 "Civil society hearings ... a GA high-level meeting": e.g., A/RES/65/180, A/RES/65/238, A/RES/71/287.
"Civil society hearings ... or a UN conference": A/RES/65/171.

5.7 Commemorative GA Meetings

Page 91 "...The standard format is as follows": e.g., A/64/250, para.43.

6 THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

6.1 The Code of Ethics

Page 94 Code of Ethics: RoP Annex XI
Page 95 "five regular UN budget posts": A/RES/58/126, A/RES/59/313.
"...Spokesperson and...": A/RES/60/286.
Page 96 "the PGA has offices": A/RES/59/313, para. 3.
B "...transitional offices": A/RES/59/313.
"Technical Support": UN internal regulations.
Page 98 "regular budget ... has not changed since 1998": e.g., A/64/6 (Sect. 1), paras. 1.9–1.11.
"regular budget covers…": A/RES/53/214.
Page 99 "Safety and Security": UN internal regulations.
Page 100 "The Protocol and Liaison Service ... specific services": A/RES/59/313.
"PGA Travels": UN internal regulations.

7 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Page 104 "...more public visibility … of the GA and the PGA": A/RES/58/126, A/RES/60/286, A/RES/321 and A/RES/70/305
"The PGA works on behalf of the Member States": RoP, Rule 36.
Page 106 "... Spokesperson...": A/RES/60/286..
Page 106 "To ensure increased cooperation…" A/RES/60/286, Annex, para. 2.
"…meets with...President of the Security Council…": A/RES/58/126, Annex, para.5.

Index

2030 Agenda 19

A

Absolute majority 62, 64
Access 121
Access, civil society 117,118, 121
Access, general debate 86, 121
Access, visitors 121
ACT — Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group 124
Accreditation 29,
Accreditation, PGA 101
Action (taking action) 54
Ad hoc committees 39
Adjournment of debate 45
Adjournment of meeting 45
Adoption, agenda 36
Adoption, resolutions 55, 58
African Group 15, 17, 61, 63, 64, 71–83, 123
African Union — see AU
Agenda 36, 111
Agenda items, numbering 111
Agreed 57
Agreed ad ref 57
Agreed language 58
Alliance of Small Island States 123
All-State formula 29
Alt 57
Amendments 55, 56, 68
AOSIS 123
Appointments — see Elections
Arab swing seat 63
ASEAN 123
Asia-Pacific 15, 17, 61, 63, 64, 71–83, 123
AU 123

B

Badge 32, 121
Bis 57
Budget of the PGA 98

C

CANZ 123
CARICOM 123
CELAC 124
Check against delivery 47
Civil society access 117,118, 121
Civil society hearings 90
Civil society participation 31, 117,118, 121
Closed meetings 39
Closure of agenda item 38
Closure of debate 49
Closure of session 84
Closure of speakers list 49
Code of Ethics — see PGA, code of ethics
Commemorative meetings 91
Committee 17
Committee, ad hoc 19
Committee, Credentials 19
Committee, General 12, 19, 37,
Committee, Main 19, 67–83
Competence, decision on 55
Compilation texts 57
Conduct of Business 44
Conference rooms 122
Conference services 25, 48, 117
Consensus 52
Consideration of item 46
Consideration of L-document 54
Consultations 56
Co-sponsoring 53
Cost of meetings 40
Courtesy tickets 121
Credentials 28
Credentials Committee 12, 19, 29

D

Dag Hammarskjöld Library 113
Debate, 46
Debate, general 86
Debate, Main Committees 67–83
Decision 52
Decision on competence 55
deleGATE 110
Delegate's Handbook 110
Delegation 28
Department of Public Information — see DPI
Department of Safety and Security — see DSS
DGACM 24, 31, 44, 46, 53, 61, 71–79, 94–101, 122
Distribution of speeches 48, 87
Divided vote 55
Division of proposal 55
Documents, numbering 54, 112
Documents, symbols 112
DPI 41, 95, 106, 115
Draft agenda 37, 111
Draft resolutions 52, 57
DSS 99

E

Eastern European Group 15, 17, 61, 63, 64, 71–83, 123
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 13
ECOSOC, election 63
Election, SG — see SG appointment
Elections 13, 61
Elections, GA officers 18
Elections, subsidiary bodies 64
Elections, PGA 16
Elections, principal organs 62
Emergency special session 15
EU 30, 39, 47, 87, 122, 123
European Union — see EU
Explanation of vote 49, 55

F

Fifth Committee 77
First Committee 69
Formal informals 58
Formal meetings 39
Fourth Committee 75
Funds and Programmes 22, 73

G

G–77 47, 123
GA-200 88, 96
GAEAD (in DGACM) 24, 94
GA and ECOSOC Affairs Division (in DGACM) — see GAEAD
GA Hall 18, 38, 114, 121, 122
GA revitalization 14, 16, 38

GA Rules of Procedure 13, 16, 24, 39, 44, 45, 49, 54, 55, 63, 68, 86, 114
Gender 61
General Committee 12, 19, 37, 111
General debate 86
General debate, theme 86, 101
Geographical representation 61
Grounds pass — see Badges
Group of Nordic Countries 124
Groups, political 123
Groups, regional 123
GRULAC 15, 17, 61, 63, 64, 71–83, 123

H
Hearings with SG candidates 62
High-level meetings 88, 118
High-level Political Forum 19
High-level week 85, 121
Holy See 30, 39, 87, 122
Human Rights Council, election 64

I
ID Cards —see Badges
Important questions 54
Informal informals 58
Informal meetings 39, 41, 115
International Court of Justice, election 64
Interpretation 48
Introduction of L-document 54
Introduction of new agenda items 37

J
JCC 123
Join Coordination Committee — see JCC
Journal of the UN 25, 39, 41, 110, 114, 115, 116, 123
Journal Summaries 115
JUSCANZ 124

L
Landlocked Developing Countries — see LLDC
Latin American and Caribbean Group — see GRULAC
L-document 53, 54
LDC 124
League of Arab States 124
Length of speech, debate 48
Length of speech, general debate 87
Least Developed Countries — see LDC
LLDC 124

M
Main Committees 12, 18, 67–83
Main Committees, elections 18
Main Committees, First 69
Main Committees, Second 71
Main Committees, Third 73
Main Committees, Fourth 75
Main Committees, Fifth 79
Main Committees, Sixth 81
Main part of session 14
Main sponsor 52
Major groups 124
Majority, absolute 62
Majority, simple 49, 54, 62
Majority, two-thirds 54, 62
Mandate, GA 13
Mandate, PGA 16
Media 105, 117
Meeting records 115
Meetings 39 – 41
Meetings, Commemorative 91
Meetings, high-level 88, 118
Membership 28
Member States 13, 28

N
NAM 123
Negotiations 56
New Zealand Handbook 110
NGLS 90, 91, 107, 110, 116, 119
NGO Handbook 110
No-action motion 45
Non-Aligned Movement — see NAM
Non-Governmental Liaison Service — see NGLS
Noon briefing 105
Numbering of agenda items 111
Numbering of resolutions 54

O
Oath of Office — see PGA, oath of office
Observers 30, 32, 47, 87, 118
ODS 113
Office of Legal Affairs 44, 81
Office of the PGA 93–102
Officers of the Main Committees 18
OIC 124
OP — see paragraphs, operative
Open meetings 39
Opening Week 84
Organisation of the Islamic Conference — see OIC

P
Pacific Island Forum — see PIF
Pacific Small Island Developing States 124
Palestine 29, 30, 39, 76
Paragraphs, operative and preambular 60
Paragraph vote 55
Peacebuilding Commission, election 65
Permanent Mission 29
PermRApp 110
PGA-elect 96
PGA, briefings 105
PGA, code of ethics 94
PGA, consultations 56, 105
PGA, election 16
PGA, eligibility 15
PGA, financial disclosure 16, 104
PGA, mandate 16
PGA, oath of office 84
PGA, record keeping 104
PGA, Sermon 106
PGA, spouse and family 100
PGA, summary 115, 116
PGA, travel 101
PGA, visa 101
PIF 124
Plenary 12, 13
Point of order 44
Political groups 123
PP — see Paragraphs, preambular
President — see PGA
Press Conference 106
Press releases 41, 106, 115
Principal organs 13, 23, 62, 106
Priorities of the Organization 37

Programme budget implication 56
Programme of work, Main Committees 41, 69
Programme of work, Plenary 41
Protocol and Liaison Service 25, 100
Provisional agenda 37, 111

Q

QuickPlace 69
Quorum 45

R

Reconsideration of resolution 55
Records, voting 115
Regional groups 69–81, 123
Regional representation 61
Regular annual session 14
Reports, introduction 47
Reports, SG 46
Reports, subsidiary bodies 47
Resolution 52, 60
Resolution, action 54
Resolution, mistake in final version 58
Resolution, numbering 54
Resolution, withdrawal 54
Resumed part of the session 14
Right of reply 49
Right of reply, general debate 87
Rio Group —see CELAC
Rooms — see conference rooms
Rotation, regional 61, 68, 71–78
Rules of Procedure — see GA Rules of Procedure

S

Seating arrangements 122
Seating arrangements, GA Hall 18, 122
Second Committee 71
Secretary-General — see SG
Security Council, election 63
Separate vote 55
Sermon, PGA 106
Sessions 14
SG, appointment 62
SG, events 85
SG, PGA 106
SG, report 46
Silence procedure 58
Simple majority 54, 62
Sixth Committee 81
Social Media 104, 106, 107
Speakers list, debates 47
Speakers list, general debate 86
Speaking order, debates 47
Speaking order, general debate 86
Specialized Agencies 22
Special Political Committee 68
Special session 14
Speeches, debate 48
Speeches, general debate 86
Spokesperson of the PGA 106
Sponsor 52
Spouse of the PGA 100, 101
Stakeouts 106
Statements — see speeches
Subsidiary bodies 19
Summary, PGA 115, 116
Summary records 115
Summit 89
Suspension of meeting 45
Sustainable development goals 19
Switzerland 28
Symbols — see document symbols

T

Tabling draft resolution 53
Takes note of 46
Taking action 54
Telephone Directory 110
Tenth Emergency Special Session 15
Thematic debate 89, 116
Theme of general debate 86, 101
Third Committee 73
Tickets 117, 121
Tie-breaker 61
Tied vote, election 61
Tied vote, Main Committee and Plenary 56
Transition period 96
Travel, PGA 100
Twitter 104

U

Unanimity 52
UN Bodies 23
UN Conference 89
UN Entities 23, 31, 117
UN Entities, participation 118
UN Family 23
UN Headquarters 16
UN Journal — See Journal of the UN
UN Organs 13, 23, 62, 106
UN Photo 48
UN System 23
UN TV 104, 106, 115
UN, related bodies 22
UNBISnet 113
UNGASS 14
UN "How To" App 110
UN-I-QUE 113
United Nations, UN 22

V

Verbatim records 115
Vice-Presidents 17
Voting by acclamation 62
Voting by ballot 62
Voting on amendments 55
Voting on resolutions 55
Voting records 115
Voting, tie 56

W

Walkout 87
Website, PGA 104
WEOG 15, 17, 61, 63, 64, 71–83,123
Western European and Other States Group — see WEOG
Working groups 19

Photo Credits

Front cover
Switzerland becomes a Member State. Federal President Kaspar Villiger and Foreign Minister Joseph Deiss walking to their seats in the General Assembly. UN Headquarters, 10 September 2002.
Photo Dominik Baumann, Blick

Inside covers
193 Member States in the General Assembly: All speakers at the general debate of the 71st session, and some speakers at the general debate of the 70th session.
UN Photo

Interior photography by Sally Montana, USA/Switzerland

Page 6
General Assembly Hall Balcony, overlooking the Visitors Lobby

Page 8
Diplomatic Entrance, UN General Assembly Hall

Page 10
General Assembly Hall

Page 20–21
Huichun Li, Tour Guide

Page 26
Wai Tak Chua, Protocol Officer

Page 33
Alina-Angela Dumitrache, Security Officer, Security Council entrance

Page 34
Joëlle Sciboz, Librarian, Dag Hammarskjold Library

Page 42–43
Raphael Pasquini and Talia Charlton, United Nations Child Care Center, Bright Horizons

Page 50–51
Luis Mata, Vienna Café, UN General Assembly Building

Page 59
Anazario Valdez, Chef, Delegates Dining Room

Page 66
Argjent Trepca, Cleaning Services

Page 82
Donald Thurin, Elevator Operator

Page 92
Loren Mitchell-Alleyne, Security Officer, Visitors Lobby

Page 102
Katharina Kandt, Social Media Specialist, Office of the President of the General Assembly

Page 108–109
John Grassi, Gardener

Page 130–131
Delegates Lounge

Acknowledgments

In reediting this book, we found quite a number of changes in the complex web of rules, regulations, practices and customs relevant to the General Assembly. The task could not have been accomplished without the generous help from the United Nations Secretariat.

Special thanks go to Kenji Nakano (DGACM), whose support was invaluable, to Mary Regan (UN Language and Communications Programme), who polished the English, and to Johann Aeschlimann, whose hand was at the helm. They were greatly supported by Rachel Stein-Holmes (DGACM), Simone Eymann (Swiss Mission to the UN) and Andrea Clementi and Lyne Calder at the home office in Bern.

The General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division, the Protocol and Liaison Office and the Meetings Management Section in DGACM, DSS, DM, the UN Photo Library and the Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit of DPI, the Main Committee secretariats, the Office of the Spokesperson of the SG and the Office of the President of the General Assembly have all patiently explained the often complicated processes and practices of the UN. We thank all of them very much.

We are grateful to Sally Montana, whose photography shows the human face of those working underground and behind the scenes.

Last but not least our thanks go to Linda Florio, whose design stood the test of time in presenting dry matter, and who offered invaluable help throughout the entire process.

Ambassador Jürg Lauber
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation