



North American Invitational Model United Nations

PARLIAMMENTARY PROCEDURES

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INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

New to Model UN? Looking to further familiarize yourself with Parliamentary Procedures? Before consulting this section, we recommend reading through the NAIMUN Training Guide. Don't worry if the terms below don't make sense – the Training Guide will provide context for the jargon below.

Below you will find information on the basics of parliamentary procedure, the rules which structure and govern debate in committee. Most NAIMUN committees follow Robert's Rules of Order. If, however, you will be participating in an unconventional committee or a court, please note that your Chair will likely delineate an alternate set of rules, which will be outlined in your background guide. If you have any questions about rules specific to your committee, don't hesitate to contact your Under-Secretaries General or Chair prior to the conference.

For crisis-specific parliamentary procedures, in addition to the following rules below, please check [Crisis Procedures](#).

NAIMUN will also be offering free, virtual trainings for our delegates through the NAIMUN Training and Interactive Program with the Secretariat (TIPS) Program. Read more about TIPS [here](#).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
contact the Secretary-General of
NAIMUN at naimunsg@modelun.org
or the Director-General at
naimundg@modelun.org

ROLL CALL

Be on time for roll call, which is taken at the start of each committee session. If you are late, send a note to the Dais to let them know of your presence, since it affects voting calculations.

During Roll Call, you may vote:

1. “Present.”
2. “Present and voting.” By voting “present and voting” a delegation may not abstain in any subsequent votes but can only vote yes or no.

SETTING THE AGENDA

After the Dais has delivered their introductory information and expectations, the first task of the committee is to Set the Agenda — pick the topic for subsequent debate. Before motions to Set the Agenda will be entertained, the Chair will consider motions to open the Primary Speaker’s List, a perpetuating document the Chair will default to when all other motions fail.

OPENING THE PRIMARY SPEAKER’S LIST:

- Requires a motion and a majority vote.

SAY: “Motion to open the Speaker’s List for the purpose of setting the agenda.”

SETTING THE SPEAKING TIME

- Speaker’s List time runs from one to two minutes.
- Requires two speakers for and two against with a 30-second speaking time.
- Requires a simple majority to pass.
- The speaking time for the Speaker’s List can be changed with a later motion that passes with simple majority.

SAY: “Motion to set the speaking time at 90 seconds.”

THE PRIMARY SPEAKER'S LIST

- Once the Speaker's List is open, debate to set the agenda begins.
- The Speaker's List is a perpetuating document – send a note to the Dais to be added! If the Speaker's List ever expires, committee automatically enters Voting Procedure, so the Speaker's List must remain populated at all times.

Example: SPEAKER'S LIST – Jordan, Afghanistan, China, Honduras, Kenya, Germany, Argentina, Romania, United States.

At Chair's discretion, motions to Set the Agenda will be entertained after a number of speeches off of the Speaker's List.

OPENING THE SECONDARY SPEAKER'S LIST

- After the agenda has been set, the Dais will discard the Primary Speaker's List and open the Secondary Speaker's List that will remain through the duration of the topic.
- The Secondary Speaker's List is functionally no different than the Primary Speaker's List— it is a procedural formality following setting the agenda.

YIELDS

A yield is a way to handle remaining speaking time— if a delegate speaks for 30 seconds during a 1 minute speaking time, they may yield the remaining 30 seconds following the procedures outlined below. Yields can only be made when delegates are called from the Speaker's List, and must be specified before a delegate begins speaking. Yields during moderated caucus speeches are not part of parliamentary procedure. If the delegate fails to specify a yield, the yield is defaulted to the Chair (See A).

A. "I YIELD MY TIME TO THE CHAIR."

- Remaining time is unused.

B. "I YIELD MY TIME TO QUESTIONS."

- Chair will call on a delegate to ask the speaker a question.
- Speaker can only respond for the amount of time unused.
- No back-and-forth dialogue between delegates is permitted.

C. "I YIELD MY TIME TO [COUNTRY'S NAME]."

- If a delegate (Oman) yields the remainder of their time to another country (Yemen), that country must accept the yield.
- Double Yields are not allowed: the country yielded to (Yemen) by the original speaker (Oman) cannot make another yield to a third country (for example, Algeria).

POINTS

Points give delegates a voice about administrative matters not related to the substance of the committee. In large committees, delegates should raise their placards and expect to be recognized by the chair before stating a point. In smaller committees, and at the Chair's discretion, delegates are able to verbalize points without being recognized, speaking up at their own volition.

POINT OF ORDER

- Tool to point out a discrepancy in parliamentary procedure or another delegate's actions.
- May interrupt a speaker.

Example: "Point of Order? The delegate is discussing resolution 3, but only 1 and 2 have been presented."

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

- Tool to ensure that you have the resources necessary for committee.
- May not interrupt a speaker.

Example: "Point of Personal Privilege? Can the Dais please speak up? We can't hear the Chair in the back."

POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

- Tool to ask the Dais to clarify a motion made, a vote up for consideration, or any other step of parliamentary procedure.
- May not interrupt a speaker.

Example: “Point of Parliamentary Inquiry? Are we voting on Resolution 1.2 or 1.4?”

CAUCUSING

MODERATED CAUCUS

- Moderated caucuses are the most common form of formal debate.
- The moderated caucus allows countries that are low on the Speaker’s List to have the opportunity to speak by temporarily suspending the Speaker’s List and allowing the chair to call on countries at their discretion.
- The delegate who proposed the caucus should specify the topic of discussion, specify the duration (not to exceed 20 minutes), and speaking time per delegate.
- To signal your desire to speak, simply raise your placard.
- Delegates should remain in their seats during a moderated caucus and maintain decorum, as during formal debate.

SAY: “Motion for a ten-minute moderated caucus with 30-second speaking times for the purpose of discussing _____.”

UNMODERATED CAUCUS

- Unmoderated caucuses are considered informal debate.
- A motion for an unmoderated caucus, which requires a majority to pass, allows the suspension of the rules and of formal debate.
- Delegates may leave their seats and discuss topics freely.
- The delegate making the motion must specify a total time for the proposed caucus, not to exceed 20 minutes.
- The Chair reserves the right to rule such a motion out of order.
- This is an ideal time to draft resolutions and develop relationships with fellow countries.

SAY: “Motion for a ten-minute unmoderated caucus.”

RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

RESOLUTIONS

- Purpose: creating innovative solutions to the topics discussed in debate.
- Each delegation can sponsor or sign as many resolutions as they wish.
- Sponsors are countries who agree with, and contribute to the content of the resolution or draft and intend to support it.
- Signatories are countries who would like to see the draft debated but do not necessarily support all the elements of the resolution.
- A signatory of a resolution does not have to vote in favor of the resolution.
- Require 20% +1 of the committee to sign on to a resolution either as a sponsor or as a signatory.
- Each resolution requires at least 2 sponsors.
- Both resolutions and amendments alike require a simple majority to pass.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENTS

- Approved by all sponsors of the resolution.
- Most commonly non-contentious, non-substantive matters. Substantive matters that alter the content of the resolution.
- Automatically added without a vote as soon as they are submitted to the Dais.

UNFRIENDLY AMENDMENTS

- 12.5% +1 of the committee must sponsor or sign before being presented to the Chair.
- Require two speakers for and two speakers against and a majority vote before being added to the draft resolution.

SUBMITTING A RESOLUTION

- Considered a “working paper” until submitted to the Dais.
- Considered a “draft resolution” until presented to the committee.
- Draft resolutions are presented to the committee in the order they were submitted.
- Draft resolutions are named based on the topics being discussed (eg. Resolution 1.1 would be the first resolution submitted for Topic 1).

PRESENTING A RESOLUTION

- Suspension of the rules at Chair’s discretion.
- At the Chair’s discretion, all the sponsors read the resolution to the committee, one sponsor will read the resolution to the committee, the Dias may read the resolution to the committee, or a quiet reading period may be entertained, after which a Question & Answer Panel is held.

QUESTION & ANSWER

- A delegate motions for Q&A with a specified length of time. Only Sponsor answers to questions from other delegates fielded by the Chair, detract from this overall time.
- A select number of sponsors, at the Chair’s discretion, will participate in Q&A.
- Non-substantive questions are used to question and correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, or to clarify (without changing) any part of a draft resolution.
- Substantive questions wish to question the meaning and intentions of the draft resolution.

VOTING

STRAW POLL

- A non-binding poll vote on a draft resolution or resolution, that allows delegates to get a feel for the popularity of an issue.

MOVING INTO VOTING PROCEDURE

- Requires two speakers for and two against and 2/3 in favor to pass.
- Once the body has voted affirmatively to close debate, the committee immediately moves into voting procedure.

SAY: "Motion to close debate."

VOTING PROCEDURE

NO ONE MAY ENTER OR LEAVE THE ROOM DURING THE ENTIRETY OF VOTING PROCEDURE.

- Each resolution is voted on in the order that it was presented unless rearranged through a motion (see below).
- Voting on unfriendly amendments occurs before voting on the resolution as a whole.
- Each resolution is passed by a simple majority.
- May vote yes, no, yes with rights, no with rights, abstain.
- Voting with rights means that a delegation is voting contrary to its expected vote based on its declared foreign policy. Delegations voting with rights may give a speech at the conclusion of voting giving their reasoning for such a vote. It is not suggested that you vote with rights; rather, vote according to policy!

MOTIONS SPECIFIC TO VOTING

- “Motion for a roll call vote.” Roll call votes conduct voting similar to Roll call attendance at the beginning of each session.
- “Motion to reorder the resolutions.” This motion alters the order in which the committee will vote on the resolutions— the order is at the discretion of the delegate who presents the motion.
- “Motion to divide the question.” Dividing the question omits specific lines, sub-clauses, or clauses from an entire resolution to be voted on separately from the original document. Divided-out clauses may fail and the resolution at large may subsequently pass. If the resolution fails, divided-out clauses that passed beforehand are no longer enacted.

MORE QUESTIONS?

For extra preparation and detailed explanations, see [Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief](#) by [William J. Evans](#), [Daniel H. Honemann](#), [Henry M. Robert](#), [Thomas J. Balch](#).

The Director-General will also hold a separate Parliamentary Procedure Training Session prior to Opening Ceremonies on Thursday to further explain Robert’s Rules of Order and answer any remaining questions.

CLOSING REMARKS

We hope that this guide will help you in all committee settings at NAIMUN and beyond. While parliamentary procedures may be confusing at first, after a weekend of competition and debate they will become incredibly intuitive. Mastering parliamentary procedures takes time, and your Chair will be there to guide committee with their extensive knowledge and experience. Most importantly, participate in formal and informal debate, speak up during suspensions, make your ideas and solutions heard. Come prepared for lively debate no matter which committee you find yourself in at NAIMUN in February, and we look forward to welcoming you to Washington D.C.

**THE CONTENT OF THIS
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