



# General Assembly

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## **Fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects**

New York, 17–28 June 2024

### **Provisional rules of procedure of the Conference**

#### **I. Representation and credentials**

##### **Rule 1**

##### **Composition of delegations**

The delegation of each State participating in the Conference shall consist of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

##### **Rule 2**

##### **Alternates and advisers**

The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

##### **Rule 3**

##### **Submission of credentials**

The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of the Conference, if possible not less than one week before the date fixed for the opening of the Conference. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of the State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

##### **Rule 4**

##### **Credentials Committee**

A Credentials Committee of nine members shall be appointed at the beginning of the Conference. Its composition shall be based on that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its most recent session. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference without delay.



**Rule 5**  
**Provisional participation in the Conference**

Pending a decision of the Conference upon their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the Conference.

**II. Officers**

**Rule 6**  
**Elections**

The Conference shall elect from among the representatives of participating States the following officers: a President, 14 Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur-General, as well as a Chair for each of the Main Committees established in accordance with rule 46. These officers shall be elected on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the General Committee. The Conference may also elect such other officers as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

**Rule 7**  
**General powers of the President**

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon the President elsewhere by these rules, the President shall preside at the plenary meetings of the Conference, declare the opening and closing of each meeting, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. The President shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order thereat. The President may propose to the Conference the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times each representative may speak on a question, the adjournment or closure of the debate and the suspension or the adjournment of a meeting.
2. The President, in the exercise of the functions of the office, remains under the authority of the Conference.

**Rule 8**  
**Acting President**

1. If the President is absent from a meeting or any part thereof, the President shall designate one of the Vice-Presidents to take the President's place.
2. A Vice-President acting as President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

**Rule 9**  
**Replacement of the President**

If the President is unable to perform the functions of the office, a new President shall be elected.

**Rule 10**  
**Voting rights of the President**

The President, or a Vice-President acting as President, shall not vote in the Conference, but may appoint another member of the same delegation to vote in that officer's place.

### **III. General Committee**

#### **Rule 11 Composition**

The President, the Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur-General and the Chairs of the Main Committees shall constitute the General Committee. The President, or, in the President's absence, one of the Vice-Presidents designated by the President, shall serve as Chair of the General Committee. The Chair of the Credentials Committee and other committees established by the Conference in accordance with rule 48 may participate, without the right to vote, in the General Committee.

#### **Rule 12 Substitute members**

If the President or a Vice-President of the Conference is to be absent during a meeting of the General Committee, that officer may designate a member of the same delegation to sit and vote in the Committee. In case of absence, the Chair of a Main Committee shall designate the Vice-Chair of that Committee as the substitute. When serving on the General Committee, the Vice-Chair of a Main Committee shall not have the right to vote if the Vice-Chair is of the same delegation as another member of the General Committee.

#### **Rule 13 Functions**

The General Committee shall assist the President in the general conduct of the business of the Conference and, subject to the decisions of the Conference, shall ensure the coordination of its work.

### **IV. Secretariat of the Conference**

#### **Rule 14 Duties of the Secretary-General of the Conference**

1. The Secretary-General of the Conference shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary organs.
2. The Secretary-General of the Conference may designate a member of the secretariat to act in the Secretary-General's place at these meetings.
3. The Secretary-General of the Conference shall direct the staff required by the Conference.

#### **Rule 15 Duties of the secretariat**

The secretariat of the Conference shall, in accordance with these rules:

- (a) Interpret speeches made at meetings;
- (b) Receive, translate, reproduce and circulate the documents of the Conference;
- (c) Publish and circulate the official documents of the Conference;
- (d) Prepare and circulate records of public meetings;
- (e) Make and arrange for the keeping of sound recordings;
- (f) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents of the Conference in the archives of the United Nations;
- (g) Generally perform all other work that the Conference may require.

**Rule 16**

**Statements by the secretariat**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Conference, or any member of the secretariat designated by either for that purpose, may, at any time, make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

**V. Opening of the Conference**

**Rule 17**

**Temporary President**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, or the Secretary-General of the Conference in the absence of the former, shall open the first meeting of the Conference and preside until the Conference has elected its President.

**Rule 18**

**Decisions concerning organization**

The Conference shall, to the extent possible, at its first meeting:

- (a) Adopt its rules of procedure;
- (b) Elect its officers and constitute its subsidiary organs;
- (c) Adopt its agenda, the draft of which shall until such adoption be the provisional agenda of the Conference;
- (d) Decide on the organization of its work.

**VI. Conduct of business**

**Rule 19**

**Quorum**

The President may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the representatives of the States participating in the Conference are present. The presence of representatives of a majority of the States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.

**Rule 20**

**Speeches**

1. No representative may address the Conference without having previously obtained the permission of the President. Subject to rules 21, 22 and 25 to 27, the President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The secretariat shall be in charge of drawing up a list of speakers.
2. Debate shall be confined to the question before the Conference and the President may call a speaker to order if the speaker's remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
3. The Conference may limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each participant may speak on any question. Permission to speak on a motion to set such limits shall be accorded only to two representatives in favour of and to two opposing such limits, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. In any event, with the consent of the Conference, the President shall limit each intervention

on procedural matters to five minutes. When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the President shall call the speaker to order without delay.

**Rule 21****Points of order**

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be immediately decided upon by the President in accordance with these rules. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the representatives present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

**Rule 22****Precedence**

The Chair or Rapporteur of a Main Committee, or the representative of a subcommittee or working group, may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by the body concerned.

**Rule 23****Closing of the list of speakers**

During the course of a debate, the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Conference, declare the list closed.

**Rule 24****Right of reply**

1. Notwithstanding rule 23, the President shall accord the right of reply to a representative of any State participating in the Conference who requests it. Any other representative may be granted the opportunity to make a reply.
2. The statements made under this rule shall normally be made at the end of the last meeting of the day, or at the conclusion of the consideration of the relevant item if that is sooner.
3. The representatives of a State may make no more than two statements under this rule at a given meeting on any item. The first shall be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes; representatives shall in any event attempt to be as brief as possible.

**Rule 25****Adjournment of debate**

A representative may at any time move the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives in favour and to two opposing the adjournment, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

**Rule 26****Closure of debate**

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate on the question under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified a wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two

representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

#### **Rule 27**

##### **Suspension or adjournment of the meeting**

Subject to rule 38, a representative may at any time move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. No discussion on such motions shall be permitted and they shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

#### **Rule 28**

##### **Order of motions**

The motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or other motions before the meeting:

- (a) To suspend the meeting;
- (b) To adjourn the meeting;
- (c) To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion;
- (d) To close the debate on the question under discussion.

#### **Rule 29**

##### **Submission of proposals and substantive amendments**

Proposals and substantive amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General of the Conference, who shall circulate copies to all delegations. Unless the Conference decides otherwise, substantive proposals shall be discussed or put to a decision no earlier than 24 hours after copies have been circulated in all languages of the Conference to all delegations. The President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments, even though these amendments have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

#### **Rule 30**

##### **Withdrawal of proposals and motions**

A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before a decision on it has been taken, provided that it has not been amended. A proposal or a motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any representative.

#### **Rule 31**

##### **Decisions on competence**

Subject to rule 28, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Conference to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

#### **Rule 32**

##### **Reconsideration of proposals**

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered unless the Conference, by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing reconsideration, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote.

## **VII. Decision-making**

### **Rule 33**

1. Every effort should be made to reach agreement on substantive matters by means of consensus. There should be no voting on such matters until all efforts to achieve consensus have been exhausted.

2. If, notwithstanding the best efforts of delegates to achieve a consensus, a matter of substance comes up for voting, the President shall defer the vote for 48 hours and, during this period of deferment, shall make every effort, with the assistance of the General Committee, to facilitate the achievement of general agreement, and shall report to the Conference prior to the end of the period.

3. If by the end of the period of deferment the Conference has not reached agreement, voting shall take place in accordance with rule 35.

### **Rule 34**

#### **Voting rights**

Each State participating in the Conference shall have one vote.

### **Rule 35**

#### **Majority required**

1. Subject to rule 33, decisions of the Conference on all matters of substance shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting.

2. Except as otherwise provided in these rules, decisions of the Conference on all matters of procedure shall be taken by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

3. If the question arises as to whether a matter is one of procedure or of substance, the President of the Conference shall rule on the question. An appeal against this ruling shall be put to the vote immediately, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

4. If a vote is equally divided, the proposal or motion shall be regarded as rejected.

### **Rule 36**

#### **Meaning of the phrase “representatives present and voting”**

For the purpose of these rules, the phrase “representatives present and voting” means representatives casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives who abstain from voting shall be regarded as not voting.

### **Rule 37**

#### **Method of voting**

1. Except as provided in rule 44, the Conference shall normally vote by a show of hands, except that a representative may request a roll-call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the States participating in the Conference, beginning with the delegation whose name is drawn by lot by the President. The name of each State shall be called in all roll-calls, and its representative shall reply “yes”, “no” or “abstention”.

2. When the Conference votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands and a recorded vote shall replace a roll-call. A representative may request a recorded vote, which shall, unless a representative requests otherwise, be taken without calling out the names of the States participating in the Conference.

3. The vote of each State participating in a roll-call or a recorded vote shall be inserted in any record of or report on the meeting.

### **Rule 38**

#### **Conduct during voting**

After the President has announced the commencement of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the process of voting.

### **Rule 39**

#### **Explanation of vote**

Representatives may make brief statements consisting solely of explanations of vote, before the voting has commenced or after the voting has been completed. The President may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations. The representative of a State sponsoring a proposal or motion shall not speak in explanation of vote thereon, except if it has been amended.

### **Rule 40**

#### **Division of proposals**

A representative may move that parts of a proposal be decided on separately. If a representative objects, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives in favour of and to two opposing the division. If the motion is carried, those parts of the proposal that are subsequently approved shall be put to the Conference for decision as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal have been rejected, the proposal shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

### **Rule 41**

#### **Amendments**

A proposal is considered an amendment to another proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal. Unless specified otherwise, the word “proposal” in these rules shall be considered as including amendments.

### **Rule 42**

#### **Order of voting on amendments**

When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Conference shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom and so on until all the amendments have been put to the vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted on.

### **Rule 43**

#### **Order of voting on proposals**

1. If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Conference decides otherwise, be voted on in the order in which they were submitted. The Conference may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.
2. Revised proposals shall be voted on in the order in which the original proposals were submitted, unless the revision substantially departs from the original proposal.



In that case the original proposal shall be considered as withdrawn and the revised proposal shall be treated as a new proposal.

3. A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal shall be put to the vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

#### **Rule 44** **Elections**

All elections shall be held by secret ballot unless, in the absence of any objection, the Conference decides to proceed without taking a ballot when there is an agreed candidate or slate.

#### **Rule 45**

1. When one or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of votes, shall be elected.

2. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of places to be filled, additional ballots shall be held to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot and to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

### **VIII. Subsidiary bodies**

#### **Rule 46** **Main Committees**

The Conference may establish Main Committees as required, which may set up subcommittees or working groups.

#### **Rule 47** **Representation of the Main Committees**

Each State participating in the Conference may be represented by one representative on each Main Committee established by the Conference. It may assign to these Committees such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

#### **Rule 48** **Other committees and working groups**

1. In addition to the committees referred to above, the Conference may establish such committees and working groups as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

2. Each committee may set up subcommittees and working groups.

#### **Rule 49**

1. The members of the committees and working groups of the Conference referred to in rule 48, paragraph 1, shall be appointed by the President, subject to the approval of the Conference, unless the Conference decides otherwise.

2. Members of the subcommittees and working groups of committees shall be appointed by the Chair of the committee in question, subject to the approval of that committee, unless the committee decides otherwise.

**Rule 50**  
**Officers**

Except as otherwise provided in rule 6, each committee, subcommittee and working group shall elect its own officers.

**Rule 51**  
**Quorum**

1. The Chair of a Main Committee may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when representatives of at least one quarter of the States participating in the Conference are present. The presence of representatives of a majority of the States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.
2. A majority of the representatives of the General Committee or the Credentials Committee or of any committee, subcommittee or working group shall constitute a quorum.

**Rule 52**  
**Officers, conduct of business and voting**

The rules contained in chapters II, VI (except rule 19) and VII above shall be applicable, mutatis mutandis, to the proceedings of committees, subcommittees and working groups, except that:

- (a) The Chairs of the General and Credentials Committees and the Chairs of the committees, subcommittees and working groups may exercise the right to vote;
- (b) Decisions of committees, subcommittees and working groups shall be taken by a majority of the representatives present and voting, except that the reconsideration of a proposal or an amendment shall require the majority established by rule 32.

**IX. Languages and records**

**Rule 53**  
**Languages of the Conference**

Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the languages of the Conference.

**Rule 54**  
**Interpretation**

1. Speeches made in a language of the Conference shall be interpreted into the other such languages.
2. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the Conference if the delegation concerned provides for interpretation into one such language.

**Rule 55**  
**Languages of official documents**

Official documents of the Conference shall be made available in the languages of the Conference.

**Rule 56****Sound recordings of meetings**

Sound recordings of meetings of the Conference and of any Main Committee shall be made and kept in accordance with the practice of the United Nations. Unless otherwise decided by the Conference or the Main Committee concerned, no such recordings shall be made of the meetings of any working group thereof.

**X. Public and private meetings****Rule 57****General principles**

1. The plenary meetings of the Conference and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole<sup>1</sup> shall be held in public unless the body concerned decides otherwise.
2. Meetings of other organs of the Conference shall be held in private.

**Rule 58****Communiqués on private meetings**

At the close of a private meeting, the presiding officer of the body concerned may issue a communiqué through the Secretary-General of the Conference.

**XI. Other participants and observers****Rule 59****Representatives of entities, intergovernmental organizations and other entities that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the capacity of observers in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices**

Representatives designated by entities, intergovernmental organizations and other entities that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and work of all international conferences convened under its auspices have the right to participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, any Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group.

**Rule 60****Representatives of the specialized agencies**

Representatives designated by the specialized agencies may participate, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, any Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

**Rule 61****Representatives of other intergovernmental organizations**

Representatives designated by other intergovernmental organizations invited to the Conference may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, any Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

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<sup>1</sup> The exact name of this subsidiary body is still to be determined.

## **Rule 62**

### **Representatives of interested United Nations organs**

Representatives designated by interested organs of the United Nations may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, any Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

## **Rule 63**

### **Representatives of non-governmental organizations**

With respect to the attendance of non-governmental organizations at the Conference, attendance will be open to:

(a) Relevant non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in accordance with the provisions of Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996. These non-governmental organizations should inform the President of the Conference about their interest in attending;

(b) Other interested non-governmental organizations relevant and competent to the scope and the purpose of the Conference, provided that requests to do so are submitted to the President of the Conference and are accompanied by information on the organization's purpose, programmes and activities in areas relevant to the scope of the Conference. The President of the Conference will subsequently provide the Conference with a list of these non-governmental organizations for consideration on a no-objection basis;

(c) Non-governmental organizations accredited through the process specified above may attend meetings of the Conference, other than those designated as closed;

(d) Representatives of accredited non-governmental organizations will be allowed to address the Conference during one meeting specifically allocated for this purpose. This meeting will not coincide with other meetings of the Conference;

(e) Accredited non-governmental organizations will be provided, upon request, with documents related to the Conference, and they may, at their own expense, provide material to the delegations, outside the conference room, in the area of the Conference;

(f) Arrangements concerning the accreditation and attendance of non-governmental organizations at the Conference shall in no way create a precedent for other United Nations conferences.

## **Rule 64**

### **Written statements**

Written statements submitted by the designated representatives referred to in rules 59 to 63 shall be distributed by the secretariat to all delegations in the quantities and in the language in which the statements are made available to it at the site of the Conference, provided that a statement submitted on behalf of a non-governmental organization is related to the work of the Conference and is on a subject in which the organization has a special competence. Written statements shall not be made at United Nations expense and shall not be issued as official documents.

## **XII. Suspension and amendment of the rules of procedure**

### **Rule 65**

#### **Method of suspension**

Any of these rules may be suspended by the Conference provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given, which may be waived if no representative objects. Any such suspension shall be limited to a specific and stated purpose and to a period required to achieve that purpose.

### **Rule 66**

#### **Method of amendment**

These rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the Conference taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, after the General Committee has reported on the proposed amendment.

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