

Guidelines for Submission of Draft Proposals in the General Assembly

NOTE: Minimum notice of 3 full business days before consideration of the item is required to process a draft proposal as an “L” document (“L.doc”) in all languages.

Submissions must be done by delegations *in person* to a representative of the General Assembly Affairs Branch (GAAB) in Room S-3044 (Secretariat building, 30th floor) or in the GA Hall during plenary meetings and requires the following:

- Electronic version of the text (email or USB key)
- Hard copy (signed and dated on every page)
- List of co-sponsors with signatures (if delegation wishes that Member States be listed on the initial L-doc.)
- Signing by delegation in person of submission certificate (provided by GAAB at time of submission)

TIP: SUBMITTING A DRAFT PROPOSAL


- To reserve rooms for consultations on draft resolutions before submission, please contact Meetings Planning & Coordination (212) 963-8114 or (212) 963-7351.
- For submission of a draft proposal for issuance as a “L.--” document in the six official languages please contact Ms. Rachel Stein-Holmes (212) 963-3872 or stein-holmes@un.org.
- For the Programme of Work please contact Ms. Radhika Ochalik (212) 963 3233 or ochalik@un.org.

For draft resolutions (“L.--” documents) based substantially on pre-existing resolutions, the officially issued version (e.g. the A/RES document available on <https://documents.un.org>) must be used as the base text, with all new text and changes to the old text clearly indicated (using TRACK CHANGES option in Word – see details below).

For revised draft resolutions (“L.--/Rev.—” documents), the original issued draft resolution must be used as the base text, with all revisions clearly indicated.

Drafts not in compliance with these guidelines will delay the processing dates of the draft resolution.

TIP: HOW TO TRACK CHANGES IN WORD

- Locate the officially issued resolution or L.doc on the UN Official Document System (ODS) at <https://documents.un.org>, download the word version and save as a new document;
- On the tools menu, choose the “Track Changes” option to open the Reviewing toolbar;
- Turn on Track Changes option by clicking the icon  and makes changes onto the document;
- Any changes to the original text will now be indicated in the document.

Once the text has been finalized, i.e. after negotiations have been completed, delegations can table a draft resolution. Once the text is final, Member States can start collecting co-sponsors’ signatures.

Please inform GAAB IF...

- the delegation intends to introduce the draft proposal at a plenary meeting
- there will be additional sponsors and the manner in which the co-sponsor’ signatures be collected
- changes to the draft proposals are expected -- any oral changes made to a draft proposal must be certified with the author of such changes (signature from the proposing delegation).

TIP: CO-SPONSORING A DRAFT PROPOSAL

- **Member States submitting a draft proposal must sign the co-sponsorship form** (which can be obtained from GAAB in the General Assembly Hall or in Room S-3044);
- Delegations need to **sign** and **print** their name on the list, including the **date** of signature;
- If delegations so wish, signatures can be received on their behalf, in which case they would need to inform Member States that a copy is available in the General Assembly Hall or Room S-3044 for signature. The list has to be accompanied by a copy of the draft resolution for the perusal of delegations;
- Refrain from circulating multiple versions of the Co-sponsor form: inform GAAB if there are additional Co-sponsor lists. GAAB must receive all lists BEFORE the adoption of the resolution;
- No signatures will be accepted once a resolution has been adopted.

Annex: Editing of Proposals at the United Nations

1. Introduction: The editing process

The **Editing Section** edits all United Nations documents, including **draft resolutions**, to make them clear, accurate, consistent, grammatically correct, in conformity with United Nations editorial standards and translatable into the other five official languages.

Editors will not make changes that alter the meaning of a resolution

- When a language issue touches on a substantive matter, the editor will consult.
- It is helpful for the editors to be informed of which passages have been closely negotiated.

Why is it important for resolutions to be edited?

- They are important **international instruments**
- The **time pressure** of negotiation and processing can lead to mistakes
- **Ambiguous language** in the original can result in different interpretations in the other languages
- Editing ensures that the **principle of multilingualism** is respected

2. Draft resolutions

All draft resolutions are submitted to DGACM for editing, translation, typing, proofreading and printing.

DGACM needs a minimum of 3 full business days before consideration of the item to process draft resolutions.

The short turnaround time means that:

- The contact information of the main sponsor or facilitator is needed
- For draft resolutions based on a previous resolution, the adopted text (with the symbol A/RES/xx/xx) should be downloaded from ODS and used as the basis for preparation of the new resolution

3. Final resolutions

Concordance

- After adoption, **concordance** ensures that all six language versions are equivalent
- Changes made by delegates at the time of adoption, if any, are incorporated
- Footnotes are checked
- The final resolutions are issued with a symbol that begins with **A/RES/(session)/--**

4. The structure of resolutions

Paragraphs

Resolutions are essentially one long sentence with three elements:

- The name of the organ (the General Assembly)
- Preambular paragraphs
- Operative paragraphs

Subparagraphs

- Subparagraphs are lettered (a), (b), (c)
- Each subparagraph begins with a capital letter
- The subparagraphs must have a similar structure

An example of proper parallel subparagraph structure (from resolution 66/167):

6. *Calls upon* all States:
- (a) To take effective measures to ensure...
 - (b) To foster religious freedom and pluralism...
 - (c) To encourage the representation of...
 - (d) To make a strong effort to...

Another good example of proper subparagraph structure (from resolution 66/94):

10. *Reaffirms* the importance...of the work of the Commission ... and in this connection:
- (a) Welcomes the initiatives of the Commission...
 - (b) Expresses its appreciation to the Commission...
 - (c) Takes note with interest of the comprehensive approach...
 - (d) Expresses its appreciation to the Governments...

5. Changes that editors make to resolutions

Editors will:

- Check and correct titles and facts
- Correct grammar and syntax
- Correct, add or delete footnotes
- Make minor adjustments to style to bring the text in line with UN editorial standards and to make the text translatable

6. Common corrections

Titles of bodies, meetings, conventions

- Titles will be checked and corrected
- The full title will be used at first mention in both the preamble and the operative part. Thereafter a shortened version may be used

Example from resolution 67/184:

2. *Notes* the progress made thus far in the preparations for the [Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice](#);

3. *Decides* that the duration of the [Thirteenth Congress](#) should not exceed eight days;

Acronyms

- Acronyms will be spelled out in full the first time they occur in both the preamble and the operative part. Thereafter, a shortened version of the title may be used.

Dates

- Dates of meetings, adoption of conventions, declarations, etc., will be checked and corrected if necessary.

Names of countries

- In United Nations documents and resolutions, the short form of the names of countries is used.

- For a list of the official short names of countries see unterm.un.org.

Names of cities

- Names of cities are followed by the country name, unless the city is the capital.

Punctuation

- Editors are experts in punctuation issues and will apply United Nations style.
- If a punctuation mark becomes a matter of political sensitivity, the editors must be informed.

Personification

- A resolution or report does not decide/recommend/launch/convene/extend a mandate, etc; it is the author or body adopting the resolution or report that takes the action.

Example:

“General Assembly resolution 65/14 requested the Secretary-General to report...”
will be changed to read:

“The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/14, requested the Secretary-General to report...”

Notes/Takes note

- “Notes” is used in the sense of “observes”.
- “Takes note” is used when the object is a report, statement or decision. A body should not take note of (or welcome) its own past decision.

Reiterates

- If the General Assembly “reiterates” something, it means that it is repeating something it said in a previous resolution.
- Otherwise, a more appropriate verb, such as “affirms”, “stresses” or “emphasizes” should be used.

Reiterates

- If “reiterates” is used, some context must be given.

Example from resolution 67/246:

6. *Reiterates* that accountability is a central pillar of effective and efficient management that requires attention and strong commitment at the highest level of the Secretariat, as defined in paragraph 8 of its resolution 64/259 of 29 March 2010;

Reiterates

- If the Assembly does not wish to provide context the verb “reaffirms” may be used:

Example

Reaffirms paragraph 37 of its resolution 62/87 and paragraph 2 of its resolution 64/228,

Footnotes

- Source footnotes may be added or deleted at the concordance stage.

Seasons of the year

- Since seasons of the year are different in different hemispheres, the editor will change a reference to “the summer of 2014”, for example, to “the third quarter of 2014”.

Including, inter alia

- The use of “including” together with “inter alia” is redundant.

7. Editorial helpdesk and other resources

Editors are available to offer assistance and advice:

editorialcontrol@un.org
(212)963-2528

Other resources

- United Nations Editorial Manual Online (dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/)
- UNTERM (unterportal.un.org)
- Official Document System (ods.un.org)