

Draft decision submitted by the President of the General Assembly

Agenda item 7: Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Procedure for taking decisions of the General Assembly by a vote (excluding elections) without a plenary meeting during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

The General Assembly,

Noting with concern the unprecedented situation concerning the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the limitations on meetings within the United Nations premises imposed as precautionary measures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19; [based on General Assembly decision 74/544]

Reaffirming that the General Assembly decision-making process is governed by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly; [based on General Assembly resolution 41/213]

Recalling its decisions 74/544 of 27 March 2020 and 74/555 of 15 May 2020;

Stressing that the procedure set out in the present decision is of an exceptional and temporary nature, which will not set a precedent;

Bearing in mind that all possible efforts should continue to be made with a view to establishing the broadest possible agreement among Member States; [based on resolution 41/213 (Section II, para. 7)]

(a) *Decides* that the procedure set out in the present decision shall only apply while a plenary meeting of the General Assembly is not practicable due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shall cease to be in effect upon the conclusion of consideration by the General Assembly of draft resolutions and draft decisions under agenda items allocated to the Fifth Committee for the second part of its resumed seventy-fourth session, and *further decides* that the present decision shall be subject to a review if it continues not to be practicable to hold plenary meetings of the General Assembly due to the COVID-19 pandemic beyond the conclusion of consideration by the General Assembly of draft resolutions and draft decisions under agenda items allocated to the Fifth Committee for the second part of its resumed seventy-fourth session;

(b) *Decides* that draft resolutions and draft decisions subject to voting without a plenary meeting, in accordance with the present decision, shall be exclusively limited to those under agenda items allocated to the Fifth Committee for the second part of its resumed seventy-fourth session, without prejudice to the right of Member States to submit other draft resolutions and decisions for adoption under a silence procedure pursuant to decision 74/544;

(c) *Decides* that a draft resolution or a draft decision falling within the scope of paragraph (b) above shall first be placed under a silence procedure pursuant to decision 74/544, and may be put to a vote without holding a plenary meeting only in the event that a vote is requested by a Member State either during the silence procedure under decision 74/544 or thereafter if the silence was broken by means other than a request for a vote;

(d) *Decides* that the President of the General Assembly shall put a proposal¹ to a vote in accordance with the arrangements below:

(i) The President of the General Assembly shall circulate a letter to all Member States announcing that a vote has been requested on a specific proposal and indicating the date and time at which a vote will commence; such a date and time shall be fixed in a manner that would allow at least 72 hours between the circulation of the letter by the President and the commencement of the vote, except procedural motions which shall be put to a vote within 24 hours from the time of the circulation of the President's letter; the letter shall be accompanied by the proposal in question, which shall be in the six official languages of the General Assembly (except procedural motions);

(ii) No other action may be proposed in relation to the proposal after a vote on the proposal has commenced at the date and time announced by the President, except a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting; this does not prevent the General Assembly from taking decisions on other proposals in parallel, including by a silence procedure pursuant to decision 74/544;

(iii) Member States may vote "yes" or "no" or indicate "abstain" through an electronic means specified by the President during the voting period, which shall be one hour; the votes cast by Member States shall become visible to other Member States one minute before the closure of the voting period;

(iv) The voting process shall be considered valid if a majority of the members of the General Assembly is present in the voting process, which shall be ascertained by counting those that accessed the electronic voting page for the proposal concerned;

(v) If the votes in favour reach the required majority, the decision shall be considered adopted, and the General Assembly will be informed of the decision at its first plenary meeting held after the cessation of the precautionary measures as soon as the circumstances allow;

(e) *Further authorizes* the President of the General Assembly, in the event that an amendment or a procedural motion is proposed at least 24 hours in advance of the original date and time of the vote on a proposal announced by the letter of the President pursuant to subparagraph (d) (i) above, to immediately postpone the scheduled vote and take one of the following steps:

¹ For the purpose of the present decision, the term "proposal" includes parts of a proposal, an amendment and a motion.

(i) The President shall put the procedural motion in question to a vote in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure of the General Assembly and paragraph (d) above;

(ii) If an amendment is proposed, the President shall circulate the amendment to all Member States; the amendment may be placed under a silence procedure pursuant to decision 74/544 or, if a vote is requested, shall be put to a vote in accordance with paragraph (d) above;

(f) *Decides* that if a point of order is raised during the voting period referred to in paragraph (d) (iii) above in connection with the actual conduct of the voting in accordance with rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the President shall suspend the vote and apply the following procedure:

(i) The point of order shall be decided by the President in accordance with rule 71; the President's ruling will be communicated by the President to all Member States indicating the time by which Member States may appeal against the ruling of the President, which shall be one hour from the time from which the communication was sent out;

(ii) If there is no appeal against the ruling during the specified timeframe, the President's ruling shall stand;

(iii) In the event of an appeal, the President will put the appeal to a vote in accordance with rule 71;

(iv) The President will communicate a new date and time at which the voting process will resume;

[(j) *Decides* that, in the event that a Member State requests a vote in the Fifth Committee, the Fifth Committee may apply the present decision *mutatis mutandis*, as long as the present decision remains in effect, and, if any draft resolution or draft decision, or a part thereof, is recommended by the Fifth Committee with a vote, the General Assembly, notwithstanding the provision in paragraph (c) above, will proceed to a vote on it without placing it under silence procedure pursuant to decision 74/544 unless the President is informed in advance that the vote is no longer needed.]