



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1 June 2020

Excellency,

Sequel to my letter dated 29 May 2020, I have the pleasure to transmit herewith, a letter from H.E. Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations, the facilitator of the informal consultations of the General Assembly on the e-voting process (excluding elections).

Further to the additional comments made by delegations, the letter circulates the revised draft (Rev.2) of the decision entitled, "*Procedure for taking decisions of the General Assembly by a vote (excluding elections) while a plenary meeting of the General Assembly is not practicable due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*".

I avail of this opportunity to express my solidarity with Member States who are fighting COVID-19 and extend my sincere condolences for their loss.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



Permanent Mission of Jamaica
to the United Nations

1st June 2020

Excellency,

I write to you in my capacity as Facilitator of the informal consultations on the General Assembly voting process (excluding elections) during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. I thank all delegations for their constructive engagement during the informal consultations convened on 11th, 18th, 21st and 28th May 2020.

Taking into consideration the comments and ideas provided by the delegations, I have the honour to circulate the revised draft (Rev.2) of the decision entitled "Procedure for taking decisions of the General Assembly by a vote (excluding elections) while a plenary meeting of the General Assembly is not practicable due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic", which is attached to the present letter for your consideration and further discussion.

As announced in my letter dated 29th May 2020, I will hold the next informal consultation on Thursday, 4th June at 3:00 p.m. via the Cisco WebEx platform.

I continue to count on your active participation and support throughout this process.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

E. Courtenay Rattray
Ambassador/Permanent Representative

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

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) while a plenary meeting of the General Assembly is not practicable due to 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 recommended as precautionary measures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19;

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;

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;

Stressing the importance of having orderly, transparent and inclusive consultations leading to a negotiated text in the absence of face-to-face negotiations, especially on those questions which may be particularly relevant to this crisis;

(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 at 6:00 p.m. on 30 June 2020 or upon the conclusion of consideration by the General Assembly of draft resolutions and draft decisions to adopt budgets under agenda items allocated to the Fifth Committee for the second part of its resumed seventy-fourth session, whichever is later, and *stresses* that all possible efforts should be made with a view to establishing the broadest possible agreement;

(b) *Further decides* that the present decision shall be subject to a review before the end of July 2020 (if the General Assembly extends the application of the present decision for a duration that covers the end of July 2020), including to review whether the present decision should be applied to draft resolutions and draft decisions on matters other than those specified in paragraph (c) below;

(c) *Decides* that draft resolutions and draft decisions subject to voting without a plenary meeting, in accordance with the present decision, shall be those essential for the United Nations system to be fully operational and effective, which for the purposes of the present decision shall mean that they are exclusively limited to the adoption of budgets under agenda items allocated to the Fifth Committee for the second part of its resumed seventy-fourth session and time-bound procedural decisions, including the postponement, cancellation or scheduling of meetings and conferences;

(d) *Decides* that a draft resolution or a draft decision falling within the scope of paragraph (c) 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;

(e) *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;

(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 five minutes 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 Member States that affirmed their presence during the voting period before accessing 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

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

meeting held after the cessation of the precautionary measures as soon as the circumstances allow;

(f) *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 (e) (i) above, to immediately suspend the scheduled vote and immediately circulate the amendment or the procedural motion in question, and take one of the following steps:

(i) 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 (e) above;

(ii) 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 (e) above;

(g) *Decides* that if a point of order is raised during the voting period referred to in paragraph (e) (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 immediately notify all Member States that an appeal has been made to his ruling and indicate the date and time of the voting on the appeal, which shall take place within one hour from the time when the President has notified that an appeal has been made to his ruling; the voting shall be held in accordance with paragraphs (e) (ii) to (v) above;

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

(h) *Decides* that, in the event that a Member State breaks the silence or requests a vote with respect to a draft resolution, a draft decision, a part thereof or an amendment thereto that was placed under a silence procedure by the Chair of the Fifth Committee pursuant to General Assembly decisions 74/544 and 74/555, the Chair of the Fifth Committee will refer the draft resolution, the draft decision, the part thereof or the amendment thereto to the General Assembly, and the General Assembly, notwithstanding the provision in paragraph (d) above, shall 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.