Guidelines for the submission of proposals (draft resolutions/draft decisions/draft amendments) in the General Assembly Plenary

**NOTE:** A minimum of FIVE (5) full business days’ advance notice before consideration of the item is required to process a proposal (draft resolution/draft decision) as a limited distribution (“L.”) document in all official languages. This period includes four full days for processing, counting from the day following the day of submission, and takes into account rule 78 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

This document aims to guide delegations who wish to submit draft resolutions, draft decisions or draft amendments (hereafter referred to as “proposals”) for consideration by the General Assembly plenary. The following guidelines outline the steps for preparing proposals and include tips and timelines for submission to the Secretariat. This document is non-exhaustive and is intended as a suggested process.

1. Preparation of proposals

   a. For **draft resolutions and/or draft decisions** (“L.--” documents) **based on previous resolutions or decisions**, the official A/RES document\(^1\) [available on the Official Document System (ODS) at https://documents.un.org] must be used as the **base text**. All new text and changes to the old text must be clearly indicated using the **Track Changes feature** in Microsoft Word (see below Tip 1).

   b. For **revised draft resolutions or decisions** (“L._/Rev._” documents), the previously issued draft resolution or draft decision must be used as the base text, with all revisions clearly indicated.

Where no previous text(s) exist, delegations are requested to include the **agenda item\(^2\)** that the proposal(s) is related to.

The submission of draft resolutions and/or draft decisions that do not comply with these guidelines will delay the processing of the texts concerned.

**TIP 1: HOW TO TRACK CHANGES IN MICROSOFT WORD**

- Locate the previously issued resolution (A/RES/session number/resolution number, e.g. A/RES/74/1), decision or, in the case of revised draft resolutions, the previously issued draft (L. document, e.g. A/74/L.1) on the ODS at https://documents.un.org, download the Word version and save it as a new document.
- On the Review tab, click on the “Track Changes” icon to turn on the Track Changes feature.
- Make changes to the document: any changes to the original text will now be indicated and saved in the document.

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1 Resolutions are available in ODS, to search for resolutions, please use the symbol A/RES/session number/resolution number, i.e. A/RES/74/1.

2 For the current session, GA74, please select the relevant agenda item from document A/74/251.
2. Co-sponsorship of proposals in e-DeleGATE

Draft resolution and/or draft decision texts are usually negotiated among delegations well in advance, prior to submission to the Secretariat. Delegation(s) can open a proposal for co-sponsorship by other delegations, through the e-DeleGATE portal (https://delegate.un.int). The sponsor (lead delegation) of the proposal(s) is responsible to upload the document(s) in the e-DeleGATE portal and open the text for e-Sponsorship (see below Tip 2).

TIP 2: CO-SPONSORING A DRAFT RESOLUTION

- A Member State (known as the Sponsor) (not jointly with other Member States) can open a text for sponsorship on the e-deleGATE portal (https://delegate.un.int) by navigating to: Plenary & Committees/GA Plenary/GA Plenary e-Sponsorship.
- When initiating e-Sponsorship, Member States can indicate which other Member States and/or Observer States can co-sponsor the proposal. Once e-Sponsorship is initiated, all registered users of eligible delegations will be informed.
- All delegations that have co-sponsored the proposal by the time it is submitted to the Secretariat for issuance in ODS, will be listed as co-sponsors on the “L.--” document.
- Draft resolutions and/or decisions will remain open for co-sponsorship until just before adoption by the GA plenary.
- All delegations that co-sponsor after the submission of the draft proposal (either through e-Sponsorship or by pressing the button from their Member State’s seat, when requested by the Secretary, during the relevant GA plenary meeting) will be announced before adoption as “additional co-sponsors” and will be listed when an addendum to the “L.--” document is issued after the adoption. Paper signature lists for sponsorship are no longer accepted.

NOTE: Once the General Assembly adopts a draft resolution and/or decision, Member States can no longer alter its sponsorship.

3. Submission of proposals

Thereafter, delegations are requested to submit proposals as follows:

- **Step 1: By email** (as a Microsoft Word doc or on a USB key) to the representative of the General Assembly Affairs Branch (GAAB), Ms. Gal Buyanover [email: gal.buyanover@un.org, +1 212 963-2986]. The draft will be processed and issued in the six official languages as an L. document, available on ODS.

- **Step 2: In person as a hard copy document** (signed and dated on each page) on the 30th floor of the Secretariat Building or in the General Assembly Hall during plenary meetings. You are kindly requested to indicate a date and timeframe, when visiting the 30th floor. The representative of delegation will be requested to sign a submission certificate (provided by GAAB at time of submission).

NOTE: Delegations are requested to inform GAAB if:

- The delegation intends to introduce the draft proposal at a plenary meeting;
- Changes to the draft proposal are expected – oral changes to a draft resolution / draft decision can be made by the main sponsor or by the Secretariat upon notification by the main sponsor;
- To obtain information on the programme of work, please contact Ms. Radhika Ochalik [email: ochalik@un.org, (212) 963-3233].

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3. Member States, the State of Palestine, the Holy See and the European Union.

4. To reserve rooms for consultations on draft resolutions and/or decisions before submission to the Secretariat, please contact the Meetings Management Section at (212) 963-8114 or (212) 963-7351.

5. Please check ODS on a regular basis for documents.
ANNEX: Editing of proposals at the United Nations

i. Introduction: The editing process
The Editing Section edits all United Nations documents, including draft resolutions and draft decisions, to ensure that the text is clear, accurate, consistent and grammatically correct, conforms to United Nations editorial standards and is 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 with the submitting official.
- It is crucial for the editors to be informed when parts of a draft have been the subject of particularly intensive negotiations or are otherwise highly sensitive.

Why is it important for resolutions to be edited?
- They are important international instruments which constitute the official records of the Organization.
- 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.

ii. Draft resolutions
All draft resolutions are submitted to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) for editing, translation, typing, proofreading and printing. DGACM requires a minimum of five full business days before consideration of the item to process draft resolutions.

Given the limited time available for processing, it is helpful if:
- Contact information (telephone and email) for the main Sponsor or Facilitator is provided to ensure that editors can reach him/her to consult on the text;
- For draft resolutions based on a previous resolution, the adopted text (with the symbol A/RES/[session number]/[resolution number]) is downloaded from ODS and used as the basis for preparation of the new resolution.

iii. Adopted resolutions
Final editing process
- After adoption, the final editing process ensures concordance among all six language versions.
- Changes made by delegates at the time of adoption, if any, are incorporated into the text.
- Footnotes are checked for accuracy and additional footnotes inserted as needed.
- The finalized resolutions are issued with A/RES/xx/xxx symbols.

iv. 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 identified by lower-case letters: (a), (b), (c) in English.
- The text of each subparagraph begins with a capital letter.
- Subparagraphs must have a similar, parallel structure (see examples below).
Example 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 and meaningful participation of...
(d) To make a strong effort to...

Example 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 ...
(e) Reiterates its appeal to ...

v. **Changes that editors make to resolutions**

According to standard editorial practice, editors:
- 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 United Nations editorial standards and to make the text translatable.

**Titles of bodies, meetings, conventions, etc.**
- Titles are checked and corrected as needed.
- In general, the full title is used at first mention in the preamble and at first mention in the operative part. Thereafter, a shortened form of the title 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 and abbreviations**
- With few exceptions, acronyms and abbreviations are not used in resolutions and will be spelled out in accordance with the practice governing titles outlined above.

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

**Countries**
- In general, the short form of the names of countries is used in United Nations documents, including in resolutions.
- For the official short names of countries, please visit [untermportal.un.org](http://untermportal.un.org).

**Cities**
- Names of cities are followed by the name of the country, unless the city is the capital, in which case the country is omitted. The standard presentation in English is “Istanbul, Turkey”.

**Punctuation**
- Editors will apply United Nations style in keeping with standard editorial practice.
- If a punctuation mark becomes a matter of political sensitivity, the editors must be informed.
Avoiding personification

- A resolution or report does not decide/recommend/launch/convene/extend a mandate, etc.; it is the author of the report or the body adopting the resolution 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, but rather “recall” it.

Reiterates

- If the General Assembly “reiterates” something, it is repeating a statement made in a previous resolution. Therefore, 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;

- If the Assembly does not wish to provide context, a more appropriate verb, such as “affirms”, “reaffirms”, “stresses” or “emphasizes”, should be used.

Example from resolution 67/246:

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

Footnotes

- Source footnotes may be added or deleted during the editing process.

Seasons of the year

- Since the seasons of the year vary in different hemispheres, editors will change a reference to “the summer of 2018”, for example, to “the third quarter of 2018”.

Including, inter alia

- The use of “including” together with “inter alia” is redundant; editors will delete one or the other.

vi. Editorial help desk and other resources

Editors are available to offer assistance and advice. Please contact: editingny@un.org or (212) 963-2528

Other resources

- United Nations Editorial Manual Online (http://www.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/)
- UNTERM (https://unterm.un.org/)