

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
PERMANENT COUNCIL



# RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

(Adopted by the Permanent Council of the Organization  
at its regular meeting on October 1, 1980.  
Includes the amendments adopted at the meetings  
held on August 22, 1984, January 22, 1992, August 9, 1995, and June 26, 2003.)

GENERAL SECRETARIAT  
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

CP

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
PERMANENT COUNCIL



OEA/Ser.G  
CP/doc.1112/80 rev. 4 corr. 1  
27 August 2003  
Original: Spanish

# RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

(Adopted by the Permanent Council of the Organization  
at its regular meeting on October 1, 1980.  
Includes the amendments adopted at the meetings  
held on August 22, 1984, January 22, 1992, August 9, 1995, and June 26, 2003.)

GENERAL SECRETARIAT  
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006  
2003

CP

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. NATURE AND COMPOSITION .....	1
II. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE .....	1
III. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.....	1
Terms of office .....	1
Order of succession .....	1
Replacement of the chair .....	1
Functions of the chair .....	2
IV. AD HOC COMMITTEES FOR THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES.....	2
Establishment.....	2
Membership and mandate.....	3
Duration of the terms of office of the members .....	3
V. COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES, AND WORKING GROUPS .....	3
Establishment.....	3
Permanent committees.....	3
General Committee .....	3
Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs .....	4
Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs.....	5
Committee on Hemispheric Security.....	5
Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities .....	5
Duration of mandates.....	7
Installation, election, and terms of office of the chairs and vice chairs .....	7
Distribution of mandates .....	8
VI. PRIOR STUDIES AND REPORTS .....	9
VII. MEETINGS .....	10
Regular meetings .....	10
Special meetings .....	10
Protocolary meetings .....	10
Public and closed meetings.....	11
Participation in the meetings .....	11
Duration of meetings .....	11
Order of business .....	11

VIII.	DEBATES .....	12
	Quorum .....	12
	The right to speak .....	12
	Proposals.....	13
	Withdrawal of proposals.....	13
	Points of order .....	13
	Suspension of debate .....	13
	Closing of debate .....	13
	Suspension or adjournment of the meeting .....	13
	Order of procedural motions .....	14
	Reconsideration of decisions.....	14
IX.	VOTING .....	14
	Right to vote .....	14
	Majority required.....	14
	Voting procedure .....	14
	Voting on proposals.....	16
	Voting on amendments .....	16
	Voting by parts .....	16
	Explanation of vote.....	17
	Consensus .....	17
X.	GENERAL SECRETARIAT.....	17
	Functions of the General Secretariat .....	17
	Minutes .....	18
XI.	PREPARATION FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION .....	19
	Change of site of a regular session of the General Assembly .....	19
	Selection by the Permanent Council of the site for a regular session of the General Assembly .....	19
	Procedure for setting the site for a regular session.....	19
	Special sessions .....	20
XII.	MEETING OF CONSULTATION OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE PERMANENT COUNCIL WHEN IT SERVES PROVISIONALLY AS ORGAN OF CONSULTATION .....	20
	Convocation of the Meeting of Consultation in application of the Charter .....	20
	Convocation of the Meeting of Consultation in application of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance .....	20
	Decisions of the Permanent Council serving provisionally as Organ of Consultation.....	20
XIII.	SCOPE AND AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE .....	20

## **RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

### **I. NATURE AND COMPOSITION**

Article 1. The Permanent Council is composed of one representative of each member state, especially appointed by the government thereof, with the rank of ambassador. Each government may appoint such alternate representatives or advisers as it considers advisable and may, if necessary, accredit an acting representative.

### **II. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE**

Article 2. The order of precedence of the principal, acting, and alternate representatives shall be determined according to the dates on which they present the respective documents accrediting them as such.

### **III. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

#### **Terms of office**

Article 3. The chair and vice chair of the Permanent Council shall hold office for a term of three months. The terms shall begin automatically on the first day of the months of January, April, July, and October.

#### **Order of succession**

Article 4. The office of chair of the Permanent Council shall be held by each of the principal representatives in turn, following the Spanish alphabetical order of the names in Spanish of their respective states. The office of vice chair shall be filled in the same way, in reverse alphabetical order.

Article 5. If the state to which the office of chair corresponds does not have a principal representative, the vice chair shall serve as chair. If the state to which the office of vice chair corresponds does not have a principal representative, the principal representatives of the states in reverse alphabetical order shall serve in turn as vice chair on an acting basis. The incumbency of such substitute in either office shall terminate with the arrival in the Permanent Council of the principal representative of the state to which that office pertains by right.

#### **Replacement of the chair**

Article 6. In the event of the temporary absence or impediment of the chair, the vice chair shall serve as chair; and in the event of the absence or impediment of both, the principal representative with the greatest seniority shall preside.

Article 7. If the offices of chair and vice chair of the Permanent Council should both devolve upon the principal representative of the same state, that representative shall be the chair. The office of vice chair shall devolve upon the principal representative of the state next in reverse alphabetical order, and thus successively.

### **Functions of the chair**

Article 8. The chair of the Council:

- a. Shall call the meetings, open and adjourn them, direct the discussions, recognize speakers in the order in which they request the floor, put motions to a vote and announce the results thereof, decide on points of order in accordance with the provisions of Article 50 of these Rules of Procedure, install the committees, and, in general, comply with and enforce the provisions of these Rules of Procedure;
- b. Shall represent the Permanent Council at functions or ceremonies when invited to do so in that capacity;
- c. Shall appoint the committee of representatives to receive, on behalf of the Council, the heads of state or government who attend protocolary ceremonies and meetings;
- d. May consult the members of the Council to prepare the work for the meetings. For that purpose, may also consult with the chairs of the permanent committees, with the coordinators of the subregional groups, and with representatives of the General Secretariat;
- e. Shall give welcome and farewell addresses to representatives in the Council. Congratulations or condolences shall be expressed by the chair of the Permanent Council. When bidding farewell to permanent representatives, the subregional group representatives shall take the floor in addition to the chair of the Permanent Council. These remarks shall, preferably, not be repeated by the delegations;
- f. Shall carry out such other functions as are expressly attributed to the chair by the Statutes, the Charter, and other inter-American treaties, and those which are specifically entrusted to the chair by the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, and the Permanent Council.

## **IV. AD HOC COMMITTEES FOR THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES**

### **Establishment**

Article 9. In the exercise of its functions, the Permanent Council may establish ad hoc committees with the consent of the parties to a dispute.

**Membership and mandate**

Article 10. The ad hoc committees shall have the membership and the mandate that the Permanent Council agrees upon in each individual case, with the consent of the parties to the dispute.

**Duration of the terms of office of the members**

Article 11. The duration of the terms of office of the members of the ad hoc committees shall be as determined by the Permanent Council in each case at the time it establishes such committees.

**V. COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES, AND WORKING GROUPS**

**Establishment**

Article 12. The Permanent Council may establish such permanent and special committees and working groups as it deems necessary. Special committees and working groups shall be temporary and shall execute temporary mandates that have not been assigned to other bodies.

Article 13. The committees may establish subcommittees and working groups, and must specify their mandate in each case. The chairs of such committees, subcommittees, and groups shall represent them at functions and ceremonies when invited to do so in that capacity.

**Permanent committees**

Article 14. The following are permanent committees of the Permanent Council, without prejudice to any others that may be established as such:

General Committee;

Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs;

Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs;

Committee on Hemispheric Security; and

Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities.

**General Committee**

Article 15. The General Committee shall be composed of one representative of each member state. The chair and vice chair of the Permanent Council shall serve, respectively, as chair and vice chair of the General Committee.

Article 16. The General Committee shall have the following functions:

- a. To advise the Permanent Council and its chair on matters that are within the area of competence of the Council and that, not having been assigned to other committees, have been assigned to the General Committee;
- b. To consider the course and coordination of the work of the Council and its committees and to make recommendations thereon to the Council, its chair, and the committee chairs. For that purpose, it may establish a subcommittee on coordination composed of the committee chairs; the chair of the General Committee shall serve as chair of the Subcommittee on Coordination;
- c. To examine periodically, by mandate of the Permanent Council, current working methods and procedures, so as to maximize efficiency and bring about the best possible use of time in the work of the Council;
- d. To consider the reports presented by the organs, agencies, and entities referred to in Article 91.f of the OAS Charter, with the exception of those reports assigned to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs under these Rules of Procedure; likewise, to submit their reports, with observations, recommendations, and accompanying draft resolutions, to the Permanent Council;
- e. To consider other reports presented by the organs, agencies, and entities, as well as the reports presented by the units of the General Secretariat;
- f. To prepare draft resolutions on the topics assigned to it by the Permanent Council or those not within the purview of other permanent committees; and
- g. Such other functions as may be assigned by the Permanent Council.

**Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs**

Article 17. It shall be the duty of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs to study topics of this nature entrusted to it by the Permanent Council.

Article 18. The Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs shall consider the reports of the Inter-American Juridical Committee, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights referred to in Article 91.f of the Charter. It shall also submit their reports, with observations, recommendations, and accompanying draft resolutions, to the Permanent Council.

### **Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs**

Article 19. The Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs shall have the following functions:

- a. To recommend to the Permanent Council any programs within the Council's purview that may serve the General Secretariat as a basis for preparing the proposed program-budget of the Organization, as stipulated in Article 112.c of the Charter;
- b. To examine the proposed program-budget that the General Secretariat transmits to it in consultation with the Permanent Council for the purposes indicated in Article 112.c of the Charter, and to submit to the Council such observations as it may deem pertinent;
- c. To study any other subjects the Permanent Council may entrust to it in relation to the programs, budget, administration, and financial aspects of the operations of the General Secretariat; and
- d. To consider any annual evaluation reports submitted by the secretary general to the Permanent Council in compliance with the provisions of the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat and, on that basis, to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Organization's programs, projects, and activities. Furthermore, to make any recommendations it deems appropriate and submit them to the Permanent Council for consideration and subsequent referral to the Preparatory Committee, so that they may be considered by the General Assembly in conjunction with the proposed program-budget.

### **Committee on Hemispheric Security**

Article 20. The functions of the Committee on Hemispheric Security are to study, and make recommendations to the Permanent Council on, any matters relating to hemispheric security that may be entrusted to it by the Permanent Council and, through it, by the General Assembly, in particular with a view to promoting cooperation in this area.

### **Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities**

Article 21. The representative of the member state presiding over the Summit process shall serve as chair of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities. If the member state chairing the committee so requests, its term shall be renewed to ensure follow-up and fulfillment of the Committee's coordination functions and of the mandates issued by the Permanent Council in the period concerned. The vice chair shall be elected according to Articles 28 and 29 of these Rules of Procedure.

Article 22. The Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities has the following functions:

- a. With respect to the Summit process:
  - i. To coordinate OAS activities in support of the Summits of the Americas process;
  - ii. To coordinate follow-up and implementation activities relating to mandates assigned to the Organization by the Summits;
  - iii. To request and receive contributions from civil society, relating to its participation in the Summit process, for consideration by the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG);
  - iv. To study topics relating to the Summit process that are assigned to it by the Council or the General Assembly and to make recommendations thereon to the Permanent Council;
  - v. To consider the reports prepared by the Executive Secretariat for the Summit Process and the technical dependency responsible for ministerial meetings and other sectoral meetings linked to the Summit process.
  
- b. With respect to civil society participation in OAS activities:
  - i. To implement the Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities and to present to the Permanent Council such amendments as the Committee deems pertinent;
  - ii. To design, implement, and evaluate the necessary strategies to increase and facilitate civil society participation in OAS activities;
  - iii. To promote the strengthening of relations established between civil society organizations and the bodies and dependencies of the OAS within the scope of the functions conferred upon the Permanent Council by the OAS Charter;
  - iv. To study matters relating to civil society participation in OAS activities that are presented to it by civil society organizations or entrusted to it by the Permanent Council or the General Assembly and to make recommendations thereon to the Permanent Council;
  - v. To analyze and transmit to the Permanent Council applications presented by civil society organizations to the secretary general to participate in OAS activities.

Article 23. All member states are members of the permanent committees.

Article 24. The Permanent Council may establish special committees, subcommittees, or working groups open to participation by all delegations.

Article 25. The provisions of the previous article notwithstanding, the Permanent Council may decide to establish the number of members of the special committees, subcommittees, or working groups and may proceed to appoint them. These functions may be delegated to the chair.

In the appointment of members of the special committees, subcommittees, and working groups, not only shall requests made by the representatives be taken into account, but so also shall the range of opinions expressed on the matters in question and, insofar as possible, the principle of equitable geographic representation.

In the appointment of members of a special committee whose number, by decision of the General Assembly, is smaller than the number of member states, the criteria provided in the preceding paragraph shall be observed; however, if no agreement is reached on such appointments, the issue shall be resolved by ballot.

Article 26. The provisions of Articles 24 and 25 shall apply to subcommittees and working groups established by the committees.

#### **Duration of mandates**

Article 27.

- a. The mandates of the permanent committees and their subcommittees and working groups shall be for one year or for any period determined by the Permanent Council.
- b. The mandates of the special committees, their subcommittees and working groups, and the working groups of the Permanent Council shall expire when they have completed their work or when the Permanent Council so decides.

#### **Installation, election, and terms of office of the chairs and vice chairs**

Article 28.

- a. The chair of the Permanent Council shall install all committees within one month following the date on which the regular session of the General Assembly closes. Except as provided in these Rules of Procedure in relation to the officers of the General Committee and the chair of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, the respective chairs and vice chairs shall be elected, if possible, at the installation meeting by the following procedure:
  - i. Candidates may be nominated in writing before the meeting and either orally or in writing during the meeting;

- ii. The chair and vice chair of each committee shall be elected by separate and secret ballot except when elected by acclamation;
  - iii. The candidates who receive the votes of an absolute majority of the members of the committee shall be elected chair and vice chair;
  - iv. If, in the balloting, no candidate receives the majority required for election, there shall be as many additional ballots as may be necessary.
- b. Each subcommittee or working group shall elect its chair.

Article 29.

- a. Elections for the chairs and vice chairs of the permanent committees, except for the officers of the General Committee and the chair of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, must be held no later than the last meeting of the month following the close of the regular session of the General Assembly. Except as provided for the General Committee and the chair of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, pursuant to Article 3 of these Rules of Procedure, the terms of office of the chairs and vice chairs of these committees shall be one year.
- b. Except in the case of the officers of the General Committee and the chair of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, in the event of the permanent absence of the chair of one of the permanent committees within the first six months of the chair's term of office, the committee shall elect a new chair.
- c. Except in the case of the General Committee and the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, in the event of the permanent absence of the chair of one of the permanent committees after six months following the date of the chair's election, the vice chair shall become chair and shall immediately convene the committee to elect a vice chair.
- d. Except in the case of the officers of the General Committee and the chair of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, chairs and vice chairs of the permanent committees may not be reelected for the following term unless they have served in that capacity for less than six months. The outgoing chairs and vice chairs shall continue to serve until the persons elected to replace them take office.

**Distribution of mandates**

Article 30. The Permanent Council shall distribute the mandates of each General Assembly session among its different committees, subcommittees, and working groups within one month following the date of closure of the regular session of the General Assembly.

## **VI. PRIOR STUDIES AND REPORTS**

Article 31. Every matter presented to the Permanent Council that, in its opinion, requires prior study shall be referred to a committee, which shall present a report.

Article 32. The committees shall report to the Permanent Council in writing on all matters entrusted to them. The final report shall contain a draft resolution or a recommendation. Members of a committee may present dissenting opinions, jointly or separately.

Article 33. The annual work programs of the Permanent Council and its committees and working groups shall include schedules for the presentation of documents and reports for its consideration.

Article 34. Reports from the areas of the General Secretariat shall be considered after at least 15 days have elapsed since their distribution to the permanent missions. The officials responsible for the operational units shall attend the relevant meetings in order to answer questions or provide any clarifications or explanations that may be requested of them.

### Article 35.

- a. The annual and special reports to be presented by the organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization in compliance with Article 91.f of the Charter shall be delivered to the Permanent Council through the secretary general at least 90 days before the opening of each regular session of the General Assembly.
- b. Reports shall not include compendia of earlier documents or quotations or references that are extraneous.
- c. The Permanent Council shall examine only those reports presented within the statutory deadline and shall submit its observations and recommendations to the General Assembly for consideration. Reports that have been examined shall be circulated as reference documents.
- d. In the case of reports presented after the statutory deadline, the Permanent Council shall notify the General Assembly of the failure of the respective organ, agency, or entity of the Organization to comply and shall recommend measures to promote compliance with these rules. It may also make observations and recommendations on substantive matters addressed in a report submitted after the deadline.
- e. In keeping with the provisions of Article 39 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the observations and recommendations of the Permanent Council on the said reports shall in all cases be transmitted to the governments of the member states

not less than 30 days before the scheduled opening date of the regular session of the General Assembly.

- f. The Permanent Council may request the chairs, presidents, and directors of the organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization to attend the meetings at which their reports are to be considered in order to provide clarifying or supplementary information as may be required. When a chair, president, or director is unable to attend, the Permanent Council may receive such information from whoever represents the chair, president, or director pursuant to the applicable statutes or rules of procedure.

## VII. MEETINGS

### **Regular meetings**

Article 36. The Permanent Council shall hold regular meetings on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. If it should be necessary to advance or postpone a regular meeting, the chair of the Council may set another date for it. The meetings of the Permanent Council and its committees, subcommittees, and working groups shall begin punctually at the time indicated in the meeting announcement.

### **Special meetings**

Article 37. The Permanent Council shall hold special meetings, in keeping with Article 14 of its Statutes, when:

- a. The chair considers it necessary;
- b. Any representative so requests in writing, stating the purpose of the request;
- c. The secretary general expressly so requests, in the exercise of the authority conferred upon him or her in the second paragraph of Article 110 of the Charter; or
- d. The General Assembly expressly so mandates.

### **Protocolary meetings**

Article 38.

- a. The chair of the Permanent Council, in agreement with the mission or delegation of the government concerned, or at its request, shall convene a protocolary meeting in honor of a head of state or government of a member state.
- b. With the prior concurrence of the General Committee, and in consultation with the mission or delegation of the government concerned, if appropriate, or at its request, the chair shall

also convene protocolary meetings in honor of other eminent persons or to celebrate or commemorate events of importance.

### **Public and closed meetings**

Article 39. The meetings of the Permanent Council shall be public. However, if the chair so provides or any representative so requests, the meeting shall be closed and shall so continue unless the Council decides otherwise. When a public meeting is to become closed, the chair shall call a brief recess to allow all unauthorized persons to leave the room. Except as provided in Article 40.c of these Rules of Procedure, only the members of the missions or delegations shall have access to closed meetings.

### **Participation in the meetings**

#### Article 40.

- a. The principal or acting representatives and the alternate representatives and advisers may participate in the meetings of the Permanent Council and of the committees, subcommittees, and working groups.
- b. When, under the provisions of Article 25, member state representatives do not serve on special committees, subcommittees, or working groups, they may participate in those bodies with voice and vote, subject to a request to, and approval by, the chair. Requests may be made orally or in writing, and shall be considered without delay.
- c. Permanent observers or their alternates may attend the public meetings of the Permanent Council and, when invited to do so by the chair, may also attend closed meetings. They may also attend meetings of the committees and working groups of the Permanent Council. In these cases they may speak provided the chair so decides.
- d. Permanent observers or their alternates may also attend the meetings of the subcommittees or working groups when invited by the corresponding chair.
- e. The secretary general, or his or her representative, and the secretary of the Permanent Council may participate with voice but without vote in all meetings of the Permanent Council and its subsidiary bodies, organs, and committees.

### **Duration of meetings**

Article 41. Each session of a meeting shall last no longer than three hours. The Permanent Council may decide to prolong meetings.

### **Order of business**

Article 42. The chair of the Permanent Council shall prepare the draft order of business for each meeting, and the General Secretariat shall transmit it to the missions and delegations, at least

three working days in advance, in the case of regular meetings, and as soon as possible, in the case of special meetings. Any representative, subsidiary organ, or committee of the Permanent Council, as well as the secretary general, may request the inclusion of topics on the aforementioned draft order of business.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the order of business shall include only matters for which the documentation has been distributed 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Article 43. Each meeting shall begin with consideration of the order of business. If a new topic is proposed for inclusion on the draft order of business, the Permanent Council may authorize its inclusion and discussion, but the decision on the said topic shall be postponed to a later meeting if any representative so requests.

## VIII. DEBATES

### **Quorum**

#### Article 44.

- a. The quorum for meetings of the Permanent Council, permanent and special committees, subcommittees, and working groups shall be one third of the representatives of the member states making up those bodies. The quorum for adopting decisions shall be a majority of the representatives of the member states making up those bodies.
- b. Without prejudice to the foregoing paragraph, when special committees, subcommittees, or working groups are established and are open to participation by all delegations, the Council or the committee, as the case may be, may establish a quorum for meeting and for adopting decisions.

### **The right to speak**

#### Article 45.

- a. No one may speak until recognized. The chair shall grant the floor in the order in which it is requested.
- b. The chair may call to order any representative whose remarks depart from the subject under discussion.

Article 46. Statements by members of the Permanent Council and officials participating in its meetings shall, in each case, be limited to 10 minutes, unless the Council considers that a prudent extension of the time period is necessary. The chair shall adopt the measures he or she considers advisable to comply with this provision.

Article 47. When they see fit, subregional groups may express their positions through their coordinators or any spokespersons they may select.

### **Proposals**

Article 48. Proposals submitted to the Permanent Council for consideration shall be presented in writing to its Secretariat, which shall deliver copies to the representatives at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at which the matter will be discussed. However, by a two-thirds vote of the member states, the Council may authorize discussion of a proposal that has not followed the established procedure because of its urgent nature.

### **Withdrawal of proposals**

Article 49. A proposal may be withdrawn by its proponent before the original text or any amendment thereto has been put to a vote. Any other representative may reintroduce a proposal that has been withdrawn.

### **Points of order**

Article 50. During the discussion of a matter, any representative may raise a point of order regarding the application of these Rules of Procedure, which shall be decided upon immediately by the chair. When raising a point of order, a representative may not go into the substance of the matter under discussion. The decision of the chair may be appealed to the Permanent Council or the committee in question, as the case may be. The appeal shall be put to a vote immediately and shall be declared approved if favored by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

### **Suspension of debate**

Article 51. The chair or any representative may request that debate be suspended. Only two representatives may speak in favor of, and two against, a motion to suspend the debate. It shall then be put to a vote immediately and shall be declared approved if favored by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

### **Closing of debate**

Article 52. The chair or any representative, when he or she considers that a matter has been sufficiently discussed, may propose that debate be closed. This motion may be opposed by two representatives and shall be declared approved if favored by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

### **Suspension or adjournment of the meeting**

Article 53. During any debate, the chair or any representative may propose that the meeting be suspended or adjourned. Such a motion shall be put to a vote immediately without discussion, and it shall be declared approved if favored by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

### **Order of procedural motions**

Article 54. Except as provided in Article 50 of these Rules of Procedure, the following motions shall have precedence over all other proposals or motions, in the order set forth below:

- a. Suspension of the meeting;
- b. Adjournment of the meeting;
- c. Suspension of discussion of the topic under consideration; and
- d. Close of debate of the topic under discussion.

### **Reconsideration of decisions**

Article 55. Reconsideration of a decision taken by the Permanent Council shall require the approval of the corresponding motion by a two-thirds vote of the representatives of the member states.

## **IX. VOTING**

### **Right to vote**

Article 56. The representative of each member state has the right to one vote.

### **Majority required**

#### Article 57

- a. Decisions of the Permanent Council shall be taken by the vote of an absolute majority of its members, except as otherwise provided in the Charter of the Organization, the current Statutes of the Council, other inter-American instruments, and decisions of the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, or the Council acting provisionally as Organ of Consultation in application of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty).
- b. Decisions of committees shall be taken by the vote of a simple majority of the members present, provided there is a quorum for adopting decisions as required in Article 44.

### **Voting procedure**

Article 58

- a. Votes shall be taken by a show of hands, but any representative may request a roll-call vote, which shall be taken beginning with the delegation of the state whose name is drawn by lot by the chair and continuing thereafter in the Spanish alphabetical order of the names of the member states in Spanish.
- b. In roll-call votes, the name of each member state shall be called and the representative shall cast his or her vote in favor, in opposition, or of abstention.
- c. Votes shall be by secret ballot only in the case of elections. However, if it is so agreed, the Permanent Council may adopt a different procedure.

Article 59. In accordance with the provisions of previous articles:

- a. The affirmative vote of two thirds of the members of the Permanent Council shall be required:
  - i. To take decisions on budgetary matters;
  - ii. To make recommendations to the General Assembly on the admission of new members to the Organization;
  - iii. To take decisions in the exercise of its functions with respect to the peaceful settlement of disputes, in the manner prescribed in Article 28 of the Statutes of the Council, except for such decisions as these Rules of Procedure allow to be adopted by a simple majority;
  - iv. To take decisions on offers of a site for a regular session of the General Assembly when it cannot be held at the place selected by the Assembly;
  - v. To convene a special session of the General Assembly;
  - vi. To reconsider a decision of the Council;
  - vii. To adopt amendments to these Rules of Procedure when the articles involved stipulate a two-thirds majority of the members of the Council;
  - viii. To authorize the discussion of a proposal that has not gone through the procedure set forth in Article 48 of these Rules of Procedure.
- b. The affirmative vote of two thirds of the members present shall be required:

- i. To approve appeals to rulings by the chair on points of order;
- ii. To suspend or close debate;
- iii. To suspend or adjourn a meeting during the discussion of any matter;
- iv. To approve a motion to deny a request that a vote be taken by parts;
- v. To decide that proposals shall be put to the vote in an order other than that in which they were presented;
- vi. To adopt amendments to these Rules of Procedure when the articles involved stipulate a two-thirds majority of the members present.

### **Voting on proposals**

#### Article 60

- a. After debate is closed, the proposals presented, together with any proposed amendments, shall be put to a vote. After the chair has announced the start of the voting, no representative may interrupt it, except for a point of order relating to the manner in which the voting is being conducted.
- b. The process of voting and vote-counting shall end when the chair announces the result.

Article 61. Proposals shall be voted on in the order in which they are presented, except when the Permanent Council, by the vote of two thirds of the members present, decides otherwise.

### **Voting on amendments**

Article 62. Amendments shall be submitted for discussion and put to a vote before the voting on the proposal they are intended to modify. A proposal that would totally replace the original proposal, or that is not directly related to it, shall not be considered as an amendment.

Article 63. When several amendments to a proposal are presented, the vote shall be taken first on the one that departs furthest from the original text. The other amendments shall be voted upon in like order. In case of doubt in this regard, they shall be voted upon in the order of their presentation.

Article 64. When the fact that one amendment has been adopted necessarily implies the exclusion of another, the latter shall not be put to a vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the complete proposal as amended shall be put to a vote.

### **Voting by parts**

Article 65. Any representative may request that the parts of a proposal or an amendment be put to a vote separately, and must specifically indicate the parts involved. If any representative opposes such a request, the motion to deny it shall be put to a vote and a two-thirds majority of the members present shall be required for approval. Only two representatives may speak in favor of, and two against, a request for voting by parts. When voting by parts is accepted, the parts of the proposal or amendment thus approved must be put to a final vote as a whole. If all the operative parts of a proposal or amendment have been rejected, it shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole. Voting by parts does not exclude a vote on the totality of the proposal.

#### **Explanation of vote**

Article 66. After the voting has ended, and except when it has been by secret ballot, any representative may request the floor to explain his or her vote.

#### **Consensus**

Article 67. Without prejudice to the preceding provisions, the Permanent Council may also take decisions by consensus.

The adoption of decisions by consensus does not curtail the right of delegations to express their views and request that they be placed on record.

## **X. GENERAL SECRETARIAT**

### **Functions of the General Secretariat**

#### Article 68

- a. The General Secretariat shall provide the advisory services required by the Permanent Council and its subsidiary organs and committees; it shall provide to them, on a permanent basis, adequate secretariat services, and carry out their instructions and assignments; and it shall receive, translate, and distribute their documents, reports, and resolutions.
- b. It shall distribute records of Permanent Council meetings and summaries of committee and working group meetings within 72 hours following the corresponding meeting.
- c. It shall keep a register of the missions or delegations, in which the order of precedence of the principal and acting representatives shall be indicated, in accordance with Article 2 of these Rules of Procedure.

- d. It shall receive communications on the appointment of alternate representatives and shall keep a register indicating their order of precedence according to the dates of receipt of said communications.
- e. Pursuant to the provisions of Article 35 of these Rules of Procedure, it shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the General Assembly has at its disposal the reports of the organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization when it takes up the observations and recommendations submitted by the Permanent Council in keeping with the provisions of Articles 54.f and 91.f of the Charter and Article 61 of the Statutes.
- f. It shall receive communications on the appointment of permanent observers and their respective alternates.
- g. It shall provide the rooms and assistance needed for informal meetings of members of the Permanent Council.
- h. It shall schedule meetings so that subcommittees and working groups of the same committee will not meet simultaneously.
- i. It shall schedule the meetings referred to in Article 8.d of these Rules of Procedure, preferably, on Fridays. Consequently, it shall take steps not to schedule meetings of the Permanent Council or its committees and working groups for that day.
- j. It shall schedule morning and afternoon meetings in order to make appropriate use of interpretation services.

### **Minutes**

#### Article 69

- a. The General Secretariat shall distribute the verbatim minutes of each meeting of the Permanent Council as soon as possible to the missions or delegations and, when applicable, to the permanent observers. The missions shall send any corrections in style that they wish to make to their own statements to the General Secretariat within five working days following the date of distribution. The corrected verbatim minutes shall be distributed to the missions and, after five working days have passed, shall be submitted to the Permanent Council at its next meeting for adoption. The minutes as adopted may not be amended.
- b. The minutes as adopted and the documents of the public meetings shall be distributed without restriction. The minutes as adopted and the documents of the closed meetings shall be distributed to the missions or delegations of the member states as restricted documents. They shall not be distributed to the public unless the Permanent Council so authorizes.

## **XI. PREPARATION FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION**

Article 70. When acting as the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly, the Permanent Council shall be governed by Articles 60 and 91.c of the Charter, by Article 37 of its Statutes, by the pertinent provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, and by such rules of procedure as the Committee itself may adopt.

### **Change of site of a regular session of the General Assembly**

Article 71. If the General Assembly cannot meet at the site chosen by the Assembly itself, it shall meet at the headquarters of the General Secretariat. However, if one of the member states wishes to offer a site in its territory, it must do so at least three months in advance of the date on which the session is to begin. Within 30 days of the offer, the Permanent Council, by a vote of two thirds of the representatives of the member states, may decide that the General Assembly shall meet at the site offered.

### **Selection by the Permanent Council of the site for a regular session of the General Assembly**

Article 72. When the General Assembly does not select the site for a regular session and it falls to the Permanent Council to do so, the Council shall be governed by the following provisions adopted by the Assembly for that purpose. If there has been no offer, the next regular session shall be held at the headquarters of the General Secretariat. Nevertheless, should one of the member states make an offer of a site in its territory at least six months in advance of the date on which the session is to begin, the Council may decide, not more than six months or less than five months in advance of that date, that the Assembly shall meet at the site offered.

### **Procedure for setting the site for a regular session**

Article 73. Whenever, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 71 and 72 of these Rules of Procedure, it falls to the Permanent Council to select the site for a regular session of the General Assembly, the following procedure shall be observed for the application of the principle of rotation:

- a. Member states that wish to make an offer of a site shall communicate the offer in writing to the secretary general of the Organization within the time frame established in each case;
- b. To decide on the offers of a site, the Permanent Council shall also take into account:
  - i. the principle of an equitable geographical distribution;
  - ii. the previous sites of sessions of the General Assembly; and
  - iii. the goods and services that the offering states are in a position to provide for the Assembly session.

### **Special sessions**

Article 74. In special circumstances, and with the approval of two thirds of the representatives of the member states, the Permanent Council shall convene a special session of the General Assembly and shall determine the date and place for it.

## **XII. MEETING OF CONSULTATION OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE PERMANENT COUNCIL WHEN IT SERVES PROVISIONALLY AS ORGAN OF CONSULTATION**

Article 75. The functions of the Permanent Council pertaining to the Meeting of Consultation of Minister of Foreign Affairs shall be governed by the provisions of the Charter, of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), of the Statutes of the Permanent Council, and of these Rules of Procedure.

Article 76. When the Council serves provisionally as Organ of Consultation, its proceedings shall be governed by the provisions of the Rio Treaty.

### **Convocation of the Meeting of Consultation in application of the Charter**

Article 77. When one or more member states request that the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs be convened in accordance with the first part of Article 62 of the Charter, the Permanent Council shall decide by the vote of an absolute majority of its members whether the Meeting should be held.

### **Convocation of the Meeting of Consultation in application of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance**

Article 78. When one or more of the member states that have ratified the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance request that the Meeting of Consultation be convened in accordance with Article 13 of that treaty, the Permanent Council shall decide by the vote of an absolute majority of the states that have ratified that treaty whether the Meeting should be held.

### **Decisions of the Permanent Council serving provisionally as Organ of Consultation**

Article 79. When the Permanent Council is serving provisionally as Organ of Consultation in application of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), it shall take its decisions, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 17 and 18 of the Rio Treaty, by the vote of two thirds of the states that have ratified that treaty.

## **XIII. SCOPE AND AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE**

Article 80.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., from October 1889 to April 1890. At that meeting the establishment of the International Union of American Republics was approved. The Charter of the OAS was signed in Bogotá in 1948 and entered into force in December 1951. The Charter was subsequently amended by the Protocol of Buenos Aires, signed in 1967, which entered into force in February 1970; by the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias, signed in 1985, which entered into force in November 1988; by the Protocol of Managua, signed in 1993, which entered into force on January 29, 1996; and by the Protocol of Washington, signed in 1992, which entered into force on September 25, 1997. The OAS currently has 35 member states. In addition, the Organization has granted permanent observer status to 55 states, as well as to the European Union.

The essential purposes of the OAS are: to strengthen peace and security in the Hemisphere; to promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention; to prevent possible causes of difficulties and to ensure peaceful settlement of disputes that may arise among the member states; to provide for common action on the part of those states in the event of aggression; to seek the solution of political, juridical, and economic problems that may arise among them; to promote, by cooperative action, their economic, social, and cultural development; and to achieve an effective limitation of conventional weapons that will make it possible to devote the largest amount of resources to the economic and social development of the member states.

The Organization of American States accomplishes its purposes by means of: the General Assembly; the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; the Councils (the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development); the Inter-American Juridical Committee; the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; the General Secretariat; the specialized conferences; the specialized organizations; and other entities established by the General Assembly.

The General Assembly holds a regular session once a year. Under special circumstances it meets in special session. The Meeting of Consultation is convened to consider urgent matters of common interest and to serve as Organ of Consultation under the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), the main instrument for joint action in the event of aggression. The Permanent Council takes cognizance of such matters as are entrusted to it by the General Assembly or the Meeting of Consultation and implements the decisions of both organs when their implementation has not been assigned to any other body; it monitors the maintenance of friendly relations among the member states and the observance of the standards governing General Secretariat operations; and it also acts provisionally as Organ of Consultation under the Rio Treaty. The General Secretariat is the central and permanent organ of the OAS. The headquarters of both the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat are in Washington, D.C.

**MEMBER STATES: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, The Bahamas (*Commonwealth of*), Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica (*Commonwealth of*), Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.**