

2023 ALAMO MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

Rules of Procedure



November 10th – 12th, 2023

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The Process of Debate: Understanding the Conference

Formal and Informal Sessions

Model UN advances through two different modalities: **formal sessions** and **informal sessions**. During **formal session**, which includes the speakers' list and discussions in moderated caucus led by the chairs, all committee rules are enforced. Delegates are expected to participate and exhibit full diplomatic decorum. During **informal session**, delegates are still expected to conduct themselves in a civil manner but are free to discuss the topic in their own ways. Informal session includes unmoderated caucuses to discuss and write resolution drafts, session breaks, and meal breaks (also known as suspensions of the meeting).

Points and Motions

Shifting between these modalities as well as the overall work within each committee is guided by **points and motions**. These can be raised by delegates at any time to organize the flow of the debate. A full list of points and motions can be found at the end of this document. To raise a point or motion, delegates may raise your placard and wait to be recognized by the chair. Upon recognition, the delegate may speak and indicate their point or motion. If the point or motion is in order, the chair will respond accordingly and either call for a procedural vote or provide the clarification needed, depending on what the delegate raising the point or motion sought. Should there be more than one motion on the floor, the chair recognizes all of them first before calling for a vote. A motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has begun. A withdrawn motion can be reintroduced by other delegates.

Opening the Session – Roll Call

Each session will open with the committee chair conducting a roll call. The roll call is made in alphabetical order by the English name of the delegation. All delegates must be present at the roll call to state their preference in “present and voting” or simply “present”. When delegates announce themselves as being "present and voting", they give away their right to abstain (i.e., not vote) on a substantial matter (such as resolutions). This indicates to the chairs and the committee that the delegate believes the matter is important and is ready to discuss. When delegates announce themselves as being "present", they make it known that they do not necessarily have a strong opinion on it. Therefore, a delegate who is "present" retains the right to abstain. Delegates that are

not present during roll call must hand a note to the chair indicating their new status.

Setting the Agenda

To initiate discussion, the **order of topics** must be determined first. If not already motioned for by a delegate, chairs during the first session will smile upon any delegate who will motion to open a speaker's list to hear from delegates regarding the preference in debate over the order of topics. This should be used to deliver **opening statements**, in which delegates outline their broader stance on each topic as well as their preferred order of discussing them. During deliberation over the order of topics, at any time a delegate may motion to set the agenda and open the debate of the first topic. **Before taking a vote on this motion, as a formality, the chair will hear one delegate speak in favor of debating the topics in the proposed order, and one delegate to speak against.** The committee will then vote on the motion to set the agenda in a proposed order. Committees will continue to vote on such motions until an agenda is passed by a majority vote. After the agenda has been set, the chair will entertain all motions, with preference for any motion to open a new speaker's list to address the first agenda topic.

Speaker's Lists

A new speaker's list is opened at the beginning of the first session as well as at the beginning of the discussion on each new topic. Once the committee moves into substantive debate, if a delegate has not already motioned for the opening of a speaker's list, the chair may enforce the opening of the speaker's list on the topic area. **The chair may only declare the speaker's list open at the beginning of each new topic.** With the opening of a speaker's list, a set speaking time must also be declared. Switching to moderated or unmoderated caucus pauses the speaker's list which will continue after the motion has been entertained. Motions to close the speaker's list and initiate the voting procedure can be made at any time.

The speaker's list is used as an instrument to conduct formal debate on topics and all delegates are expected to participate. A Member State may address the committee as many times as it would like, but it must wait until it has spoken before placing its name back on the speaker's list. Once the chair has opened the speaker's list, he or she will ask for the names of those wishing to be placed on the list. *If you decide to join the speaker's list after the official calling of names, you can raise your placard asking the chair to be added to the Speaker's list.* When a Member

State is recognized to speak, that country must approach the podium, and deliver as well as finish their speech within the speaker's set time. Delegates are not required to use all the allotted time and may yield excess time to either the chair, to another delegate, or to the floor (see details on last page). This rule should be used in the spirit of diplomacy to give each delegation an opportunity to express their views; it is not a tool to hinder debate or slow the substantive work of the body.

Moderated Caucus

At any point in time during formal session, a delegate may motion to conduct discussion in **moderated caucus**. Such debate follows all formal rules as the committee is still in session. Thus, all members of the committee must be quiet and respectful to the delegate speaking while the delegate speaking will be spotlighted when addressing the committee. **A moderated caucus has many purposes, but the main purpose is to allow delegates to discuss sub-topics under the main topic and to indicate public support for certain measures.** It is up to the delegates to steer the debate in the direction they want to go and get others to discuss the issues that are relevant for them. To indicate interest to speak, delegates are asked to raise their placards. The chair then freely determines who can speak based upon the order in which they are called by the chair.

To move into a moderated caucus, the motion must include the overall speaking time, the time per speaker, and the sub-issue to be discussed.

***Example:** The Delegation of Zambia moves for a 5-minute moderated caucus with 30 second speaking time per delegate to discuss the economic dimension of trafficking.*

Unmoderated Caucus

Formal session is not conducive to delegates creating coalitions, formulating agreements about the topic or for drafting resolutions; for these activities, delegates should make use of **unmoderated caucus**. During this time, delegates can move freely within designated conference spaces to go and talk to other delegates in the groupings of their choice. Because it is impossible to ask delegates questions during formal debate (unless the speaker has yielded to points of inquiry), the way to actively push delegates on certain matters, discuss issues in more detail, and draft resolutions is to suspend the meeting for an unmoderated caucus, during which delegates discuss in smaller groups.

An unmoderated caucus is essentially a procedural “timeout,” as formal session temporarily is put on hold, and the committee can break down into smaller groups for discussing the topic, drafting resolutions, or debating the merits of various resolutions. Chairs play no part in informal caucusing and the rules of procedure for sessions are not in effect because the committee is not in session.

When a motion is made for an unmoderated caucus, the motion should include the purpose for the unmoderated caucus, the length of time for the suspension of the session and require a majority vote to pass.

Example: *The Delegation of Tuvalu moves for an unmoderated caucus for 10 minutes for the purpose of discussing possible resolution drafts.*

Note that **unmoderated caucuses** can lead to the emergence of blocs of countries not engaging with each other and thus should be used cautiously. Simply put, *unmoderated caucus excludes*. In the real United Nations, there are regional blocs and regional caucuses, but delegates in Model UN can choose to build their own blocs. These blocs will typically work together to create a draft resolution, but *you should be open-minded about reaching out to other countries and balance unmoderated and moderated caucuses*.

Closure and Adjournment of Debate

A motion to close debate may be made at any time but requires the support of two-thirds of the committee to pass. Following closure, no further speakers will be heard on the topic and no further resolutions or amendments can be submitted. **If there is at least one draft resolution that has been introduced at the time of closing the debate, voting procedure will be initiated** (see below). If there are no draft resolutions, closure of debate will initiate the next topic on the agenda.

If the committee believes that no decision will be reached on a topic at any given point in time and that draft resolutions submitted are inadequate to address the issue, a two-thirds majority can adjourn (table) debate on the topic. **If debate is adjourned, no further discussion of the topic will occur, no working papers will be accepted on the topic, and no voting will take place on draft resolutions already submitted.** The committee is precluded from returning to the topic for

the rest of the conference. Once debate is closed and draft resolutions voted upon or adjourned without voting, the committee moves on to begin discussing the next topic on the agenda.

Voting Types – Procedural & Substantive

There are two different types of voting at Model UN: procedural and substantive. The first refers to voting on motions and the latter refers to voting on resolutions. In both, **each delegation shall have only one vote and may vote yes, no, or abstain**. Abstentions are non-votes and are not included when determining the passage of a motion or resolution, as long as a majority exists.

Voting on a motion is considered procedural. **All procedural votes must be taken raising the delegation's placards**. The chair will restate the motion at hand and asks for all countries in favor first before asking for those who oppose. The rapporteur will count both numbers of raised placards and announce the result of the vote. **Procedural decisions shall be made by a majority vote of delegates present and voting**. If there is an equal division between yes and no votes, the motion fails. For practical reasons, the chair may only ask delegates to raise their placard if they support the motion, assuming that delegates who do not raise their hands reject the motion.

All substantive votes on resolutions must be taken through roll call vote. Substantive voting is based on the initial roll call conducted at the beginning of the respective session. *It is the right of any country to request a new roll call before the vote, and there is no vote on the motion as the motion automatically passes*. Roll call votes are carried out by the chair who calls upon each Member State to cast its vote in alphabetical order; countries may pass once. In this case, the chair continues with the alphabetical order to then go back to any country which passed initially. These countries then must vote when asked again. Once in roll call voting procedure, no delegate shall leave the committee or interrupt the voting except on a Point of Order or Information concerning the actual conduct of the vote.

A delegate may explain their substantive vote on a particular resolution, briefly addressing the committee immediately after their vote on the resolution in question. **Requests for an explanation of vote must be submitted before debate is closed**. Delegates may not address the substance of the resolution in question, speaking only to the reasons for their vote. Sponsors of a resolution may not explain their vote in favor of the resolution, and abstentions are not explained.

Rules and Speech

Diplomatic Conduct and Speech

Representatives are expected to communicate appropriately at all times. This includes not to address another delegate directly, interrupt at any point in time, or commit any other disturbance. The chair has the right to call out such behavior and warn delegates. Recurrent violation of diplomatic conduct may lead to exclusion from the meeting. This rule applies to formal and informal sessions. Whether it is public or private, delegates are expected to communicate appropriately with each other. Unruly behavior towards the chair or rapporteur is not accepted at all and will lead to immediate expulsion from the committee. Delegates shall further always refer solely to their delegation when addressing the council, and never refer to themselves personally.

*Example: Delegate raises placard, is recognized by chair and addresses committee:
“The delegation of ... would like to.”*

Do not under any circumstances, (other than a point of personal privilege) refer to yourself in the first person. Delegates may address the Council only once permission is granted by the chair. Delegates are called upon in the order in which they signify their desire to speak or the order on the speaker’s list. **Speakers must keep their remarks related to the subject under discussion** (whether a remark is relative to the discussion at hand is determined by the chair, delegates can be warned by the chair to keep their remarks related to the subject at hand). A time limit may be established for speeches to be determined at the same time a Speaker’s List is created.

At the end of any contribution, delegates will be allowed, if they yielded their time to the floor, to answer questions concerning their speech. **A delegate that desires to ask a question should signify by raising their placard.** All questions and replies are directed to the chair. After acknowledging the point of inquiry, the chair may allow the delegation that is the subject of the inquiry to respond to the inquiry. If a delegate does not yield at the end of his or her remarks, it is assumed that they yield to the chair.

Example: “The delegate of Finland yields their time to: (1) the chair, (2) to the floor, or (3) to the delegation of”

Right of Reply

The chair may grant Right of Reply to any Representative if a speech by another Representative contains unusual or extraordinary language clearly insulting to personal or national dignity. **Requests for a Right of Reply may be made either immediately after the delegation that made the remarks in question have yielded the floor (by raising their placard and specifically requesting a right of reply), or in private note to the chair containing the specific language found to be insulting to personal or national dignity.** The chair's decision is not subject to appeal. **There shall be no reply to a reply.** The right of reply extends for thirty seconds to one minute in length but is subject to the chair's discretion.

Resolutions

The goal of a committee is to pass resolutions in order to address the issues discussed and provide solutions. The following terms are important in this context:

- **Working paper:** a list of ideas circulated by delegates but not recognized by the chair yet. These may or may not be written in resolution format and shared among delegates as appropriate. Delegates will be spending most of their time writing and amending working papers to eventually condense them into draft resolutions.
- **Draft resolution:** a document written in resolution format, submitted to and approved by the chairs, and shared to committee but not yet voted upon is called a draft resolution. A draft resolution is required to be considered for voting.
- **Sponsors:** delegates who authored the draft resolution or actively contributed ideas, support the draft resolution and want to see it passed. **All resolutions require a minimum number of three sponsors and any delegate can only sponsor one resolution per topic.**
- **Signatories:** delegates who wish to see the draft resolution debated but may or may not agree with all the ideas. However, they think there is merit to the draft and want to see it presented. **All resolutions will require a minimum number of five signatories and any delegate can sign as many resolutions as he or she pleases to.**

- **Preambulatory clauses:** statements in the first section of the draft resolution that describes the problems the committee wants to solve as well as previous measures taken to combat the problem. Preambulatory clauses are usually italicized or underlined but not numbered.
- **Operative clauses:** statements in the second section of the draft resolution that outlines the specific solutions the sponsors wish to implement. Operative clauses are numbered and underlined.
- **Amendment:** Amendments can add, delete, or change an operative clause in a draft resolution. A **Friendly Amendment** is an amendment written and approved by all the sponsors to a draft resolution and is automatically included into the text. An **Unfriendly Amendment** is an amendment not approved by all the sponsors and must be voted upon before it can be included into the text.

The Resolution Process

Passing a resolution requires discussion and support. This can be achieved in formal or informal session. The actual writing, however, will be conducted in unmoderated caucus. At any point in time during unmoderated caucus, delegates can approach the chairs and ask to review their working paper. Upon receiving a working paper, chairs will consider whether all rules of resolution writing were upheld. Once confirmed, the chairs will get back to the delegates and confirm that the working paper can be introduced as a draft resolution. At this point in time, the working paper needs three sponsors and five signatories. If these requirements are met and once back in formal session, any delegate can motion to introduce a draft resolution and consider it for later voting. Draft resolutions will be administered by the chair and provided as virtual copies for all delegates.

At any point in time during formal session, delegates can motion to close the debate. If this motion passes with a two-thirds majority, no further draft resolutions can be submitted. In other words, **all draft resolutions must be on the table before closing the debate in order to put them to the vote.** Due time will be granted to allow all draft resolutions to be circulated among the delegates for their review. Commencing the actual voting procedure, one sponsor of the first draft resolution introduced will be given the spotlight and will read their draft resolution to the committee. After reading the draft resolution out, open discussion in moderated caucus will take place in which delegates can raise their placards to raise questions. This allows all Member States to ask the draft

resolution authors to clarify any questions about the content of their draft resolution. Signatories of the draft resolution, during the “Question and Answer” session, must directly answer the questions concerning the content of the draft resolution and are not allowed to provide sustained discussion on why the resolution is relevant. At any point in time during the “Question and Answer” session, the following points and motions are appropriate:

- Points of order or parliamentary inquiry
- Motion to request for a roll call
- Motion to propose an amendment
- Motion for a division of the question
- Motion to pass resolution by acclamation
- Motion to close debate and proceed to voting

Once successfully motioned to proceed to voting, voting shall begin upon the chair’s declaration “**we are now in voting procedure,**” and end when the results of the vote are announced. Immediately prior to any vote, the chair shall remind the Council about the draft resolution to be voted on in light of other draft resolutions to be considered later and explain the consequences of a “yes” or “no” vote. **Each delegation shall have one vote and may vote yes, no, or abstain.** No delegate may cast a vote on behalf of another country. Upon finishing voting on the first draft resolution, the process continues by allowing sponsors of the second resolution to read out their draft resolution and enter the next “Question and Answer” session. This continues until all draft resolutions have been read out, discussed in plenary, and voted upon.

Amendments & Division of the Question

Amendments are proposed changes to a draft resolution once they have been read but before they are voted upon. It is up to the discretion of the chair to determine whether an amendment is friendly or unfriendly. Friendly amendments for the most part represent additions in the spirit of the resolution whereas unfriendly amendments either delete clauses or change them substantively.

Friendly amendments automatically become part of the resolution without debate or voting once approved by all sponsors. If all of the sponsors of the draft resolution being amended are also sponsors of the amendment, the chair will expand the draft resolution accordingly before voting.

Unfriendly amendments require an additional vote. Once motioned, debate can begin but only one amendment can be on the floor at any one time and will remain on the floor until it has been tabled or voted on by the committee. The chair will entertain two speakers in favor and two against the unfriendly amendment. The content of these speeches must be substantive in nature but limited time will be allotted (app. 30 seconds). Afterwards, a motion for closure of debate is in order after there have been at least two speakers for and two speakers against the amendment and happens automatically when there are no more states on the speaker's list. Once the committee has voted on all unfriendly amendments to a resolution, the committee votes upon the draft resolution in its entirety, including any unfriendly amendments accepted by the committee.

A motion to **division of the question** can be entertained at any point in time during debate and before voting. The chair will recognize one speaker for and one speaker against the division and a simple majority then decides whether the respective parts of draft resolution at hand are then voted upon separately (e.g., individual operative clauses).

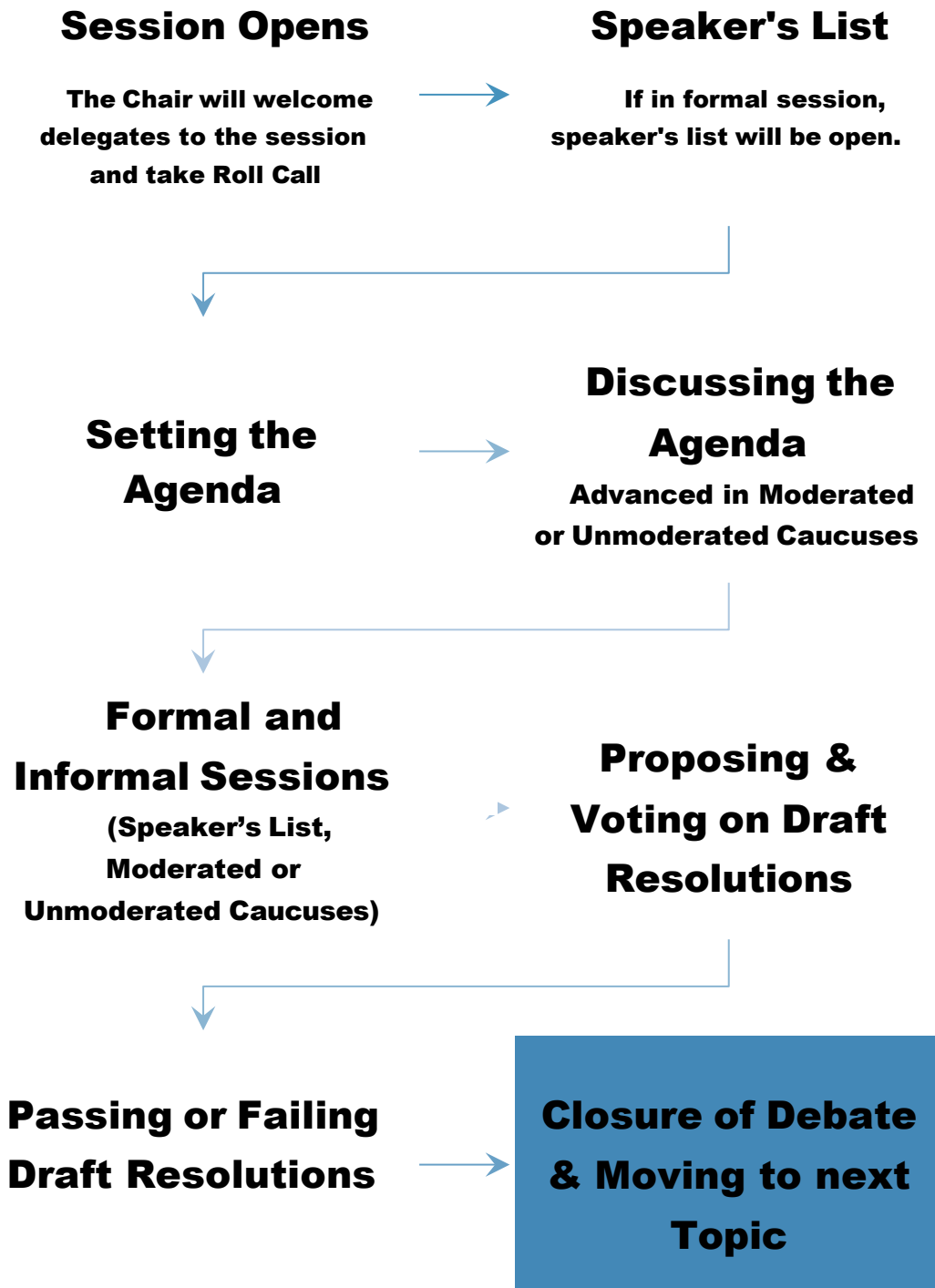
Passing of a Resolution

All submitted, recognized, read, and debated draft resolutions are up for a vote once debate is closed. A motion can be entertained to **adopt the resolution by acclamation**. This motion needs one speaker for and one against. More importantly, it needs a unanimous vote to pass. If not passed by acclamation, a resolution passes if it receives the necessary support through voting. To be adopted by the **UN Security Council**, a draft resolution must have the affirmative vote of nine members of the Council, including the concurring votes of the five permanent members: People's Republic of China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. As such, a draft resolution does not pass

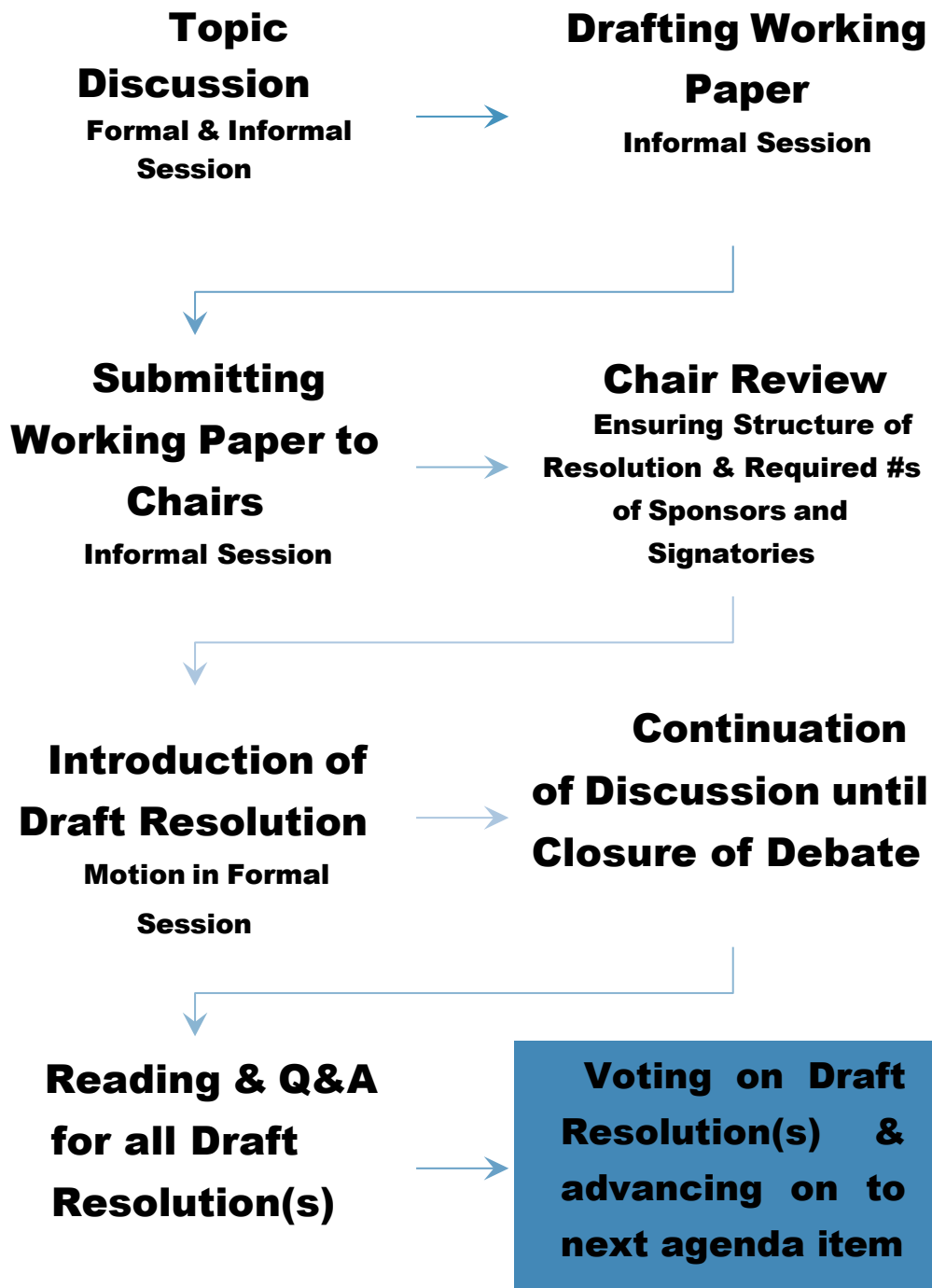
- if the draft fails to win nine votes, or
- if a permanent member casts a negative vote (veto).

To be adopted by the **Economic and Social Council & General Assembly: Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth Committee)**, a draft resolution must have the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Council present and voting. There is no veto power. **After voting on all draft resolutions, the committee concludes the debate and moves to the next agenda topic.**

Flow of Debate Chart



The Resolution Process



Points and Motions – Reference Sheet

Rule	Debatable?	Vote Required?	Interrupt Speaker?	Description
POINTS – How a speaker inquires on rules of procedure				
Point of Parliamentary Procedure / Order	No	No	Yes	Used to point out a misuse of the rules.
Point of Inquiry / Information	No	No	No	Used to ask for rules or non-rules related clarification from the presiding chair / speaker (at the end of their speech)
Point of Personal Privilege	No	No	No	Used to express personal discomfort that hinders delegate to participate in the committee
COMMON MOTIONS – How a speaker advances & organizes formal discussions				
Open Speaker's List	No	Majority	No	Opens a speaker's list
Set or change Speakers Time	No	Majority	No	Chooses how long each speaker on the speaker's list or in moderated caucus is allowed to speak
Go to Moderated Caucus	No	Majority	No	Moves into formal debate: must specify how long the Moderated Caucus will last, to what purpose it is intended, as well as how long each speaker can speak
Go to Unmoderated Caucus	No	Majority	No	Moves into informal debate: must specify how long the Unmoderated Caucus will last as well as its purpose
Set the Agenda	1 For 1 Against	Majority	No	Chooses which agenda item will be discussed first; once passed, motion can no longer be raised
Suspend the Meeting	No	Majority	No	Used to suspend debate for breaks in the schedule (i.e., for lunch)
Introduce a Draft Resolution	No	Majority	No	Brings a draft resolution to the floor and to the committee's attention.
Introduce Amendment	No	Majority	No	Brings an amendment to the floor for discussion. Opens a new discussion on draft resolution
Division of the Question	1 For 1 Against	Majority	No	Divides a draft resolution in to two or more parts, to be voted upon separately
Request for a Roll Call before Vote	No	No	No	Initiates a new roll call for member states to be called on in alphabetical order to announce their presence.

Adopt resolution by acclamation	1 For 1 Against	Unanimity	No	Approves draft resolution without roll call vote; requires unanimity to pass.
Closure of Debate	1 For 1 Against	2/3 Majority	No	Finishes the debate on current topic and brings all draft resolutions introduced to discussion and vote.
Adjourn Debate	1 For 1 Against	2/3 Majority	No	Adjourns debate on current topic without resolution voting; Also known as 'tabling'.
Reopen Debate	1 For 1 Against	2/3 Majority	No	Allows the committee to reconsider matters upon which debate was previously closed or adjourned.
Adjourn the Meeting	1 For 1 Against	2/3 Majority	No	Ends the meeting.
YIELDS – How a speaker finishes their speech				
Yield to the Chair	No	No	-	The chair retakes control of the committee.
Yield to another Delegate	No	No	-	Another delegate is allowed to speak until the end of the speaking time (if there are time limits).
Yield to the Floor	No	No	-	Allows members of the committee to ask questions of the speaker, until speaking time has expired.