

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-COMMISSION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND OF THE PRESS

DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

I. MEMBERSHIP

Rule 1

The delegates to the Conference shall be those persons duly accredited as such by the Governments of States members of the United Nations and by the Governments of States not members of the United Nations, invited to the Conference.

Rule 2

Specialized Agencies, other Inter-Governmental Organizations, and Non-Governmental Organizations, invited to the Conference, may send representatives, observers and consultants, respectively, and shall have a status equivalent to that granted them by the Economic and Social Council; the International Organization of Journalists shall have a status equivalent to that granted by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Governmental Organizations in Category (a).

Rule 3

Only delegates as defined by Rule 1 shall be entitled to vote.

Rule 4

A Credentials Committee shall be elected at the beginning of the Conference. It shall consist of nine members, who shall be appointed by the Conference from among the delegations, on the proposal of the President. The Committee shall elect its own officers. It shall examine the credentials of delegates, representatives, observers and consultants and report without delay.

Rule 5

Any delegate, representative, observer or consultant, to whose admission a member has made objection, shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other delegates, representatives, observers and consultants, until the Credentials Committee has reported and the Conference has given its decision.

Rule 6

Each delegation shall consist of not more than five delegates, not more than five alternates, and as many advisers as may be required by the delegation.

Rule 7

Only one delegate shall have the right to speak in the name of his delegation on any given question unless the President, at the request of the delegation, authorizes another delegate to speak.

Rule 8

Alternates or advisers may participate in the discussions and voting in the absence of, or as substitutes for, delegates.

Rule 9

Representatives, observers, and consultants, duly accredited to the Conference, may attend the plenary meetings of the Conference and, on the invitation of the President, submit their observations but they may not vote.

Rule 10

Representatives, observers and consultants may likewise attend, under similar conditions, the meetings of committees unless the latter otherwise decide.

Rule 11

Representatives, observers, and consultants may be accompanied by one or more advisers at plenary meetings and at the meetings of committees.

/Rule 12

Rule 12

The Conference and its committees may invite to one or more of their meetings any person whose technical advice they may consider useful for their work. Persons thus invited may not speak unless requested by the President.

II. AGENDA

Rule 13

The provisional agenda for the Conference shall be communicated to all States invited to attend the Conference at least forty days before its opening.

Rule 14

Any State invited to the Conference may, at least twenty-five days before the date fixed for the opening of the Conference, request the inclusion of additional items in the agenda. These items shall be placed on a supplementary list, which shall be communicated to the States at least fifteen days before the date fixed for the opening of the Conference. The Conference shall decide whether items on the supplementary list shall be included in its agenda.

Rule 15

During the session of the Conference items may be revised and may be added to or deleted from the agenda by a majority of the members present and voting.

III. MEETINGS

Rule 16

The meetings of the Conference and its committees shall be held in public unless the body concerned decides that exceptional circumstances require that the meeting be held in private.

Rule 17

All decisions of the Conference taken in a private meeting shall be announced at an early public meeting of the Conference. At the close of
/each private

each private meeting of the principal committees, other committees and sub-committees, the Chairman may issue a communique through the Secretary-General.

Rule 18

A majority of the delegations to the Conference shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 19

During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may rise to a point of order and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. A delegate may appeal against the ruling of the President.

Rule 20

During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may move the adjournment of the debate. Any such motion shall have priority in the debate. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one delegate may speak in favour of and one against the motion. If the Conference decides by a majority vote in favour of the adjournment of the debate, the President shall declare the debate adjourned.

Rule 21

The Conference may limit the time allowed to each speaker.

Rule 22

A delegate may at any time move the closure of the debate whether or not any other delegate has signified his wish to speak. If application is made for permission to speak against the closure, it may be accorded to not more than two delegates.

Rule 23

A vote of the Conference shall be taken on a motion for closure. If the Conference decides by a majority vote in favour of the closure, the President shall declare the closure of the debate.

/Rule 24

Rule 24

The texts of resolutions and substantive motions shall be introduced in writing and handed to the Secretary of the Conference when possible twenty-four hours before they are laid before the Conference.

Rule 25

Parts of a report, resolution, other motion or amendment may be voted on separately at the request of a delegate and subject to the will of the Conference. The proposal shall then be voted on as a whole.

Rule 26

When an amendment revises, adds to, or deletes from a proposal the amendment shall be voted on first, and if it is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted on.

Rule 27

If two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Conference shall first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed, and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote.

IV. VOTING

Rule 28

Each delegation to the Conference shall have one vote.

Rule 29

Decisions of the Conference shall be made by a majority of the delegations present and voting. For the purpose of these Rules of Procedure, the phrase "present and voting" is defined as meaning members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Delegations which abstain from voting are considered as not present, without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 18.

Rule 30

The Conference shall normally vote by show of hands or by standing, but any delegate in plenary or committee meetings of the Conference may request a roll-call which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the States.

Rule 31

Rule 31

The name of each delegation shall be called in any roll-call and one of its members shall reply "yes", "no", or "abstention." The vote of each delegation participating in any roll-call shall be inserted in the record.

Rule 32

If a vote is equally divided on matters other than elections, a second vote shall be taken at the next meeting. If this vote also results in equality, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

V. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES OF THE CONFERENCE

Rule 33

The Conference shall elect a President and seven Vice-Presidents who shall hold office until the close of the session. The Vice-Presidents shall be elected on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the General Committee (Bureau) as defined in Rule 42.

Rule 34

If the President finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting, or any part thereof, he shall appoint one of the Vice-Presidents to take his place.

Rule 35

The President, or Vice-President acting as President, shall not vote but shall appoint another member of his delegation to vote in his place.

Rule 36

The Conference shall set up four principal committees upon which each delegation shall be represented. These committees will be: a main committee, a committee on the gathering and international transmission of information, a committee on implementation of the rights of all peoples to receive accurate, objective and comprehensive information, and the obligations of the workers of the press in this connection, and a committee on law and continuing machinery.

/Rule 37

Rule 37

The Conference shall set up such other committees as may be required for the performance of its functions, and shall define the terms of reference and composition of each such committee.

Rule 38

Each committee of the Conference shall elect its own Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur.

Rule 39

Each committee shall set up such sub-committees as may be required for the effective performance of its functions. It shall define the terms of reference and composition of each such sub-committee.

Rule 40

Unless otherwise decided by the committee concerned, each sub-committee shall elect its own chairman as well as his deputy in the event of the chairman being unable to be present.

Rule 41

The Rules of Procedure of the Conference shall apply to the proceedings of committees and sub-committees.

Rule 42

The General Committee (Bureau) shall comprise the President of the Conference, who shall preside, seven Vice-Presidents, who shall be elected on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the Committee, and the Chairman of the principal committees.

Rule 43

The General Committee shall at the beginning of the session consider the provisional agenda, together with the supplementary list, and shall make a report thereof to the Conference. It shall consider applications for the inclusion of additional items on the agenda and shall report thereon to the Conference. It shall assist the President and the Conference

/in drawing up

in drawing up the agenda for each plenary meeting, and in determining the priority of its items. It shall be entrusted with the direction of the business of the Conference and the co-ordination of the work of its committees. Finally, it shall assist the President in the general conduct of the work of the Conference.

Rule 44

Any State invited to the Conference which has no delegate on the General Committee and which has requested the inclusion of an additional item on the agenda shall be entitled to attend any meeting of the General Committee at which its request is discussed, and may participate, without vote, in the discussion of that item.

VI. SECRETARIAT

Rule 45

The technical secretariat of the Conference and of its committees and sub-committees shall be provided by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Rule 46

The Secretary-General, or his deputy acting on his behalf, may make either oral or written statements to the Conference concerning any question under consideration by it.

Rule 47

No verbatim report of the meetings of the committees and sub-committees shall be drawn up unless the necessity therefor, in respect of a specific meeting or part of a meeting is recognized by a committee or sub-committee. A summary record of each meeting of the committees shall, however, be drawn up by the Secretariat in the working languages.

VII. LANGUAGES

Rule 48

In respect of languages, the business of the Conference and of its committees and sub-committees shall be conducted in accordance with the

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provisions of the Rules of Procedure adopted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.*

VIII. AMENDMENT AND SUSPENSION OF RULES

Rule 49

These Rules of Procedure may be amended or suspended by a decision of the Conference taken by a two-thirds majority of the delegations of the Conference present and voting.

* Excerpts from Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council

Rule 27 Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the official languages, and English and French the working languages of the Council.

Rule 28 Speeches made in either of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other working language.

Rule 29 Speeches made in any other of the three official languages shall be interpreted into both working languages.

Rule 30 Any representative may make a speech in a language other than the official languages. In this case he shall himself provide for interpretation into one of the working languages. Interpretation into the other working language by an interpreter of the Secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first working language.