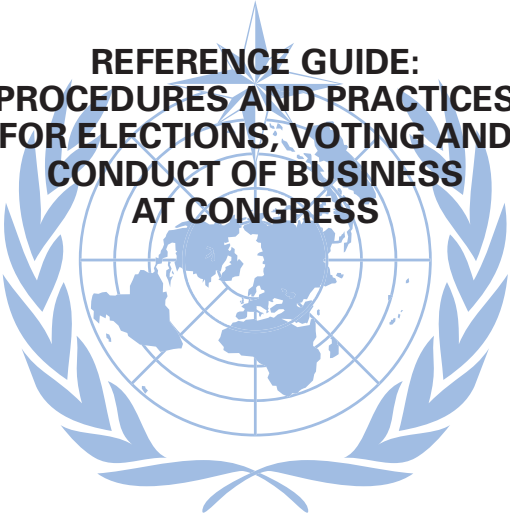


FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

Geneva, 7–25 May 2007



**REFERENCE GUIDE:
PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES
FOR ELECTIONS, VOTING AND
CONDUCT OF BUSINESS
AT CONGRESS**

Secretariat of the World Meteorological Organization

Weather • Climate • Water

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet presents a digest of WMO procedures and practices intended to assist delegates and presiding officers in the conduct of business during plenary or working committee meetings of Congress and in the organization of voting and elections at the session; it should not be considered as an official publication or document of WMO.

1. Conduct of business (Regulations 94–108)

NOTE 1

Any of the Regulations 94 to 108 may be suspended in whole or in part in special cases provided 24 hours' notice of such a proposal has been given. The notice may be waived if no delegation or member objects (Regulation 3).

- 1.1 Power of the presiding officer (Regs. 94–95)
- to open and close the meeting
 - to direct the discussions
 - to ensure the observance of the provisions of the relevant Articles of the Convention and of the General Regulations
 - to accord the right to speak
 - to put questions to vote and announce decisions
 - to exercise control over the proceedings and maintain order at the meeting (e.g., call a speaker to order if remarks are

irrelevant or impose time limits on speakers if necessary, except when a delegation or member raises a point of order)

- to propose adjournment or closure of the debate(s)
- to propose adjournment or suspension of the meeting(s)
- to rule on points of order

- 1.2 Point of order (Reg. 96) (has precedence over any other matter including procedural motions)
- intervention directed to the presiding officer requiring an immediate ruling; no debate; vote only in case of an appeal against the ruling (see also Appendix I)

NOTE 2

Requests for information or clarification, remarks or criticism relating to material arrangements (interpretation system, temperature of room, seating, etc.), documents, translation, etc. should not be confused with a point of order; the presiding officer should try to find a solution with the help of the Secretary-General.

- 1.3 Motions (Reg. 98)
- shall be debated and voted upon in the order proposed except as otherwise provided (see 1.4 to 1.7 below)

NOTE 3

In accordance with Regulation 106, the procedural motions have precedence in the following order:

- *suspension of the meeting;*
- *adjournment of the meeting;*
- *adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion;*
- *closure of the debate on the item under discussion.*

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 1.4 | Suspension of the meeting
(Reg. 103) | • temporary adjournment of the business of the meeting* |
| 1.5 | Adjournment of the meeting
(Reg. 103) | • termination of all business until another meeting is called* |
| 1.6 | Adjournment of the debate
(Reg. 104) | • termination of the debate on the item under discussion until a later time in the meeting or until a later meeting* |
| 1.7 | Closure of the debate
(Reg. 105) | • termination of all debate on the item at the meeting; no more than two speakers, both opposing the closure may speak, then immediately vote to be taken subject to a point of order being raised |

* Motion will not be debated, but immediately voted upon subject to a point of order being raised.

- 1.8 Amendments to a motion or to an amendment (Reg. 99) • when more than one amendment, discussion and vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original text; the presiding officer determines the order
- 1.9 Withdrawal of a motion or an amendment (Reg. 100) • possible, by the mover, if no amendment to the motion or to the amendments is already approved or being discussed
- 1.10 Division of a motion/amendment into parts (Reg. 102) • if objection to division, permission to discuss only for two speakers for and two against, then vote; if approved, then separate vote on each part and final vote on the whole

NOTE 4

An amendment generally refers to proposed additions to, deletion from, or modifications to, a motion or proposal. However, an amendment to the Convention or the Regulations presented to Congress in accordance with Article 28 of the Convention or Regulation 2, respectively, is considered as an original proposal. Any proposed amendments to the original proposal should not result in a change in the basic intent of the original proposal; otherwise, it must be presented as a new proposal to which Article 28 of the Convention or Regulation 2 will apply, as appropriate.

- 1.11 Observers' Right and role of observers (Reg. 108) • may participate in a debate of common interest to WMO and the organization which

- he/she represents; a motion or amendment shall be considered if endorsed by a delegation; no right to vote
- 1.12 Consideration of documents by plenary (Reg. 109) • shall be distributed at least 18 hours before consideration unless the provision of Reg. 109 is suspended (Reg. 3); can be adopted or re-submitted in the form of a working paper or PINK document
2. **Voting and elections in plenary** (see also Appendix II and Cg-XV/INF. 2)
- 2.1 Quorum (Art. 12) • the minimum number of Members present at a meeting necessary for a decision taken by Congress to be valid
- the number of Members present should be at least equal to the simple majority of all Members (or Members which are States when decisions are taken on subjects on which only such Members are entitled to vote)
- 2.2 Voting rights (Art. 11(a) and Reg. 56) • each Member shall have one vote subject to Article 31, which defines the case of suspension

- 2.3 Type of vote
- 2.3.1 Show of hands (Reg. 58) • designated staff members will count the votes
- 2.3.2 Roll-call (Reg. 59) • shall be at the request of any delegation; delegations are called in alphabetical order (in the French language) of the list of Members entitled to vote
- 2.3.3 Secret ballot* (Regs. 60, 61, 62) • for all elections, except when there is only one candidate (or the number of candidates is equal to the number of positions to be filled), and for decisions on request of at least two delegations; Members are called; two tellers among delegates required; voting slips destroyed after announcement and acceptance (see also 2.5.2); electronic voting system will be used; detailed information is included in Cg-XV/INF. 2
- 2.3.4 Consensus • enables decision-making without voting but cannot be formally imposed or pursued by delegation(s) or presiding officer
- 2.4 Majority required (Art. 11(b)) • in general, for any type of vote including elections, the

* Motion will not be debated. The process of voting by secret ballot will be carried out.

majority required is calculated taking into account the number of valid votes (not including abstention or blank or invalid voting slips (Reg. 57)) by the delegations of Members (or Member States) present having voting rights

NOTE 5

After the presiding officer has announced that voting has commenced, no one may interrupt the voting except for a point of order concerning the manner of conducting the vote (Reg. 107).

Voting by secret ballot has preference to roll-call, if both have been requested (Reg. 60).

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|---------|---|---|--|
| 2.4.1 | • For decisions: | } | only Members which are States can vote; approval by two-thirds majority of all Member States is required |
| 2.4.1.1 | • Amendments to the Convention not involving new obligations for Members (Art. 28(c)) | | |
| | • Requests for membership (Art. 3(c), (e)) | | |
| | • Relations with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations (Articles 25, 26) | | |

NOTE 6

If in the case of draft amendments to the Convention this two-thirds majority of all Member States is not reached, but two-thirds majority of Member States present and voting for and against is obtained, Congress may decide to submit to next Congress the same draft amendment for a new vote.

- | | | |
|---------|--|--|
| 2.4.1.2 | Any other decision (Articles 11(b), 28(b)) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two-thirds majority of delegations (of Member States for Art. 28(b)) present, and voting for and against |
|---------|--|--|

NOTE 7

Decisions of Congress are recorded in resolutions or in the general summary of the work of the session.

- | | | |
|---------|--|---|
| 2.4.2 | For elections (Art. 11(b)) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple majority of the valid votes cast |
| 2.4.2.1 | Election of the President and Vice-Presidents (Reg. 83)
(a) Simple majority not reached (Reg. 86) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separate elections for each office in order; simple majority (Art. 11(b)); only Member States vote (Art. 11(a)) • second ballot with the two candidates with the highest number of votes; if other candidate obtains the same number of votes as the second candidate, he/she shall also be included in the list for the next ballot |

- (b) Same number of votes (Reg. 89) • another ballot; if still no decision, then decision by drawing lots

NOTE 8

For elections, the simple majority shall be the next integer immediately above the half of the voting slips received, excluding abstentions and blank or invalid voting slips (Reg. 63(b)).

NOTE 9

The President and the three Vice-Presidents shall normally belong each to a different Region (Reg. 83).

- 2.4.2.2 Election of Executive Council members (Art. 11(a)) • only Member States vote
- (a) First election (Reg. 85(a)) • separate ballot, when necessary, to fill the required minimum number of four seats for each of the Regions; the ballots are conducted simultaneously
- (b) Second election (Regs. 85(b), 87, 88) • to fill simultaneously, by one or several subsequent ballots, the remaining 13 seats of the Executive Council; only one voting slip is used

- (c) Further ballot (Reg. 87(c))

 - if further ballots are needed, the total number of candidates shall not be greater than twice the number of places to be filled

- 2.4.3 For appointment of Secretary-General (Reg. 198)

 - delegations of all Members with voting rights; *first step*, application of “indication of preference” procedure by secret ballot; *second step*, two-thirds majority of the votes cast for the preferred candidate, if not already obtained

- 2.5 Counting of the votes
- 2.5.1 Blanks, abstentions, or invalid slips (Reg. 57)

 - not included in the counting

- 2.5.2 Invalidity (Regs. 82, 85)

 - contains name(s) not appearing in the list of candidates (in election)
 - contains more names than number of seats to be filled (in election)
 - contains more names, for any Region, than the maximum number of seats remaining possible (election for Executive Council)

- voter's identity revealed by any notation, mark or sign (in secret ballots)
- 2.5.3 Explanation of vote (Reg. 107)
- either before or after the count except for secret ballot; the mover of a point of order during a vote shall not be permitted to explain his/her vote
- 2.5.4 Results of a vote/election
- the presiding officer should give:
 - (a) the number of delegations present and entitled to vote
 - (b) quorum required
 - (c) number of abstentions, blank and invalid votes
 - (d) number of valid votes cast
 - (e) the required majoritythen either:
 - (i) *for voting*: the total number of votes cast for and against the proposal
 - (ii) *for elections*: the number of votes received by each candidate in descending order and announce the name(s) of those elected

- 2.5.5 Destruction of voting slips (Reg. 61)
- destroyed immediately after the announcement of the result of the election or of the vote by secret ballot on any matter and its acceptance by the meeting

NOTE 10

Details on voting procedures for elections and the appointment of the Secretary-General are given in Cg-XV/INF. 2.

3. Working committees

- 3.1 Election of chairperson (Reg. 30)
- the President shall preside until a chairperson is elected
- 3.2 Members of committees
- any member of a delegation may join any working committee
- 3.3 Vote
- in principle no vote; the chairperson should seek a consensus as far as possible or obtain an idea of the tendency within the body through an informal show of hands
- 3.4 Report to plenary (Reg. 109)
- to be submitted by the chairperson on behalf of his/her committee along with an oral introduction

NOTE 11

In view of the open-ended nature of working committees, a vote, when necessary, shall normally be taken on the basis of the number of Members present and voting, dispensing with the provisions of the Regulations governing the conditions for obtaining the quorum required; decision is taken by simple majority (Reg. 64). The result of such vote shall, however, be reported in the discussion part of the report to plenary.

APPENDIX I

Description of the concept of a point of order

1. A point of order is basically an intervention directed to the presiding officer, requesting him/her to make use of some power inherent in his/her office or specifically given to him/her under the General Regulations. It may, for example, relate to the manner in which the debate is conducted, to the maintenance or order, to the observance of the General Regulations, or to the way in which presiding officers exercise the powers conferred upon them by the Regulations. Under a point of order, a delegate may request the presiding officer to apply a certain Regulation or question the way in which the officer applies the Regulations. Thus, within the scope of the General Regulations, delegates are enabled to direct the attention of the presiding officer to possible violations or misapplications of the Regulations by other delegates or by the presiding officer himself/herself. A point of order has precedence over any other matter, including procedural motions (Regulations 96 and 106).
2. Points of order raised under Regulation 96 involve questions necessitating a ruling by the presiding officer, subject to appeal. They are, therefore, distinct from the procedural motions provided for in Regulations 103 to 106, which can be decided only by a vote and on which more than one motion

may be entertained at the same time. Regulation 106 lays down the precedence of such motions. They are also distinct from requests for information or clarification, or from remarks relating to material arrangements (seating, interpretation system, temperature of the room, documents, translations, etc.), which — while they may have to be dealt with by the presiding officer — do not require rulings from him/her. However, in practice, a delegate intending to submit a procedural motion or to seek information or clarification often entitles his/her request for the floor as a “point of order”. The latter usage should be distinguished from a true point of order under Regulation 96.

3. Under Regulation 96, a point of order must be immediately decided by the presiding officer in accordance with the General Regulations; any appeal arising therefrom must also be immediately put to vote. It follows that, as a general rule:
 - (a) Neither a point of order, nor any appeal arising from a ruling thereon, is debatable. Any discussion on an appeal shall be limited to the appellant and the presiding officer;
 - (b) No point of order on the same or a different subject can be permitted until the initial point of order and any appeal arising therefrom have been disposed of.

Nevertheless, both the presiding officer and delegations may request information or clarification regarding a point of order. In addition, the presiding officer may, if he/she considers it necessary, request an expression of views from delegations on a point of order before giving a ruling; in the exceptional cases

in which this practice is resorted to, the presiding officer should terminate the exchange of views and give a ruling as soon as he/she is ready to announce that ruling.

4. Regulation 96 provides that a delegate raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. Consequently, the purely procedural nature of points of order calls for brevity. The presiding officer is responsible for ensuring that statements made on a point of order are in conformity with the present description.

APPENDIX II

Guiding principles for the conduct of elections or voting by secret ballot

1. Before voting begins, the President shall hand to the two tellers appointed by him/her the list of Members entitled to vote.
2. The Secretariat shall distribute a ballot paper to each delegation present and entitled to vote. Every ballot paper shall be of the same size and colour without distinguishing marks.
3. The tellers shall satisfy themselves that the ballot box is empty and then lock it.
4. Members shall be called to vote in turn in the French alphabetical order.
5. The representative of the Secretary-General and the tellers shall record each Member's participation in the vote by marking in the margin the list of Members entitled to vote.
6. At the conclusion of the calling of Members, the President shall ensure that all the Members present and entitled to vote have been called. He shall then declare the voting closed and announce that the votes are to be counted.
7. When the ballot box has been opened, the tellers shall count the number of ballot papers. If the number exceeds that of the voters, the President shall declare the vote invalid and another ballot shall be held.

8. The counting of votes takes place in the presence of the constituent body.
9. For elections, a teller shall read aloud the name or names on the ballot paper. On a document drawn up for this purpose the number of votes obtained by each candidate mentioned shall be written opposite that name by the other teller.
10. A ballot paper on which nothing is written or which bears the word “abstention” shall be considered as an abstention.
11. The following shall be considered null and void:
 - (a) Ballot papers in which the voters have revealed their identity, in particular by apposing their signature or mentioning the name of the Member they represent;
 - (b) Ballot papers bearing the name of any person not appearing in the established list of candidates;
 - (c) Ballot papers on which there are more names than elective places or on which the name of any candidate appears more than once.
12. When the counting of the votes is completed, the tellers shall indicate the result in a document drawn up for that purpose, which they shall sign and hand to the President after verification by the representative of the Secretary-General. The President shall announce the result of the election in the following order: number of Members present and entitled to vote; number of abstentions; number of ballot papers null and void; number of valid votes cast; number required for a majority. For elections: names of candidates and the number of votes secured by each of them in descending order of the number of votes. For any other vote: number of votes for and against the proposal.

13. The ballot papers shall be destroyed after the declaration of the results of the ballot and their acceptance by the meeting.

Electronic voting system

If Congress uses an electronic voting system for the elections of the President and the Vice-Presidents, the election of the members of the Executive Council and for the appointment of the Secretary-General, the above principles governing secret ballots will be adjusted as follows:

1. The electronic voting system operates with a SQL Server 2000 Database, connected via access points to handheld PC tablets using radio networking technology and a standard web browser interface. The system automates the counting of the ballots in real time and the immediate production of reports on the outcome of each vote. It has been established and used by another United Nations agency since 2003.
2. A demonstration will be organized in the early days of Congress for delegates to familiarize themselves with the electronic voting system through a trial vote.
3. At each of the Congress meetings scheduled for the election of the President and Vice-Presidents, the elections of the members of the Executive Council and the appointment of the Secretary-General, the Principal delegate or his/her Alternate from each delegation entitled to vote will be provided with a PC tablet and a PIN code to access the electronic voting system. Delegations entitled to vote are those in good standing of their contributions of the Organization pursuant to Resolution 37 (Cg-XI) – Suspension of Members for failure to

meet financial obligations and Resolution 35 (Cg-XII) – Settlement of long-outstanding contributions. The list of Members entitled to vote will be announced before each vote.

4. PIN codes will be automatically generated in a number equal to the number of delegations entitled to vote. They will be introduced in envelopes and distributed randomly to voters in order to secure the secrecy of the ballots. A PIN code will be distributed at each of the meetings of Congress referred to in the preceding paragraph and will be valid during that meeting only.
5. Prior to each vote, the Secretariat prepares the system indicating the majority required (e.g., two thirds for the appointment of the Secretary-General, simple majority for the election of the officers and Executive Council members) and the maximum number of possible choices (e.g., number of seats available for each Region in the first stage of Executive Council member elections) in accordance with established procedures. Secretariat staff will also key into the system the names of the candidates proposed by the Nomination Committee or suggested from the floor. When the vote preparation is completed, the Presiding officer will declare it open.
6. Upon entering the PIN code, the system will display a screen with the subject of the vote (e.g., election of the President of the Organization or appointment of the Secretary-General) and the possible choices, i.e., the names of the candidates among whom to select. The selection of one or more candidates from the list will be made by ticking the box opposite each name

with the finger or a plastic pen. A “BLANK BALLOT” box will appear on each vote display as a possible choice.

7. Once the choice has been made, voters will be asked to confirm it by pressing a button “CONFIRM BALLOT”. The button only becomes active if at least one choice has been made. Upon confirmation, the system will move the voter to a screen displaying the choices made. It will be possible to validate the choices by pressing a button “SUBMIT BALLOT” or to change the choices before submitting the ballot by returning to the previous screen. Once the “SUBMIT BALLOT” button has been pressed, the vote will have been cast and it will no longer be possible to recover or modify it – this follows the same rules as for a voting slip once it has been inserted into the ballot box. This verification in two steps is designed to ensure that no vote is cast by mistake.
8. With the electronic voting system, all delegates can cast their votes simultaneously, thus rendering unnecessary to call each voter in the French alphabetical order of WMO Members. The Presiding officer will close the vote after ascertaining that all voters have had an opportunity to submit their choice.
9. A report with the outcome of the vote will be generated immediately upon closure of the vote and announced by the presiding officer, then displayed on all PC tablets. For the purpose of General Regulation 62 (requiring that the number of votes for, against and abstentions be recorded in the minutes), blank ballots will be recorded as abstentions, together with the difference between the number of delegations entitled to vote and present at the meeting and the number of those delegations having actually cast a ballot.

10. Manual votes using voting slips and ballot boxes will still be possible as a fall-back solution. However, it should be noted that the optical mark reader used in previous sessions of Congress to assist the tellers with the counting of ballots can no longer be sustained. Manual counting would, in this case, be necessary.
11. While the use of the electronic voting system will not affect basic procedures, the following features of the manual voting procedure will become redundant or will no longer apply:
 - Voting slips will be replaced with screen displays;
 - There will be no call of voters; all voters will be invited simultaneously to cast their ballots on their individual voting stations when the presiding officer declares the voting open;
 - Approved lists of candidates will be displayed on the voting stations;
 - Invalid or empty ballots are not possible with the electronic voting system, as it requires the voter to make at least one choice, even if it is “BLANK BALLOT”, and the manner to cast the vote is standard for all voters – no writing or identification being possible with the handheld voting stations;
 - While the real-time counting of votes and the automated report production do not require the intervention of tellers, they still have a role to play, if so desired, in monitoring the electronic preparation of the votes and report production by the Secretariat, or by ensuring the anonymous distribution of PIN codes;

- In the absence of voting slips, their destruction under General Regulation 61 is no longer required; however the voting reports stored on the server will be destroyed once the results have been printed and announced.

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