

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**(As approved at the first special session, on July 7, 1970, and
as subsequently amended at the third, fourth, seventh, eighth
tenth, eleventh, thirteenth, twentieth, twenty-second,
twenty-seventh, and thirtieth regular sessions, and at
the eighteenth special session)**

**GENERAL SECRETARIAT
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
2000**

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RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I. NATURE AND COMPOSITION

Article 1. The General Assembly is the supreme organ of the Organization of American States and is composed of the delegations accredited by the governments of the member states.

II. PARTICIPANTS

Delegations

Article 2. The delegations of the member states shall be composed of the representatives, advisers, and other persons whom the governments accredit. Each delegation shall have a head of delegation, who may delegate his duties to any other member of his delegation.

Credentials

Article 3. The members of each delegation and the permanent observers to the Organization of American States shall be accredited to the General Assembly by their respective governments through written communication to the Secretary General of the Organization.

Precedence

Article 4. The order of precedence of the delegations for each session shall be established by lot by the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly. The order of precedence of the permanent observers shall be established in the same manner.

General Secretariat

Article 5. The Secretary General of the Organization, or his representative, may participate with voice but without vote in the deliberations of the General Assembly.

Organs of the OAS

Article 6 The chairs or representatives of the following organs or agencies of the inter-American system may attend the General Assembly with the right to speak:

Inter-American Juridical Committee;
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
Inter-American Court of Human Rights;
Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development; and
Inter-American specialized organizations.

United Nations

Article 7. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, or his representative, may attend the sessions of the General Assembly and may speak if he so desires.

Permanent observers

Article 8. Permanent observers or their respective alternates, as the case may be, may attend the public meetings of the plenary General Assembly and the General Committee. They may likewise attend any closed meetings when invited by the corresponding presiding officer. Permanent observers may also request the floor and the corresponding presiding officer will decide on the request.

Other observers

Article 9. The following may also send observers to the General Assembly:

- a. Governments of American states that are not members of the Organization, with the authorization of the Permanent Council;
- b. Governments of non-American states that are members of the United Nations or of its specialized agencies, when they express an interest in attending, with the authorization of the Permanent Council;
- c. Inter-American regional or subregional governmental entities or agencies that are not included among the organs or agencies of the Organization, with the authorization of the Permanent Council;
- d. The specialized agencies of the United Nations and other international agencies, when agreements concluded with the Organization and in force so establish.

The observers referred to in this article may request to speak at meetings, and the corresponding presiding officer shall decide whether to recognize the observer.

For the purposes of this article, the Secretary General of the Organization shall transmit the appropriate communications.

Special guests

Article 10. With the authorization of the Permanent Council and the consent of the government of the country in which the Assembly session is to be held, representatives of the specialized agencies of the United Nations and other governmental or nongovernmental international agencies and organizations not included in the previous article may attend the General Assembly as special guests, as long as they have expressed interest in doing so.

For the purposes of this article, the Secretary General of the Organization shall extend the appropriate invitations.

Requests to attend General Assembly sessions as special guests shall be presented to the General Secretariat of the Organization at least 30 days in advance of the opening of the Assembly session.

III. PRESIDENT

Article 11. The head of the delegation indicated by the order of precedence established under these Rules of Procedure shall serve as provisional president until the General Assembly elects its president.

Article 12. At the first plenary session, the General Assembly shall elect a president, who shall hold office until the close of the Assembly session. The election shall be by the vote of a majority of the member states.

Article 13. The heads of delegation shall be vice presidents ex officio of the Assembly and shall replace the president in the event of his disability, in accordance with the order of precedence.

Article 14. When the officer presiding over a session wishes to take part in the discussion or in the voting on a matter, he shall request the appropriate representative, in accordance with Article 13, to preside.

Powers of the president

Article 15. The president shall call the plenary sessions; decide on the order of business thereof; open and close the plenary sessions; direct the discussions; recognize speakers in the order in which they request the floor; submit points under discussion to a vote and announce the results thereof; decide on points of order in accordance with the provisions of Article 57; install the General Committee of the Assembly; and, in general, comply with and enforce the provisions of these Rules of Procedure.

IV. SECRETARIAT

Article 16. The General Secretariat, as the central and permanent organ of the Organization, is the Secretariat of the General Assembly. To this end, the Secretary General shall, on a permanent basis, provide it with adequate Secretariat services and shall carry out the duties and assignments given him by the Assembly.

Article 17. The General Secretariat shall provide the delegations with the official documents of the General Assembly. It shall also provide these documents, except those for which it has been decided to limit distribution, to the permanent observers, other observers, and special guests.

Article 18. The president of the General Assembly shall establish the maximum duration of the statements of the heads of delegation.

V. COMMITTEES

Preparatory Committee

Article 19. The Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly shall be governed by Articles 60 and 91.c of the Charter and by the applicable provisions of these Rules of Procedure.

Article 20. No later than 15 days before the opening of the General Assembly session, the Preparatory Committee shall adopt recommendations on the following topics:

- a. Agreement on the draft agenda;
- b. Agreement on the proposed program-budget;
- c. Agreement on the time limit for the presentation of proposals;
- d. Agreement on the duration of the Assembly session;
- e. Agreement on the minutes of the meetings.

Article 21. The chair of the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, or his representatives, may participate in the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee, with the right to speak.

The Committee may invite representatives of other entities of the inter-American system to participate in its deliberations when it considers matters directly related to the activities of those entities.

General Committee

Article 22. The General Assembly may establish a General Committee, which may establish such subcommittees and working groups as it deems necessary. Each subcommittee and working group shall elect a chair, who shall present a report to the General Committee containing its conclusions.

Article 23. At each special session, the General Assembly may establish a General Committee, which may establish such subcommittees and working groups as it deems necessary.

Article 24. The General Committee shall be composed of representatives of all the member states participating in the General Assembly. The General Committee shall elect a chair, a vice chair, and a rapporteur. The chair shall have, as appropriate, the same powers as those indicated for the president of the Assembly in Article 15. In the event of the absence of the chair, the vice chair shall assume that position. In the event of the absence or incapacity of the latter, a representative of a delegation selected according to the order of precedence shall preside.

Article 25. The rapporteur of the General Committee shall present to the plenary General Assembly a report on the topics assigned to that committee, which shall include the conclusions reached by the committee and the results of the votes taken. The duration of the report may not exceed five minutes, unless the president gives express authorization to that effect. The plenary Assembly shall take cognizance of the report and consider the proposals recommended therein.

Work of the General Assembly

Article 26. The president of the General Assembly shall see that the work of the General Assembly proceeds satisfactorily and, to this end, shall present such recommendations as he considers appropriate. The president, if necessary, shall coordinate the draft declarations, recommendations, and resolutions adopted by the General Committee before they are submitted to a plenary session. The president shall also perform the other duties assigned by these Rules of Procedure and any others assigned by the General Assembly itself.

Credentials

Article 27. The Secretary General shall receive the credentials presented to him under the provisions of Article 3 and shall submit a report on the matter to the General Assembly.

Style Committee

Article 28. The Permanent Council of the Organization shall constitute a Style Committee composed of delegations appointed at the last regular meeting it holds before each regular or special session of the General Assembly, and each such delegation shall represent one of the four official languages of the Organization.

The Style Committee shall receive the resolutions, declarations, and recommendations issued by the General Assembly, shall correct their defects of form, and shall ensure equivalency among the versions in the official languages. If it notes defects of form that it cannot correct, the Style Committee shall submit the matter to the Permanent Council for resolution.

VI. AGENDA

A. Regular sessions

Article 29. For each regular session of the General Assembly, the Preparatory Committee shall prepare a preliminary draft agenda that will be sent with a report by that committee to the governments of the member states, so that they may have an opportunity to make the observations they deem pertinent or to propose the inclusion of additional topics within whatever time period the Committee may set. In preparing this preliminary draft agenda, the Committee shall take into account the provisions of the Charter, the topics proposed by the governments of the member states, those agreed to by the Assembly at previous sessions, and, if such is the case, by the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, those recommended by other organs of the Organization, and matters that, in the opinion of the Secretary General, might threaten the peace and security of the Hemisphere or the development of the member states.

Article 30. The agenda for each regular session of the General Assembly shall include the following matters, in addition to those mentioned in the previous article:

- a. Adoption of the agenda;
- b. The observations and recommendations of the Permanent Council on the reports of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, the Inter-American Juridical Committee, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the General Secretariat, the specialized organizations and conferences, and the other organs, agencies, and entities;
- c. Determination of the place and date of the next regular session;
- d. Election of officers of organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization;

- e. Approval of the annual program -budget of the Organization;
- f. Determination of the quotas of the member states.

Article 31. Taking into account the observations and proposals referred to in Article 29, the Preparatory Committee shall prepare the draft agenda, which shall be transmitted to the governments at least 45 days before the opening date of each regular session of the General Assembly. The Preparatory Committee may recommend that, in view of their importance, certain topics be considered on a priority basis at the opening of the regular session of the Assembly. The draft agenda shall be accompanied by a report of the Committee, which shall contain such factual and legal background information and, when appropriate, other criteria as may facilitate consideration of the topics.

Article 32. Once the Preparatory Committee has approved the draft agenda, new topics may be included only by the vote of two thirds of the members of that committee, at least 30 days prior to the opening date of the session of the General Assembly.

Article 33. Once the regular session of the General Assembly has begun, only urgent and important matters may be added to the agenda. The admission of such topics shall require the vote of two thirds of the member states.

Article 34. The General Assembly shall adopt the agenda by the vote of two thirds of the member states, following a report by the Preparatory Committee.

B. Special sessions

Article 35. The agenda of each special session of the General Assembly shall be confined to the subject or subjects for which the session was convoked.

The procedures and time periods for the preparation of the agenda of a special session shall be established in each case by the Preparatory Committee.

VII. DRAFTS AND WORKING DOCUMENTS

A. Regular sessions

Draft treaties or conventions

Article 36. A government of a member state or an organ of the Organization that wishes to submit to the General Assembly for consideration a draft treaty or convention relating to any topic on the agenda shall transmit the text thereof to the Secretary General of the Organization at least 45 days prior to the opening of the Assembly session, so that the governments may give it advance consideration. If such a draft is not submitted within the time specified, it may be considered by the Assembly only if the latter so agrees by the vote of two thirds of the member states.

Draft declarations, resolutions, or recommendations

Article 37. Whenever possible, draft declarations, resolutions, or recommendations relating to the agenda shall be presented to the Secretary General of the Organization prior to the beginning of the Assembly session. The deadline for the presentation of drafts after the session has begun shall be established by the General Assembly at its first plenary session.

Reports and studies

Article 38. The observations and recommendations of the Permanent Council concerning the reports of the specialized organizations and bodies of the Organization may be combined into a single document and shall be sent directly to the plenary General Assembly together with those reports as information documents. Any delegation may request separate consideration of such observations and recommendations, in which case they shall be sent to the General Committee for that purpose.

Article 39. Reports from the Meeting of Consultation, those requested by the General Assembly itself, and any observations and recommendations that the Permanent Council may present on the reports of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, the Inter-American Juridical Committee, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the General Secretariat, the specialized organizations and conferences, and the other organs, agencies, and entities must be transmitted to the governments of the member states no later than 30 days prior to the opening date of the regular session of the General Assembly.

Article 40. Any draft, study, or report that, in the opinion of a delegation or of the Secretary General, is not clearly related to the agenda shall be presented to the General Committee so that it may decide on the matter.

Article 41. In adopting any resolution providing for a project or activity that entails expenditure by the Organization, the General Assembly shall take into account financial estimates, which the General Secretariat shall prepare in advance, on the impact of such projects or activities on the budgetary calculations of the Organization, as well as prior statements by the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs of the Permanent Council or, as the case may be, by the General Committee of the General Assembly on such financial implications.

B. Special sessions

Article 42. For special sessions of the Assembly, the Preparatory Committee may, if necessary, change the procedures and time periods established in this chapter with respect to drafts and working documents.

VIII. SESSIONS

A..... Regular sessions

Schedule of sessions and opening dates

Article 43. The General Assembly shall hold a regular session each year, preferably during the second quarter.

At each of these sessions, the General Assembly shall determine the opening date of its next session, taking special account of the work of preparing and adjusting the program-budget of the Organization.

Article 44. At each regular session, the General Assembly shall determine the place of its next regular session, taking into account the offers made by the member states and in accordance with the principle of rotation.

Article 45. If for any reason the General Assembly session cannot be held at the place chosen, it shall be held at the headquarters of the General Secretariat, unless a member state should offer to host the session in its territory at least three months in advance of the date determined in accordance with Article 43 of these Rules of Procedure, in which case the Permanent Council may decide that the General Assembly shall meet at that place.

Transmittal of the notice of convocation

Article 46. The Secretary General shall transmit to the member states the notice of convocation of each regular session of the General Assembly at least 60 days prior to the opening date thereof.

B. Special sessions

Article 47. The General Assembly shall hold a special session when the Permanent Council convokes it in accordance with Article 58 of the Charter.

The Secretary General shall immediately transmit the corresponding notice of convocation to the governments.

IX. SESSIONS AND MEETINGS

Types of sessions

Article 48. The General Assembly shall hold an inaugural session, the necessary plenary sessions, and a closing session. Nevertheless, in the case of a special session, the inaugural session may be eliminated.

Public and closed sessions

Article 49. The plenary sessions of the General Assembly and the meetings of the General Committee, the subcommittees, and the working groups shall be public, unless the respective body decides that they shall be closed.

Article 50. Only the delegations of the member states, necessary Secretariat personnel, and the permanent observers, in accordance with Article 8, may attend closed sessions or meetings.

X. DEBATES AND PROCEDURE**Official Languages**

Article 51. English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish shall be the official languages of the General Assembly.

Quorum

Article 52. A majority of the member states shall constitute a quorum at the plenary sessions. In the General Committee, its subcommittees, and its working groups, a quorum shall consist of one third of the delegations comprising those bodies. Nevertheless, in order for a vote to be taken, the presence of at least two thirds of such delegations at the session or meeting concerned shall be required.

Article 53. Proposals shall be presented in writing to the Secretariat and may not be discussed until 12 hours after they have been distributed to the delegations in all four official languages. Nevertheless, the General Assembly, by the vote of two thirds of the member states, may authorize discussion in the plenary sessions of a proposal that has not been distributed on time.

Amendments

Article 54. During the consideration of a proposal a motion may be made to amend it.

A motion shall be considered to be an amendment to a proposal only when it adds to or eliminates something from that proposal or changes part of it. A motion that would totally replace the original proposal or that is not directly related to it shall not be considered to be an amendment.

Withdrawal of proposals and amendments

Article 55. A proposal or an amendment may be withdrawn by its proponent before it has been put to a vote. Any delegation may present again a proposal or amendment that has been withdrawn.

Article 56. For the reconsideration of a decision taken by the plenary General Assembly, the General Committee, a subcommittee, or a working group, the approval of the corresponding motion by the vote of two thirds of the delegations that are members of the body in question shall be required.

Points of order

Article 57. During the discussion of a topic, any delegation may raise a point of order, which shall be decided upon immediately by the president or chair. Any delegation may appeal this decision, in which case the appeal shall be put to a vote.

While raising a point of order, a delegation may not go into the substance of the matter under discussion.

Suspension of debate

Article 58. The president or chair or any delegation may propose that debate be suspended. Only two delegations may speak in favor of, and two against, such a motion, which shall then be put to a vote immediately.

Closing of debate

Article 59. The president or chair or any delegation, when he or it considers that a topic has been discussed sufficiently, may propose that debate be closed. This motion may be opposed briefly by two delegations, after which it shall be declared approved if so voted by two thirds of the delegations present at the session or meeting.

Suspension or adjournment of the session or meeting

Article 60. During the discussion of any topic, the president or chair or any representative may propose that the session or meeting be suspended or adjourned. Such a motion shall be put to a vote immediately and without discussion.

Article 61. Decisions on the matters dealt with in Articles 57, 58, and 60 shall be taken by the vote of a majority of the delegations present.

Order of procedural motions

Article 62. Except as provided in Article 57, the following motions shall have precedence, in the order set forth below, over all other proposals or motions:

- a. Suspension of the session or meeting;
- b. Adjournment of the session or meeting;
- c. Suspension of debate on the topic under consideration;
- d. Close of debate on the topic under consideration.

Provisions common to all deliberative bodies of the General Assembly

Article 63. The provisions regarding debate and procedure contained in this chapter shall govern the plenary sessions and the meetings of the committees, subcommittees, and working groups.

XI. VOTING

Right to vote

Article 64. Each delegation shall have the right to one vote.

Majority required

Article 65. In both the plenary sessions and the General Committee meetings, decisions shall be taken by the vote of a majority of the member states, except in those cases in which the Charter of the Organization or these Rules of Procedure may provide otherwise.

Article 66. In the subcommittees and working groups of the General Committee, decisions shall be taken by the vote of a majority of the delegations present, except in those cases in which these Rules of Procedure may provide otherwise.

Article 67. 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 whose name is drawn by lot by the president or chair and continuing in the order of precedence of the delegations.

Votes shall be taken by secret ballot only in the cases and in the manner provided for in these Rules of Procedure.

No representative may interrupt the voting, except for a point of order relating to the manner in which it is being conducted. This rule applies to the votes provided for in this article and in the following articles of this chapter.

Voting on proposals

Article 68. After discussion is closed, the proposals presented, together with any amendments thereto, shall be put to a vote immediately.

Proposals shall be voted upon in the order in which they are presented.

Voting on amendments

Article 69. An amendment shall be submitted for discussion and shall be put to a vote before the proposal that it is intended to modify is voted upon.

Article 70. 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 considered in the order of their presentation.

Article 71. When the adoption of one amendment necessarily entails the exclusion of another, the latter shall not be put to a vote. If one or more of the amendments is adopted, the proposal as amended shall be put to a vote.

Article 72. When any delegation so requests, a proposal or amendment shall be voted upon by parts. If any delegation opposes such a request, the opposing motion shall be put to a vote, in which case the majority called for in Article 65 or Article 66, as applicable, shall be required for approval. If voting by parts is accepted, the proposal or amendment thus approved shall be put to a final vote in its entirety. When all the operative parts of a proposal or amendment have been rejected, such proposal or amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Elections

Article 73. Elections shall be by secret ballot except when they are by acclamation.

Article 74. In cases where only one member state or one person is to be elected, if no candidate obtains the vote of a majority of the member states on the first ballot, a second and, if necessary, a third ballot shall be taken, limited to the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes. If after the third ballot no candidate has obtained the required majority, the election shall be suspended for the period of time determined by the Assembly or, if applicable, the committee concerned. When the election is resumed, two additional ballots shall be taken. If neither of the two candidates is elected the balloting procedure established in this article shall be started again at the time indicated by the Assembly, with respect to the candidates who are presented.

Article 75. When two or more elective posts are to be filled at the same time and under the same conditions, the candidates obtaining the vote of a majority of the member states shall be declared elected. If the number of candidates obtaining such a majority is smaller than the number of persons or members to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining posts, the voting being limited to the candidates who have received the most votes on the previous ballot, in such a way that the number of candidates will not be more than twice the number of posts remaining to be filled.

Explanation of vote

Article 76. After voting has ended, and except when it has been by secret ballot, any representative may request the floor to give a brief explanation of his vote.

XII. MINUTES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Verbatim and summary minutes

Article 77. The minutes of the plenary sessions shall be verbatim. The minutes of committee meetings shall be summary, unless the Preparatory Committee decides otherwise.

Article 78. The Secretariat shall distribute the provisional minutes to the delegations and, when applicable, to the permanent observers as promptly as possible. It shall do the same for the other observers in the case of public meetings at which these observers have spoken. The delegations, permanent observers, and other observers may present to the Secretariat any corrections in style that they deem necessary.

The corrected minutes shall be published as part of the official proceedings of the session.

Summary

Article 79. The Secretariat shall publish a brief summary of the sessions and meetings held on the preceding day. This publication shall also include:

- a. The list of documents distributed during the preceding 24 hours;
- b. The orders of business for the next sessions and meetings; and
- c. Brief announcements of interest to the delegations.

Resolutions, declarations, and recommendations

Article 80. The resolutions, declarations, and recommendations issued by the General Assembly shall be published in the official languages of the Organization and shall be distributed to the delegations, permanent observers, other observers, and special guests immediately after they are approved. The General Assembly may entrust the Permanent Council with coordinating the texts of the resolutions after each session. The General Secretariat shall distribute the official versions of these resolutions to the governments.

Reservations and statements

Article 81. Any delegation that wishes to make a reservation or statement with respect to a treaty or convention, or a statement regarding a resolution of the General Assembly, shall communicate the text thereof to the Secretariat, so that the latter may distribute it to the delegations no later than at the plenary session at which the instrument in question is to be voted upon. Such reservations and statements shall appear along with the treaty or convention or, in the case of a resolution, in the corresponding minutes.

Official version of the proceedings

Article 82. The General Secretariat shall publish as soon as possible the official version of the proceedings of each Assembly session.

The General Secretariat shall adopt an appropriate system for numbering the resolutions of the General Assembly.

Article 83. The General Secretariat shall send certified copies of the treaties, conventions, and resolutions adopted by the Assembly to the governments of the member states. It shall also register the said treaties and conventions with the United Nations.

XIII. ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS

Article 84. The General Assembly shall consider the recommendations made by the Permanent Council concerning the requests for admission presented by independent American states, in accordance with the provisions of Article 7 of the Charter.

By a vote of two thirds of the member states and following a report by the competent committee, the General Assembly shall determine whether it is appropriate to authorize the Secretary General to permit the applicant state to sign the Charter and for him to accept the deposit of the corresponding instrument of ratification.

XIV. AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Article 85. These Rules of Procedure may be amended by the General Assembly, acting either on its own initiative or on a proposal by the Preparatory Committee or the Permanent Council. For the adoption of a proposed amendment, the vote of a majority of the member states shall be required, except in the case of articles in which a two thirds majority has been established, for the amendment of which that same majority shall be required.

APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ROTATION TO THE SELECTION OF THE PLACE FOR THE REGULAR SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The member states that may wish to make offers of a site shall communicate the offer in writing to the Secretary General of the Organization by the deadline established by the General Assembly for the presentation of proposals.
2. The General Assembly, in deciding upon the offers of a place, shall take into account:
 - a. The principle of equitable geographic distribution;
 - b. The previous sites of sessions of the General Assembly; and
 - c. The services and facilities that the states that have made offers may be able to provide for the session of the Assembly.
3. 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 Permanent Council may decide, not more than six months or less than five months in advance of the date, that the Assembly shall meet at one of the places so offered, taking into account the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

**PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING THE MEMBERS
OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL**

1. The General Secretariat shall prepare and distribute a list containing the names of the candidates presented by the governments of the member states, following the alphabetical order of the names of the proposing states in Spanish.
2. Before proceeding to the voting, the president shall designate two representatives as tellers.
3. There shall be a ballot, which shall contain the list of candidates referred to in paragraph 1. Voters may not vote for more than one candidate. The voting shall be secret.
4. The tellers shall declare void any ballots that are signed, those marked for more than one candidate, and those on which the intent of the voter cannot be clearly ascertained.
5. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes shall be declared elected, provided the candidate receives the votes of an absolute majority of the member states.
6. If none of the candidates receives the required majority on the first ballot, as many additional ballots shall be taken as are needed to fill the vacant post. These ballots shall be confined to the candidates who received the most votes on the previous ballot.
7. When a member of the Tribunal must be elected to complete the term of a member who, for whatever reason, ceases to be a member before the normal expiration of his term, this procedure, insofar as applicable, shall be in accordance with the provisions of Articles 73, 74, and 75 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

**PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING MEMBERS OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN JURIDICAL COMMITTEE IN
THE CASE OF THE NORMAL EXPIRATION
OF THEIR TERMS OF OFFICE**

1. The General Secretariat shall prepare and distribute a list containing the names of the candidates presented by the governments of the member states, following the alphabetical order of the names of the proposing states in Spanish.
2. Before proceeding to the voting, the president shall designate two representatives as tellers.
3. The delegations shall mark on the list of candidates the names of those persons they are voting for, but may not vote for more than three candidates.
4. The ballots shall be deposited in the ballot box, which the Secretariat shall circulate.
5. The tellers shall declare void any ballots that are signed, any in which the intent of the voter cannot be clearly ascertained, and any on which more than three candidates have been marked.
6. In accordance with Article 73 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, those candidates who have received the largest number of votes shall be declared elected, provided that they have obtained the votes of at least an absolute majority of the member states.
7. If the three members are not elected on the first ballot, as many additional ballots shall be taken as may be necessary in order to elect the remaining members. For these ballots the number of candidates shall not be more than twice the number of posts remaining to be filled and shall be restricted to the candidates who have obtained the largest number of votes on the immediately preceding ballot, without obtaining the required absolute majority. In the event that there is a tie among the candidates such that the number of candidates is more than twice the number of posts remaining to be filled, a vote shall first be taken to break the tie, for the sole purpose of reducing the number of candidates to no more than twice the number of posts remaining to be filled.
8. If two or more candidates have obtained the same number of votes, with the majority required for election, and their number is greater than the number of posts remaining to be filled, as many additional ballots as may be necessary shall be taken in order to settle the tie.
9. Since there cannot be more than one member of any one nationality on the Inter-American Juridical Committee, if two candidates of the same nationality should obtain the required majority and the same number of votes, a vote shall be taken to break the tie.

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 over 41 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 regular sessions 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 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 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 is 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.

