



**Intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop
an international legally binding instrument on plastic
pollution, including in the marine environment
Fourth session**

Ottawa, 23–29 April 2024

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

Organizational matters: adoption of the rules of procedure

**Draft rules of procedure for the work of the intergovernmental
negotiating committee to develop an international legally
binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine
environment**

Note by the secretariat

1. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/14, entitled “End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument”, an ad hoc open-ended working group convened by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme met in Dakar from 30 May to 1 June 2022 to prepare for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.
2. The working group considered the draft rules of procedure prepared by the secretariat for the intergovernmental negotiating committee.¹ The text was based on the rules of procedure of other United Nations bodies and on established practice, including the work of other intergovernmental negotiating committees convened under the auspices of the United Nations in the field of the environment. The text, in rule 37, contained a reference to the right of regional economic integration organizations to exercise the right to vote on matters falling within their competence.
3. The working group agreed to forward the draft rules of procedure to the intergovernmental negotiating committee with some issues to be agreed on by the committee. The text of the draft rules of procedure, as agreed on by the working group, is contained in appendix II to the report of the working group.²
4. At the first meeting of the first session, on 28 November 2022, a representative of the secretariat introduced the draft rules of procedure for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee, which had been forwarded by the working group.³ The draft rules of procedure contained bracketed text in paragraph 1 of rule 37 and three alternatives for paragraph 2 based on the text recommended by the working group. To facilitate consultations, the intergovernmental negotiating committee also had before it a submission from the United States of America and the European Union

* UNEP/PP/INC.4/1.

¹ UNEP/PP/OEWG.1/4.

² UNEP/PP/OEWG/1/5.

³ UNEP/PP/INC.1/3.

setting out proposed alternative language for a portion of the bracketed text in rule 37.⁴ The committee agreed that the Chair would hold informal consultations on the bracketed text in rule 37 with a view to reaching agreement, and that pending such agreement the draft rules of procedure would apply to the committee's work on a provisional basis.

5. At the ninth meeting of the first session, on 2 December 2022, the intergovernmental negotiating committee agreed to defer the adoption of the draft rules of procedure until its second session to allow for further consultations on the matter, on the understanding that, pending their adoption, the draft rules would continue to apply to its work on a provisional basis.

6. At the second session, held from 29 May to 2 June 2023, the Committee decided to adopt the following interpretive statement relating to rule 38, paragraph 1:

“The intergovernmental negotiating committee understands that, based on discussions on the draft rules of procedure for the intergovernmental negotiating committee, there are differing views among intergovernmental negotiating committee members on rule 38, paragraph 1, and its reflection in the report of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on the work of its first session. Therefore, the provisional application of rule 38, paragraph 1, of the draft rules of procedure has been a subject of debate. In the event that rule 38, paragraph 1, is invoked before the rules are formally adopted, members will recall this lack of agreement.”

7. At the second session of the committee and again at the third session, held from 13 to 19 November 2023, the Chair also recalled that the draft rules of procedure would continue to apply provisionally to the work of the committee, as had been decided at its first session.

8. The annex to the present note sets out the draft rules of procedure as agreed on by the working group and forwarded to the intergovernmental negotiating committee for consideration and possible adoption.

⁴ Available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/41322/Proposal%20for%20consolidated%20language%20on%20rule%2037%20of%20the%20draft%20Rules%20of%20Procedure.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>.

Annex***Draft rules of procedure for the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment****I. Purposes**

These rules of procedure shall govern the negotiation of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

II. Definitions**Rule 1**

1. “Member” means any State Member of the United Nations or Member of its specialized agencies or a regional economic integration organization participating in the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (hereinafter referred to as the Committee).
2. “Regional economic integration organization” means an organization constituted by sovereign States of a given region to which its member States have transferred competence in respect of matters covered by the committee’s work. Participation of such a regional economic integration organization shall in no case entail an increase in the representation to which the member States of that organization would otherwise be entitled.
3. “Chair” means the Chair elected in accordance with rule 9 of these rules of procedure.
4. “Secretariat” means the secretariat provided by the Executive Director which is required to support the Committee.
5. “Executive Director” means the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme or his or her representative.
6. “Session” means any series of meetings convened in accordance with the present rules of procedure.
7. “Representatives present and voting” means representatives of Members present and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives who abstain from voting are considered as not voting.

III. Place and dates of sessions**Rule 2**

1. The venue and dates of the sessions shall be decided by the Committee in consultation with the secretariat.
2. The secretariat shall convey to Members the date, venue and provisional agenda of each session no less than six weeks in advance of that session.

IV. Agenda**Drawing up of the provisional agenda for a session****Rule 3**

The Executive Director shall, after approval by the Bureau referred to in rule 9, paragraph 1, submit to the Committee at each session the draft provisional agenda for the following session. The Committee shall review the draft and revise it, as it deems necessary, and agree to forward it to its next session for adoption.

* The annex to document UNEP/PP/INC.1/3 is reproduced here, without formal editing.

Adoption of the agenda

Rule 4

At the beginning of each session, the Committee shall adopt its agenda for the session based on the provisional agenda referred to in rule 3.

Revision of the agenda

Rule 5

During a session, the Committee may revise the agenda for the session by adding, deleting or amending items. Only items that the Committee considers to be urgent and important may be added to its agenda during the session.

V. Representation

Composition of delegations

Rule 6

The delegation of each Member participating in any session shall consist of a head of delegation and such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Alternates and advisers

Rule 7

The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

Rule 8

The names of representatives, alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the secretariat no less than three days before the session they are to attend.

VI. Officers

Elections

Rule 9

1. The Committee shall elect from among the representatives of the Members a Bureau comprising one Chair and ten Vice-Chairs, one of whom shall act as Rapporteur.
2. In electing the officers referred to in the previous paragraph, the Committee shall have due regard to the principle of equitable geographical representation and gender balance. Each of the five United Nations regional groups shall be represented by two members of the Bureau and one Bureau member shall represent the small island developing States.

Acting Chair

Rule 10

If the Chair finds it necessary to be absent from a session or any part thereof, he or she shall call upon a Vice-Chair to take his or her place.

Replacement of the Chair

Rule 11

If the Chair is unable to continue to perform his or her functions, a new Chair shall be elected for the unexpired term, with due regard to rule 9, paragraph 2.

Substitute members

Rule 12

If a Vice-Chair finds it necessary to be absent from a session or any part thereof, a new Vice-Chair shall be designated by the same regional group. Such substitution shall not exceed the period of one session.

Replacement of a Vice-Chair

Rule 13

If a Vice-Chair resigns or is otherwise unable to complete his or her term of office, a new Vice-Chair shall be elected for the unexpired term, with due regard to rule 9, paragraph 2.

VII. Secretariat

Rule 14

The Executive Director may designate his or her representative during the sessions.

Rule 15

The Executive Director shall provide and direct the staff of the secretariat required to support the Committee, including any subsidiary organs that the Committee may establish.

Rule 16

The Executive Director, or his or her designated representative, may, subject to rule 20, make oral and written statements to the Committee and its subsidiary organs concerning any matter under consideration.

Rule 17

The Executive Director shall be responsible for convening sessions in accordance with rules 2 and 3 and for making all the necessary arrangements for sessions, including the preparation and distribution of documents at least six weeks in advance of the sessions.

Rule 18

The secretariat shall, in accordance with rules 2, 3, 51 and 58, interpret speeches made at sessions; receive, translate and circulate the documents of the sessions; publish and circulate reports and relevant documentation to the Members; have custody of the documents in the Committee's archives; and generally perform all other work that the Committee may require.

VIII. Conduct of business

Quorum

Rule 19

1. The Chair may declare a session open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the Members participating in the session are present. The presence of a majority of Members so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.
2. For the purposes of determining a quorum for a decision to be taken on a matter within the competence of a regional economic integration organization, that organization shall be counted to the extent of the number of votes it is entitled to cast.

Powers of the Chair

Rule 20

In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere by the present rules, the Chair shall declare the opening and closing of each session; direct the discussion; ensure observance of the present rules; accord the right to speak; put questions to the vote; and announce decisions. The Chair shall rule on points of order and, subject to the present rules, shall have control over the proceedings of the sessions and over the maintenance of order at sessions. The Chair may propose to the session the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each Member may speak on any subject, the closure of the list of speakers, or the closure of

the debate. The Chair may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the session or of the debate on the question under discussion.

Rule 21

The Chair, in the exercise of his or her functions, remains under the Committee's authority.

Powers of the acting Chair

Rule 22

A Vice-Chair acting as Chair shall have the same powers and duties as the Chair.

Voting rights of the Chair

Rule 23

The Chair shall not vote, but may designate another member of his or her delegation to vote in his or her place.

Speeches

Rule 24

No one may address a session without having previously obtained the Chair's permission. Subject to these rules, the Chair shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The Chair shall call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are irrelevant to the subject under discussion.

Precedence

Rule 25

The Chair, the Vice-Chair, or a designated representative of any subsidiary group that may be established pursuant to rule 49 may be accorded precedence in speaking for the purpose of explaining the conclusion arrived at by the subsidiary organ concerned and for the purpose of replying to questions.

Points of order

Rule 26

1. During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Member may at any time raise a point of order and the point of order shall be immediately decided upon by the Chair in accordance with these rules. A representative of a Member may appeal against the Chair's ruling. The appeal shall be put to the vote immediately and the Chair's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority vote of the representatives of Members who are present and voting.
2. A representative of a Member raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Time limit on speeches

Rule 27

The Committee may limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times that each person may speak on any question, except on procedural questions, in respect of which the Chair shall limit each intervention to a maximum of five minutes. When debate is limited and a speaker has spoken for his or her allotted time, the Chair shall call him or her to order without delay.

Closing of list of speakers

Rule 28

During the course of a debate, the Chair may announce the list of speakers and, with the Committee's consent, declare the list closed. The Chair may, however, accord the right of reply to any Member if, in his or her opinion, a speech delivered after he or she has declared the list closed renders this justified. When debate on an item is concluded because there are no other speakers, the Chair shall, with the Committee's consent, declare the debate closed.

Adjournment of debate

Rule 29

During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Member may move the adjournment of the debate on the subject under discussion. In addition to the proponent of the motion, one representative of a Member may speak in favour of the motion and one against it, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote.

Closure of debate

Rule 30

A representative of a Member may at any time move the closure of the debate on the subject under discussion, whether or not any other representative of a Member has signified his or her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate shall be accorded only to two representatives of Members opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the Committee is in favour of the closure, the Chair shall declare the closure of the debate.

Suspension or adjournment of a session

Rule 31

During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Member may move the suspension or the adjournment of any session. Such motion shall not be debated, but shall immediately be put to the vote.

Order of procedural motions

Rule 32

Subject to rule 26, and regardless of the order in which they are submitted, the following motions shall have precedence, in the following order, over all other proposals or motions before the session:

- (a) To suspend the session;
- (b) To adjourn the session;
- (c) To adjourn the debate on the subject under discussion;
- (d) To close the debate on the subject under discussion.

Proposals and amendments

Rule 33

Proposals and amendments shall normally be introduced in writing and submitted to the secretariat, which shall circulate copies to all representatives of Members. As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any session of the Committee unless copies of that proposal have been circulated in the official languages of the session to all representatives of Members not later than the day preceding the session. Subject to the Committee's consent, the Chair may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of proposals or amendments that have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.

Decisions on competence

Rule 34

Subject to rule 32, any motion calling for a decision on the Committee's competence to adopt any proposal or any amendment submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a vote is taken on the proposal or amendment in question.

Withdrawal of proposals or motions

Rule 35

A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its proponent at any time before voting on it has commenced, provided that the proposal or the motion has not been amended. A proposal or motion that has thus been withdrawn may be reintroduced by another representative of a Member.

Reconsideration of proposals

Rule 36

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the Committee, by a two-thirds majority of the representatives of Members who are present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded to only two representatives of Members opposing the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote.

Voting rights

Rule 37

1. Each Member shall have one vote[, except as provided for in paragraph 2 of the present rule].

Original from Minamata

2. A regional economic integration organization shall, on matters within its competence, exercise its right to vote with a number of votes equal to the number of its member States participating in the Committee. Such an organization shall not exercise its right to vote if any of its member States exercises its right to vote, and vice versa.

Alt. 1

A regional economic integration organization shall, on matters within its competence, exercise its right to vote with a number of votes equal to the number of its member States **duly accredited and present at the time of the vote** [participating in the Committee]. Such an organization shall not exercise its right to vote if any of its member States exercises its right to vote, and vice versa.

Alt. 2

A regional economic integration organization shall, on matters within its competence, exercise its right to vote with a number of votes equal to the number of its member States **duly accredited and present at the session** [participating in the Committee]. Such an organization shall not exercise its right to vote if any of its member States exercises its right to vote, and vice versa.

Alt. 3 (Package from Minamata + footnote)

A regional economic integration organization shall, on matters within its competence, exercise its right to vote with a number of votes equal to the number of its member States participating in the Committee.* Such an organization shall not exercise its right to vote if any of its member States exercises its right to vote, and vice versa.

[* *duly accredited and present at the session*]

Adoption of decisions

Rule 38

1. The Committee shall make every effort to reach agreement on all matters of substance by consensus. If all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted and no agreement has been reached, the decision shall, as a last resort, be taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives of Members who are present and voting.
2. Decisions of the Committee on procedural matters shall be taken by a majority of the representatives of Members who are present and voting.
3. Where there is disagreement as to whether a matter to be voted on is a substantive or procedural matter, that issue shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of the representatives of Members who are present and voting.

Method of voting

Rule 39

Subject to rule 45, the Committee shall normally vote by show of hands, but any representative of a Member may request a roll call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members, beginning with the Member whose name is drawn by lot by the Chair. If, however, at any time a Member requests a secret ballot, that shall be the method of voting on the issue in question.

Recording of roll call

Rule 40

The vote of each Member participating in a roll call shall be recorded in the relevant documents of the session.

Conduct during voting

Rule 41

After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no representative of a Member shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Chair may permit representatives of Members to explain their votes, either before or after the voting, except when the vote is taken by secret ballot. The Chair may limit the time to be allowed for such explanation. The Chair shall not permit the proponent of a proposal or of an amendment to explain his or her vote on his or her own proposal or amendment.

Division of proposals or amendments

Rule 42

A representative of a Member may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment shall be voted on separately. If objection is made to the request for division, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion for division shall be given to only two representatives of Members in favour and two against. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or of the amendment that are subsequently approved shall be put to the vote as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal or of the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Voting on amendments

Rule 43

1. When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Committee shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter amendment shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon. If no amendments are adopted, the proposal shall be put to the vote in its original form.
2. A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it adds to, deletes from, or revises part of that proposal.

Voting on proposals

Rule 44

1. If two or more proposals are related to the same question, the Committee shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted. The Committee may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.
2. Any proposals or motions requiring that no decision be taken on the substance of such proposals shall, however, be considered as previous questions and shall be put to the vote before them.

Elections

Rule 45

All elections shall be held by secret ballot unless, in the absence of any objection, the Committee decides to proceed without taking a ballot when there is an agreed candidate.

Rule 46

1. If, when only one person or Member is to be elected, no candidate obtains, in the first ballot, the majority required, a second ballot shall be taken, restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, the Chair shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.
2. In the case of a tie in the first ballot among the candidates obtaining the second largest number of votes, a special ballot shall be held for the purpose of reducing the number of candidates to two. In the case of a tie among three or more candidates obtaining the largest number of votes, a second ballot shall be held. If a tie results among more than two candidates, the number shall be reduced to two by lot and the balloting, restricted to the remaining candidates, shall continue in accordance with the preceding paragraph.

Rule 47

1. When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates obtaining the required majority on the first ballot shall be elected.
2. If the number of candidates obtaining such a majority is more than the number of places to be filled, those candidates obtaining the largest number of votes shall be elected.
3. If the number of candidates obtaining such a majority is less than the number of places to be filled, additional ballots shall be held to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates having obtained the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot, who shall number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled. In the case of a tie between a greater number of unsuccessful candidates, however, a special ballot shall be held for the purpose of reducing the number of candidates to the required number.
4. If three restricted ballots are inconclusive, unrestricted ballots shall follow, in which votes may be cast for any eligible person or member. If three such unrestricted ballots are inconclusive, the next three ballots (subject to exception in a case similar to that of the tie mentioned at the end of the previous paragraph of this rule) shall be restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the third of the unrestricted ballots. The number of such candidates shall be not more than twice the number of places remaining to be filled.
5. The following three ballots thereafter shall be unrestricted and so on, until all the places are filled.

Equally divided votes**Rule 48**

If a vote is divided equally on matters other than elections, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

IX. Subsidiary organs**Subsidiary organs of the sessions, such as working groups and expert groups****Rule 49**

1. The Committee may establish such subsidiary organs as may be necessary for the effective discharge of its functions.
2. Each subsidiary organ shall elect its own officers, having due regard for the principle of equitable geographical representation and for gender balance. The number of such officers shall be no more than five.
3. The rules of procedure of the subsidiary organs shall be those of the Committee, as appropriate, subject to such modifications as the Committee may decide upon in the light of proposals made by the subsidiary organ concerned.

X. Languages and records

Languages of the sessions

Rule 50

Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the languages of the sessions.

Interpretation

Rule 51

1. Speeches made in a language of the sessions shall be interpreted into the other languages.
2. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the sessions. In this case he or she shall himself or herself provide for interpretation into one of the languages of the session, and interpretation into the other languages by the interpreters of the secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first language.

Languages of official documents

Rule 52

Official documents shall be made available in the languages of the session.

XI. Public and private meetings

Plenary meetings

Rule 53

The plenary meetings during any session shall be held in public unless the Committee decides otherwise. All decisions taken at any non-public meeting shall be announced at an early stage at a public meeting.

Other meetings

Rule 54

Meetings of subsidiary organs such as working groups or expert groups, other than any drafting group that may be set up, shall be held in public, unless the organ concerned decides otherwise.

XII. Observers

Participation of specialized agencies, United Nations related organizations, multilateral environmental agreements, United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental organizations

Rule 55

Participation of observers

Observers may participate in the work of the session in accordance with the established practice of the United Nations General Assembly.

Observers from non-governmental organizations

Rule 56

Relevant non-governmental organizations participating in the session as observers may make their contributions to the negotiating process, as appropriate, on the understanding that these organizations shall not have any negotiating role during the process, and taking into account decisions 1/1 and 2/1 adopted by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at its first and second sessions concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations.

XIII. Suspension and amendment of the rules of procedure

Rule 57

A rule of procedure may be amended or suspended by a decision of the Committee taken by consensus, provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal has been given.

XIV. Use of electronic means of communication

Rule 58

The Committee may use electronic means of communication for the transmission and sharing of documentation, without prejudice to other means of communication, as appropriate. The secretariat shall ensure that a secure and dedicated web interface is established and maintained to facilitate the work of the Committee.
