

The United Nations Environment Assembly rules of procedure

Secretariat Orientation Session for new Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Alvin Gachie and Catalina Pizarro , Law Division
Hybrid meeting (Conference Room 4 and Online)
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Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

General Assembly resolution 67/213 of 21 December 2012 decided in OP 4(b), to establish universal membership in the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme. It was subsequently renamed the United Nations Environment Assembly.

The Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) was established by Governing Council Decision 13/2. The CPR consists of the representatives of all States Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies, and the European Union, accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme. (Governing Council decision 19/32).

Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Governing Council Decision 19/32 provides that the CPR shall hold four regular meetings a year. Extraordinary meetings may be also convened. The CPR may establish subcommittees, working groups and task forces as deemed appropriate to carry out its mandate.

Governing Council Decision 19/32 OP 7 refers to its mandate, including inter alia, to review, monitor and assess the implementation of decisions; to review the draft PoW and budget, reports requested of the secretariat; prepare draft decisions.

Strengthened role of the CPR

Governing Council decision 27/2 – 22 February 2013 para 9: [Decided] that an open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives will be the inter-sessional subsidiary body of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme and perform the following functions:

- (a) Contribute to the preparation of the agenda of its governing body;
- (b) Provide advice to its governing body on policy matters;
- (c) Prepare decisions for adoption by its governing body and oversee their implementation;
- (d) Convene thematic and/or programmatic debates;
- (e) Promote effective ways and means to facilitate participation of the non-resident members of the Committee, particularly from developing countries; and
- (f) Perform any other functions delegated to it by its governing body.

Bureau of the CPR

Governing Council decision 19/32, paragraph 9: “the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall elect a Bureau composed of a Chairperson, three Vice Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, for a period of two years, taking into account the principles of rotation and equitable geographical representation”.

The Bureau assists the Chair in the general conduct of business of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Decision of 23 June 2021, reaffirmed that the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall conduct its work in a collaborative manner and, in the light of the tasks expected of it, recommends that it adopt, under the leadership of its Chair and in a balanced manner, practical arrangements for the sharing of responsibilities among the Chair, the Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur.

Sub Committee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Meets annually for a period of 5 days to review, with the support of the secretariat, the Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work and budget, in a manner coherent with the budgetary cycle of the United Nations, to be endorsed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives and for the governing body's approval, and to oversee their implementation and accountability by the Secretariat.

Credentials

Rule 16

Each member of the United Nations Environment Assembly shall be represented by an accredited representative, who may be accompanied by such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Rule 17

1. The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Executive Director before the first meeting which the representatives are to attend.
2. The Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly shall examine the credentials and submit its report to the United Nations Environment Assembly. This rule shall not, however, prevent a member from changing its representative, alternate representatives, or advisers subsequently, subject to proper submission and examination of credentials, where needed.

Replacement of a Bureau Member

Rule 19 provides that during the intersessional period, if a Bureau member resigns or is unable to exercise her or his functions, the member State or the regional group to which that member belongs shall nominate a replacement for the remainder of the term. The Executive Director shall immediately upon receipt of the nomination inform all members of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the nomination in writing. If within one month no objections are received in writing, the nominee is elected. If a member State objects, the nominee is elected if a majority of member States responding support the nominee.

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Powers of the President/Chair

Rule 33

The President/Chair declares the opening and closing of each meeting

Directs the discussion, ensures observance of rules, accords the right to speak, puts questions to the vote and announces decisions.

Rules on points of order and, subject to these rules, has control of the proceedings

Proposes the limitation of time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak on any question, the closure of the list of speakers or the closure of the debate.

Proposes the suspension of the meeting.

Rule 34

The President/Chair, in the exercise of her or his functions, remains under the authority of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Acting President/Chair

Acting President: Rule 21: If the President cannot preside at a meeting or any part thereof, the President shall appoint a Vice President to take her or his place.

Powers of the Acting President: Rule 23: A Vice-President acting as President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

Guidance on the role and function of the Bureaus of UNEA and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Converging elements of consensus for the Process for review by the CPR (mandated by UNEA res 4/2), Annex: UNEA / **CPR**

- a) Election and composition of the Bureau, e.g. the Chair of the CPR / **representative of the President of UNEA** shall participate in an ex officio capacity in meetings
- b) Replacement of a Bureau member
- c) Terms of office
- d) Meetings of the Bureau, e.g. as a general practice shall meet in Nairobi
- e) Quorum
- f) Decision-making
- g) Joint Bureau meetings, e.g. shall be convened for the purpose of conducting consultations between the bureaus, but decisions shall be taken separately by each Bureau.
- h) Powers of the President / **Functions of the Chair**
- i) Functions of the Bureau
- j) Language

Rule 32

The President may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the members of the United Nations Environment Assembly are present. The presence of a majority of the members of the United Nations Environment Assembly shall be required for any decision to be taken.

- General presumption of regularity: When a meeting is opened it is assumed that the presiding officer has determined the presence of the necessary quorum, even if the presiding officer does not announce it – and similarly, there is such a presumption as the meeting continues, that quorum is maintained. However, at any time a point of order can be made with respect to quorum.
- Different quorum requirements for the discussion phase and the decision-making phase.

Quorum – Action/Adoption phase

- A point of order can be made with respect to the fact that there is no quorum. Such a point of order can be made with respect to proposals adopted by consensus or a vote.
- Presumption of regularity: If the presiding officer permits a decision to be taken, he may be presumed to have established to his satisfaction that a majority of the members are present.
- Quorum is determined by the physical presence of an authorized representative behind the nameplate of a Member State.
- The question of quorum is a procedural question and relates to the specific vote in question.
- The question of quorum has to be determined prior to adoption/before action and is not determined ex post facto.

Action phase: adoption by consensus

- In United Nations practice the majority of proposals are adopted by consensus.
- Consensus is generally understood to mean adoption of a decision without formal objections and vote; this being possible only when no delegation formally objects to consensus being recorded, though some delegations may have reservations to the substantive matter at issue or to a part of it. The fact that consensus is recorded does not necessarily mean that there is “unanimity”, namely, complete agreement as to substance and a consequent absence of reservations. For example, there are numerous occasions where States make declarations or reservations to a matter at issue while not objecting to a decisions being recorded by consensus.
- Within the practice of the United Nations explanation of votes before and after the vote are permitted even when a proposal is adopted by consensus.

Action phase: adoption by vote

- Methods of voting: Rule 50: (1) Show of hands, (2) Roll call; and now (3) electronic means.
- Whether a draft proposal or resolution has been adopted by a vote is determined on the basis of whether the draft resolution has met the required majority, i.e. a majority of those present and voting, which is determined exclusively on the basis of the affirmative and negative votes cast. (Rule 49)

Informal consultations

Informal consultations are convened by the President or Chair of a subsidiary body, with the approval of the body. The President/Chair normally invites a delegate/member of the Bureau to undertake consultations on a particular issue and report to him or her on the outcome of these consultations. Informal consultations are normally open ended, but if a smaller group is desired then the President or Chair bears responsibility for determining the invitees.

Contact Groups – OECPR and UNEA

Thank you



Alvin Gachie
alvin.gachie@un.org

Catalina Pizarro
Associate Legal Officer
catalina.pizarro@un.org
