



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### How is the Bureau elected?

Each Main Committee elects a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence ([rule 103](#) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly).

The Chair of the Fifth Committee is elected on the basis of regional rotation. The Rapporteur comes from the regional group that held the chair of the Committee the previous year. The three remaining regional groups take the positions of Vice-Chairs.

[Rule 30](#) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly specifies that the General Assembly shall hold elections at least three months before the opening of the session over which they are to preside.

In its resolution [72/313](#) of 17 September 2018, the Assembly decided to establish the pattern for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees for the forthcoming 10 sessions of the General Assembly, namely from the seventy-fourth to the eighty-third session, as set forth in the table below. It also decided to prepare arrangements concerning the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees for the following sessions no later than at its eighty-second session.

### ***Pattern for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees of the General Assembly***

<i>Session</i>	<i>First Committee</i>	<i>Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)</i>	<i>Second Committee</i>	<i>Third Committee</i>	<i>Fifth Committee</i>	<i>Sixth Committee</i>
Seventy-fourth	Latin American and Caribbean States	Asia-Pacific States	African States	Western European and other States	Asia-Pacific States	Eastern European States
Seventy-fifth	Western European and other States	African States	Asia-Pacific States	Eastern European States	Latin American and Caribbean States	Latin American and Caribbean States
Seventy-sixth	African States	Latin American and Caribbean States	Western European and other States	African States	Eastern European States	Asia-Pacific States
Seventy-seventh	Asia-Pacific States	Asia-Pacific States	Eastern European States	Latin American and Caribbean States	Western European and other States	African States

# Administrative & Budgetary (Fifth) Committee of the General Assembly



<i>Session</i>	<i>First Committee</i>	<i>Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)</i>	<i>Second Committee</i>	<i>Third Committee</i>	<i>Fifth Committee</i>	<i>Sixth Committee</i>
Seventy-eighth	Eastern European States	African States	Latin American and Caribbean States	Western European and other States	African States	Asia-Pacific States
Seventy-ninth	Latin American and Caribbean States	Eastern European States	Asia-Pacific States	African States	Latin American and Caribbean States	Western European and other States
Eightieth	Western European and other States	Latin American and Caribbean States	African States	Asia-Pacific States	Eastern European States	Asia-Pacific States
Eighty-first	Asia-Pacific States	African States	Eastern European States	Western European and other States	African States	Latin American and Caribbean States
Eighty-second	Eastern European States	Asia-Pacific States	Asia-Pacific States	Latin American and Caribbean States	Western European and other States	African States
Eighty-third	African States	Latin American and Caribbean States	Latin American and Caribbean States	Eastern European States	Asia-Pacific States	Western European and other States

## What is the process used for submitting draft resolutions?

Once the general discussion of an item has finished in formal meetings, the Committee holds informal consultations (with interpretation) under the chairmanship of a designated coordinator. Informal consultations begin with question-and-answers with the relevant Secretariat officials. The coordinator then distributes a skeletal draft proposal for consideration by Member States.

The coordinator requests delegations to provide their contributions for inclusion in the text by a deadline. The Committee subsequently considers the draft resolution containing all contributions received from groups and delegations in informal consultations. Some items require lengthy negotiations and, where necessary, the Committee may resort to "informal informals" (without interpretation and oftentimes outside of the regular conference room and normal working hours). Once consensus is reached, it is "adopted" in an informal meeting and only thereafter issued in the "L" series for action by the Committee. Once draft resolutions or decisions are issued as "L" documents, they are adopted at a formal meeting of the Committee. Draft resolutions adopted by the Fifth Committee will then be submitted to the General Assembly for action.



## How does the Fifth Committee reach agreement?

In paragraph 7 of section II of its resolution [41/213](#) of 19 December 1986, the General Assembly considered it "desirable that the Fifth Committee.... should continue to make all possible efforts with a view to establishing the broadest possible agreement" on the outline of the programme budget before submitting its recommendations to the General Assembly".

In considering agenda items and questions every effort is made to reach consensus before resorting to a vote. For political considerations this is applied not only to the outline of the programme budget but also to all other Fifth Committee draft resolutions and decisions. This process often requires lengthy negotiations. Only on a few occasions does the Fifth Committee adopt a proposal by vote.

## How is the work of the Fifth Committee structured?

In the past, in keeping with General Assembly resolution [46/220](#) of 20 December 1991, the Fifth Committee biennialized a number of items: Odd years (e.g. 2009/2011/2013) were informally called 'budget years' where the biennial programme budget was discussed. In off-budget years the Committee considered the programme plan as well as reports related to human resources management, thus leading to off-budget years informally being referred to as 'human resources years'.

In its resolution [72/266 A](#) of 24 December 2017, the General Assembly, inter alia, approved a proposed change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis. At its seventy-seventh session, in its resolution [77/267](#), the Assembly decided to lift the trial period effective from 2023 and requested the Secretary-General to continue with the submission of the programme budget according to an annual cycle. In the same resolution, it also requests the Secretary-General to conduct a comprehensive review on the annual cycle, including its financial, administrative and procedural impact, its impact on the implementation of mandates across sections of the programme budget and the workload and the associated costs, and to submit a report for consideration by the General Assembly at the main part of its eighty-third session, in 2028. In light of these decisions, the distinction between 'budget-years' and 'human resources years' has become obsolete. In fact, the Fifth Committee has started following the practice of considering the bulk of human-resources management-related reports, including those previously considered in so-called 'human resources years', in the context of the first part of its resumed session.

The work of the Fifth Committee is very fluid; it often has to accommodate last-minute additions of urgent reports. While the Committee follows the guidelines given by the General Assembly, it cannot always complete its work within the ascribed time frame. Its ability to complete its work in a timely fashion is also subject to the completion of work by the other Main Committees as it will have to consider any programme budget implications (PBIs) arising from their work.



## Why does the Fifth Committee have three sessions?

The Fifth Committee presently holds three sessions per year. During the main part of the session of the General Assembly (normally October-December), the Committee considers the majority of items, many of which are time-bound, including the proposed programme budget for the following year. A number of issues that do not require immediate consideration may remain on the agenda and are deferred (postponed) to the first part of the resumed session, which is normally held for a period of three or four weeks in March, depending on the workload.

According to the timetable endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [49/233 A](#) of 23 December 1994, the Committee resumes its work annually for a period of four weeks in May to consider the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations and possibly other questions or items that the Committee may need to consider.

## What is the relationship between the Fifth Committee and ACABQ?

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. [Rule 157](#) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly explains the role of ACABQ:

"The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions shall be responsible for expert examination of the programme budget of the United Nations and shall assist the Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee)".

ACABQ submits to the General Assembly a detailed report on the proposed programme budget as well as other items that fall under its purview, including on the accounts of the United Nations and all United Nations entities for which the Secretary-General has administrative responsibility.

ACABQ makes observations, conclusions and recommendations on the proposals made by the Secretary-General. It also examines, on behalf of the General Assembly, the administrative budgets of the specialized agencies and proposals for financial arrangements with such agencies and considers and reports to the General Assembly on the reports of the Board of Auditors on the accounts of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies. The programme of work of ACABQ is determined by the requirements of the General Assembly and the other legislative bodies to which it reports.

According to the working methods of the Fifth Committee, the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ form the basis of the draft resolutions and decisions considered by the Fifth Committee. The Fifth Committee may accept, amend or disregard recommendations of ACABQ.



## How does the Fifth Committee work with the General Assembly and its other Main Committees?

[Rule 153](#) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly explains the relationship between the General Assembly and the Fifth Committee:

"No resolution involving expenditure shall be recommended by a committee for approval by the General Assembly unless it is accompanied by an estimate of expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General. No resolution in respect of which expenditures are anticipated by the Secretary-General shall be voted by the General Assembly until the Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee) has had an opportunity of stating the effect of the proposal upon the budget estimates of the United Nations."

Regulation 5.9 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget and Evaluation ([ST/SGB/2018/3](#)) also states that no body can take a decision involving either a change in the budget approved by the General Assembly or possible expenditure unless it has taken account of the a report from the Secretary-General on the budget implications of the proposal.

On certain occasions Main Committees draft resolutions use the phrase "within available resources". ACABQ, in its report [A/54/7](#), expressed concern about the use of this phrase and its potential impact on the use of resources. In the same report, ACABQ also stressed that the Secretariat should accurately inform the General Assembly and its Main Committees about whether there are enough resources to implement any new activity.

## What is a PBI?

PBI stands for programme budget implication. A PBI is a statement detailing the administrative, financial and programmatic changes that the adoption of a draft resolution would entail. Once a PBI is issued, ACABQ will provide its observations and recommendations for the Fifth Committee to consider.

At least 48 hours are required before action can be taken on a draft resolution containing budgetary implications so that the Secretary-General can prepare the PBI and ACABQ can consider it. For this reason, there is a deadline of no later than 1 December for draft resolutions with financial implications to be submitted to the Fifth Committee (see paragraphs 12 and 13 of decision 34/401 ([A/520/Rev.18](#), annex V).

## What is a revised estimate?

This is an estimate of additional resources submitted by the Secretary-General. According to rule 102.4 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations ([ST/SGB/2013/4](#)) and ([ST/SGB/2013/4/Amend.1](#)), revised and supplementary programme budget proposals may be submitted in the following instances:

- When, in the interest of peace and security, urgent approval is required;



- When they include activities which the Secretary-General considers to be of the highest urgency and which could not have been foreseen at the time the initial programme budget proposals were prepared;
- In respect of decisions taken by the General Assembly;
- In respect of decisions taken by the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council or the Trusteeship Council;
- When they cover activities mentioned in earlier programme budget proposals as items for which later submissions would be made;
- When they involve changes in expenditure requirements associated with inflation and currency fluctuations.

## What appointments take place in the Fifth Committee?

Appointments or confirmation of appointments to the following subsidiary bodies and committees takes place in the Fifth Committee:

- The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
- The Board of Auditors
- The Committee on Contributions
- The Investments Committee
- United Nations International Civil Service Commission
- United Nations Staff Pension Committee
- Independent Audit Advisory Committee

Vacancies are usually announced in early March. Announcements are contained in notes issued by the Secretary-General under the agenda item Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments.

Member States then propose candidates and inform the Secretary-General. The bureau of the incoming session will propose a date for the elections to be held (usually the first Friday in November) and a deadline for submission of candidatures.

Details of candidatures and other information on elections are available on [CandiWeb](#) and the [e-Candidatures and Elections module](#) on e-deleGATE (password required).

The conduct of elections in the Fifth Committee is governed by Articles 18 and 19 of the [United Nations Charter](#) and rules 103, 132 and 133 of the [Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly](#). Furthermore, the Fifth Committee observes specific practices, including the restriction of ballots to candidates received by the nomination deadline.