

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES  
TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION  
OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE<sup>1</sup>

RULES OF PROCEDURE

I. PARTICIPATION

**Rule 1 - Chief participants**

The representatives of all States Parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference on 16 November 1972, may take part, with the right to vote, in the work of the Assembly.

**Rule 2 - Representatives and observers**

- 2.1 The representatives of Member States of UNESCO not parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural heritage and permanent observer missions to UNESCO may participate in the work of the Assembly as observers, without the right to vote, and subject to Rule 7.3.
- 2.2 Representatives of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations which have concluded mutual representation agreements with UNESCO, as well as observers of intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations invited by the Director-General, may participate in the work of the Assembly, without the right to vote, and subject to Rule 7.3.

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the Second General Assembly of States Parties (Paris, 24 November 1978) and amended at the Tenth General Assembly of States Parties (Paris, 2-3 November 1995), Thirteenth General Assembly of States Parties (Paris, 30-31 October 2001), Fourteenth General Assembly of States Parties (Paris, 14-15 October 2003), Sixteen General Assembly of States Parties (UNESCO, 24-25 October 2007), Seventeenth General Assembly of States Parties (UNESCO, 23-28 October 2009) and First Extraordinary General Assembly of States Parties (UNESCO, 13-14 November 2014). Articles 14.6 and 14.7 concerning the voting papers have been aligned with Article 14.4, amended by the Tenth General Assembly of States Parties (2-3 November 1995), in accordance with the decision of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee at its 23rd session (5-10 July 1999).

## **II. ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY**

### **Rule 3 - Election of officers**

The Assembly shall elect a Chairperson, one or more Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur.

## **III. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

### **Rule 4 - Duties of the Chairperson**

- 4.1 In addition to exercising the powers which are conferred upon him elsewhere by the present Rules, the Chairperson shall open and close each plenary meeting of the Assembly. He/She shall direct the discussions, ensure observance of these Rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. He/She shall rule on points of order and, subject to the present Rules, shall control the proceedings and the maintenance of order. He/She shall not vote, but he/she may instruct another member of his/her delegation to vote on his/her behalf.
- 4.2 Should the Chairperson be absent during a meeting, or any part thereof, he/she shall be replaced by the Vice-Chairperson or one of the Vice-Chairpersons. A Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

### **Rule 5 - Public nature of meetings**

Meetings shall be held in public unless decided otherwise by the Assembly.

### **Rule 6 - Quorum**

- 6.1 A quorum shall consist of a majority of the States referred to in Rule 1 and represented at the Assembly.
- 6.2 The Assembly shall not decide on any matter unless a quorum is present.

### **Rule 7 - Order and time-limit of speakers**

- 7.1 The Chairperson shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their wish to speak.
- 7.2 For the convenience of the discussion, the Chairperson may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker.
- 7.3 The consent of the Chairperson must be obtained whenever an observer wishes to address the Assembly.

**Rule 8 - Points of order**

- 8.1 During a discussion, any delegation may raise a point of order; such a point of order shall be immediately decided upon by the presiding officer.
- 8.2 An appeal may be made against the ruling of the presiding officer. Such an appeal shall be put to the vote immediately and the presiding officer's ruling shall stand, unless overruled by a majority of the delegations present and voting.

**Rule 9 - Procedural motions**

- 9.1 During a discussion, any delegation may move the suspension or adjournment of the meeting or the adjournment or closure of the debate.
- 9.2 Such a motion shall be put to the vote immediately. Subject to Rule 8.1, such motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting:
  - a) suspension of the meeting;
  - b) adjournment of the meeting;
  - c) adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion;
  - d) closure of the debate on the question under discussion.

**Rule 10 - Working languages**

- 10.1 The working languages of the Assembly shall be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
- 10.2 Speeches made at the Assembly in one of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other languages.

**Rule 11 - Resolutions and amendments**

- 11.1 Draft resolutions and amendments may be proposed by the participants referred to in Rule 1 and shall be transmitted in writing to the Secretariat of the Assembly, which shall circulate copies to all participants.
- 11.2 As a general rule, no draft resolution or amendment shall be discussed or put to the vote unless it has been circulated sufficiently in advance to all participants in the working languages of the Assembly.

## **Rule 12 - Voting**

- 12.1 The representative of each State referred to in Rule 1 shall have one vote in the Assembly.
- 12.2 Subject to the provisions of Rules 6.2 and 16, decisions shall be taken by a majority of the States present and voting, except for the provisions of Rule 12.3.
- 12.3 The decision concerning the amount of the contributions, in the form of a uniform percentage applicable to all States which have not made the declaration referred to in paragraph 2 of Article 16 of the Convention, shall be determined by a majority vote of the States Parties present and voting. This decision of the General Assembly requires the majority of the States Parties present and voting which have not made the above-mentioned declaration.
- 12.4 For the purpose of the present Rules, the expression "States present and voting" shall mean States casting an affirmative or negative vote. States abstaining from voting shall be regarded as having not voted.
- 12.5 Subject to Rule 14.1, voting shall normally be either by a show of hands or by electronic means with each Member's vote displayed on a screen.
- 12.6 When the result of a vote by show of hands is in doubt, the presiding officer may take a second vote by a roll-call. A vote by roll-call shall also be taken if it is requested by not less than two delegations before the voting takes place and for the decision mentioned in Rule 12.3.
- 12.7 When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Assembly shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the presiding officer to be furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, and then on the amendment next furthest removed there from and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote.
- 12.8 If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon as a whole.
- 12.9 A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal.

**Rule 13 - Procedures for the presentation of candidatures to the World Heritage Committee<sup>2</sup>**

- 13.1 The Secretariat shall ask all States Parties, at least three months prior to the opening of the General Assembly, whether they intend to stand for election to the World Heritage Committee. If so, its candidature should be sent to the Secretariat at least six weeks prior to the opening of the General Assembly.
- 13.2 Members of the World Heritage Committee may stand again for election after a gap of 6 years after the expiry of their mandate.
- 13.3 At least four weeks prior to the opening of the General Assembly the Secretariat shall send to all States Parties the provisional list of States Parties candidates. The Secretariat will also provide information on the status of all compulsory and voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund made by each of the candidates. This list of candidatures will be revised as necessary.
- 13.4 This list of candidatures shall be finalised 48 hours before the opening of the General Assembly. No other candidatures nor payments of compulsory and voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund (for the purpose of presenting a candidature to the Committee) will be accepted in the 48-hour period prior to the opening of the General Assembly.

**Rule 14 - Election of members of the World Heritage Committee**

- 14.1
  - a) The election of members of the World Heritage Committee shall be conducted by secret ballot whenever five or more delegations having the right to vote so request, or if the Chairperson so decides.
  - b) The election of the members of the World Heritage Committee shall be conducted on the basis of the composition of the electoral groups of UNESCO, as determined by the UNESCO General Conference at its most recent session, it being understood that 'Group V' shall consist of two separate groups, for the African States and Arab States respectively.
  - c) Seats shall be allocated for each electoral group as follows: two (2) seats for Group I, two (2) seats for Group II, two (2) seats for Group III, three (3) seats for Group IV, four (4) seats for Group Va, two (2) seats for Group Vb. An additional seat shall be allocated for Group III and Group IV on a rotational basis.
  - d) Notwithstanding, at each election, due consideration shall be given to the election of at least one State Party which has never served as a Member of the World Heritage Committee.
  - e) In case the above formula cannot be practically applied, an exceptional arrangement may be made to accommodate such special circumstances.

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<sup>2</sup> Resolution 13 GA 9 (paragraph 6) invites the States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*, to voluntarily reduce their term of office from six to four years.

- f) Ballot(s) for allocated seat(s) shall precede the ballot(s) for the remaining seats to be filled. Unsuccessful candidates in a ballot for any allocated seat shall be eligible to stand for election in subsequent ballot(s).
- 14.2 Before the election begins, the Chairperson shall appoint two tellers from among the delegates present; he/she shall hand to them the list of States entitled to vote and the list of States candidates. He/She shall announce the number of seats to be filled.
- 14.3 The Secretariat shall distribute to the delegations a voting paper in the form of a list of all the States which are candidates.
- 14.4 Each delegation shall cast its vote by encircling the names of those States for which it desires to vote.
- 14.5 The tellers shall collect from each delegation their voting paper and shall proceed to count the votes, under the supervision of the Chairperson.
- 14.6 Voting papers on which all names of States have been circled shall be considered to be abstentions.
- 14.7 Voting papers on which more names have been circled than there are seats to be filled shall be considered invalid.
- 14.8 a) Ballot for the allocated seats  
The candidate(s) obtaining in the first round the highest number of votes shall be declared elected in the sequential order of the number of votes obtained from the highest to the lowest, up to the number of seat(s) to be filled. In case two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes for the seat(s) remaining to be filled, a second round shall be held for those candidates to fill those remaining seat(s).
- b) Ballot for the open (non allocated) seats  
The candidate(s) obtaining in the first round, more than half of the valid votes cast by States Parties present and voting shall be declared elected in the sequential order of the number of votes obtained from the highest to the lowest, up to the number of seat(s) to be filled. If there still remain seat(s) to be filled, there shall be a second round.
- 14.9 In the second round, the candidate(s) obtaining the highest number of votes, up to the number of seat(s) to be filled, shall be declared elected.
- 14.10 If in the second round, two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes, and, as a result, the number of these candidates is greater than the remaining number of seats to be filled, there shall be an additional round of voting restricted to those candidates who obtained the same number of votes. If in this additional round of voting, two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes, the Chairperson shall decide by drawing lots among them in order to allocate the remaining seat(s).

14.11 After each round, the Chairperson shall announce the results.

#### **IV. SECRETARIAT OF THE MEETING**

##### **Rule 15 - Secretariat**

- 15.1 The Director-General of UNESCO or his/her representative shall participate in the work of the Assembly, without the right to vote. He/She may, at any time, make either oral or written statements to the Assembly on any question under discussion.
- 15.2 The Director-General of UNESCO shall appoint an official of the Secretariat of UNESCO to act as Secretary to the Assembly, and other officials who shall together constitute the Secretariat of the Assembly.
- 15.3 The Secretariat shall receive, translate and distribute all official documents of the Assembly and shall arrange for the interpretation of the discussions, as provided in Rule 10. It shall also perform all other duties necessary for the proper conduct of the work of the Assembly.

#### **V. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE**

##### **Rule 16 - Adoption**

The Assembly shall adopt its Rules of Procedure by a decision taken in plenary meeting by a simple majority of the representatives of States present and voting.

##### **Rule 17 - Amendment**

The Assembly may amend these Rules of Procedure by a decision taken in plenary meeting by a two-thirds majority of the representatives of States present and voting.