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MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING

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RULES OF PROCEDURE

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I. PARTICIPATION

Member states of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Rule 1

Representatives of all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), hereinafter referred to as participating States, may participate in the Conference.

Member States of the United Nations or its specialized agencies not members of the Economic Commission for Europe

Rule 2

Representatives of Member States of the United Nations or its specialized agencies not members of the Economic Commission for Europe may participate in the Conference in a consultative capacity in its consideration of any matter of particular concern to those States.

Specialized agencies

Rule 3

Representatives designated by specialized agencies may attend, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference and, as appropriate, in any working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Other intergovernmental organizations

Rule 4

Representatives designated by other intergovernmental organizations invited to the Conference may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference and as appropriate, any working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Interested United Nations organs

Rule 5

Representatives designated by interested organs of the United Nations may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference and, as appropriate, any working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Representatives of non-governmental organizations

Rule 6

1. Representatives of the non-governmental organizations accredited to the Conference may sit as observers at the plenary sessions of the Conference, within the limitations set by the Conference room's seating capacity.
2. Given the availability of time, a limited number of non-governmental organizations accredited to the Conference may also make oral statements at the Conference. Non-governmental organizations should select spokespersons among themselves and provide the list thereof to the Chairperson of the Conference who is requested to present the list of selected non-governmental organizations to member states in a timely manner for approval and to ensure that such selection is made on an equal and transparent basis, taking into account the geographical representation and diversity of non-governmental organizations;
3. NGOs with special competence in the area of ageing may submit written documentation and proposals, prior to and during the Conference.

Individual experts

Rule 7

1. Prominent experts in the field of ageing may be invited to the Conference in their personal capacity as resource persons by the Executive Secretary of the UNECE in consultation with member states.
2. Upon the invitation of the Chairperson, such experts may make oral statements on questions in which they have special competence.

II. REPRESENTATION AND CREDENTIALS

Composition of delegations

Rule 8

The delegation of each state participating in the Conference shall consist of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as may be required. The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

Credentials

Rule 9

The credentials of all representatives and other members of delegations to the Conference shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the UNECE.

III. OFFICERS

Elections

Rule 10

The Conference shall elect the following officers: a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons, a Chairperson of the Drafting Group and a Rapporteur, to be chosen among the representatives of participating states.

Acting Chairperson

Rule 11

1. If the Chairperson finds it necessary to be absent from a session or any part thereof, he/she shall designate a Vice-Chairperson to take the Chair.
2. A Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

Voting rights of the Chairperson

Rule 12

The Chairperson, or a Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson, shall not vote, but shall appoint another member of his/her delegation to vote in his/her place.

IV. BUREAU

Composition

Rule 13

The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons, the Chairperson of the Drafting Group and the Rapporteur of the Drafting Group shall constitute the Bureau of the Conference. The Chairperson of the Conference or, in his/her absence, one of the Vice-Chairpersons designated by him/her, shall serve as Chairperson of the Bureau.

Functions

Rule 14

The Bureau shall assist the Chairperson in the general conduct of the business of the Conference and, subject to the decisions of the Conference, shall ensure the coordination of its work.

V. SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE

Duties of the Executive Secretary of UNECE

Rule 15

The Executive Secretary of UNECE shall be responsible for the secretariat of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies.

Statements by the secretariat

Rule 16

The Executive Secretary of UNECE, or any member of the secretariat designated by him/her for that purpose may, subject to rule 23, make statements concerning any question under consideration.

VI. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

Temporary Chairperson

Rule 17

The Executive Secretary of UNECE shall discharge the functions of the Chairperson until the election of the Chairperson is completed.

Decisions concerning the agenda and the organization

Rule 18

The Conference shall, at its first meeting:

- (a) elect its officers and constitute its subsidiary bodies;
- (b) adopt its agenda, the draft of which shall, until such adoption, be the provisional agenda of the Conference;
- (c) decide on the organization of its work.

VII. CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

Report

Rule 19

The Conference shall adopt its report, including decisions taken at the Conference.

VIII. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Quorum

Rule 20

The Chairperson may declare a session open and permit the debate to proceed when representatives of at least one-third of participating States are present. The presence of representatives of a majority of participating States shall be required for any action to be taken.

General powers of the Chairperson

Rule 21

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him/her elsewhere by these rules, the Chairperson shall preside at the plenary sessions of the Conference, shall declare the opening and closing of each session, direct the discussions, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. He/she shall rule on points of order. The Chairperson, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order thereat. The Chairperson may propose to the Conference the closing of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times any participant may speak on a question, the adjournment or the closure of the debate and the suspension or the adjournment of a session.
2. The Chairperson, in the exercise of his/her functions, remains under the authority of the Conference.

Points of order

Rule 22

Subject to rule 40, a representative of a participating State may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be immediately decided by the Chairperson in accordance with these rules. A representative of a participating State may appeal against the ruling of the Chairperson. The appeal shall be immediately put to vote, and the Chairperson's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the representatives of participating States present and voting. No one may, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Speeches

Rule 23

1. No one may address the Conference without having previously obtained the permission of the Chairperson. Subject to rules 22, 24 and 26 to 29, the Chairperson shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak.
2. Debate shall be confined to the question before the Conference and the Chairperson may call a speaker in order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
3. The Conference may limit the time allowed to speakers and the number of times participants may speak on a question. Permission to speak on a motion to set such limits shall be accorded only to two representatives in favour of and to two opposing such limits, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. In any event, with the consent of the Conference, the Chairperson shall limit each intervention on procedural matters to five minutes. When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the Chairperson shall call him/her to order without delay.

Precedence

Rule 24

Representative(s) designated by any subsidiary body of the Conference may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by the body.

Closing of the list of speakers

Rule 25

During the course of a debate, the Chairperson may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Conference, declare the list closed. When there are no more speakers, the Chairperson shall, with the consent of the Conference, declare the debate closed. Such closure shall have the same effect as closure pursuant to rule 27.

Right of reply

Rule 26

Notwithstanding rule 25, the Chairperson shall accord the right of reply to a representative of any participating state who requests it. Any other representative may be granted the opportunity to make a reply. Representatives should attempt, in making such statements, to be as brief as possible and preferably to deliver their statements at the end of the session at which the request is made.

Adjournment of debate

Rule 27

A representative of a participating State may at any time move the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives of participating States in favour and to two opposing the adjournment, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 30, be immediately put to vote.

Closure of debate

Rule 28

A representative of a participating State may at any time move the closure of the debate on the question under discussion, whether or not any other representative of a participating State has signified his/her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion shall, subject to rule (30), be immediately put to the vote.

Suspension or adjournment of the session

Rule 29

Subject to rule 39, a representative of a participating State may at any time move the suspension or the adjournment of the session. No discussion on such motions shall be permitted and they shall, subject to rule 30, be immediately put to the vote.

Order of motions

Rule 30

The motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or other motions before the session:

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

Submissions of proposals and substantive amendments

Rule 31

Proposals and substantive amendments may be made only by representatives of a participating State. They shall normally be submitted in writing to the secretariat of the Conference, who shall circulate copies to all delegations.

Withdrawal of proposals and motions

Rule 32

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

IX. DECISION-MAKING

General agreement

Rule 33

The Conference should make best endeavours to ensure that the work of the Conference is accomplished by general agreement.

Voting rights

Rule 34

Each participating State shall have one vote.

Majority required

Rule 35

1. Subject to rule 33, decisions of the Conference shall be taken by a simple majority of the representatives present and voting.
2. If a vote is equally divided, the proposal or motion shall be regarded as rejected.

Meaning of the phrase "representatives present and voting"

Rule 36

For the purpose of these rules, the phrase "representatives present and voting" means representatives casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives who abstain from voting shall be regarded as not having cast a vote.

Method of voting

Rule 37

Except as provided in rule 44, the Meeting shall normally vote by show of hands, except that a representative may request a roll-call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the participating States, beginning with the delegation whose name is drawn by lot by the Chairperson. The name of each State shall be called in all roll-calls and its representative shall reply "yes", "no" or "abstention".

Explanation of vote

Rule 38

Representatives may make brief statements consisting solely of explanations of vote, before the voting has commenced or after the voting has been completed. The Chairperson may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations. The representative of a state sponsoring a proposal or motion shall not speak in explanation of vote thereon, except if it has been amended.

Conduct during voting

Rule 39

After the Chairperson has announced the commencement of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the process of voting.

Division of proposals

Rule 40

A representative may move that parts of a proposal be voted on separately. If a representative objects, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives in favour of and two opposing the division. If the motion is carried, those parts of the proposal that are subsequently approved shall be put to the vote as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal have been rejected, the proposal shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Amendments

Rule 41

A proposal is considered an amendment to another proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal. Unless specified otherwise, the word "proposal" in these rules shall be considered as including amendments.

Order of voting on amendments

Rule 42

When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Conference shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next further 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 shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

Order of voting on proposals

Rule 43

1. If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Conference decides otherwise, be voted on in the order in which they were submitted. The Conference may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.
2. Revised proposals shall be voted on in the order in which the original proposals were submitted, unless the revision substantially departs from the original proposal. In that case the original proposal shall be considered as withdrawn and the revised proposal shall be treated as a new proposal.
3. A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal shall be put to the vote before a vote is taken on the proposal in question.

Elections

Rule 44

All elections shall be held by secret ballot, unless the Conference decides otherwise.

Rule 45

1. When one or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of votes shall be elected.
2. 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.

X. SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Bureau, Drafting Group and Working Groups

Rule 46

There shall be a Bureau and a Drafting Group; working groups may be established by the Conference.

Representation on the Drafting Group

Rule 47

Each participating State may be represented by one representative on the Drafting Group. Each State may assign to the Drafting group such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Officers and procedures

Rule 48

Unless otherwise decided by the Conference, the rules under point VIII. Conduct of Business and point IX. Decision-making shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the subsidiary bodies

XI. LANGUAGES AND DOCUMENTS

Languages of the Conference

Rule 49

English, French and Russian shall be the languages of the Conference.

Interpretation

Rule 50

1. Speeches made in a language of the Conference shall be interpreted into the other such languages.
2. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the Conference if he/she provides for interpretation into one such language. Interpretation into the other languages of the Conference by interpreters of the secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first such language.

Languages of resolutions and other formal decisions

Rule 51

All formal decisions by the Conference shall be published, following the Conference, in the languages of the Conference.

XII. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS

General principles

Rule 52

1. The plenary sessions of the Conference shall be held in public unless otherwise decided.
2. As a general rule, meetings of any other bodies of the Conference shall be held in private.

XIII. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

Rule 53

Written statements submitted by the designated representatives and experts referred to in rules 4 to 7 shall be distributed by the secretariat to all delegations in the quantities and in the language in which the statements are made available to it at the site of the Conference, provided that a statement submitted on behalf of a non-governmental organization is related to the work of the Conference and is on a subject in which it has a special competence.

XIV. AMENDMENT AND SUSPENSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Method of amendment

Rule 54

These rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the Conference taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, after the Bureau has reported on the proposed amendment.

Method of suspension

Rule 55

Any of these rules may be suspended by the Conference provided that a notice of the proposal for the suspension is given to the Chairperson, which may be waived if no representative objects. Any such suspension shall be limited to a specific and stated purpose and to a period required to achieve that purpose.

