
Annex III

Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies

I. General

1. The work of the Commission, its subsidiary bodies and the secretariat is based on the United Nations Charter, the Terms of Reference of ECE as adopted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Rules of Procedure of ECE, relevant United Nations rules and regulations, and is in line with these guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies and the secretariat. It should be ensured, at all administrative levels of the secretariat and for all bodies of the Commission, that the work is carried out in a way that is member driven, participatory, consensus-oriented, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, results-oriented and accountable. The Commission and its subsidiary bodies should continue their existing practice of inviting, without a right to vote, other relevant stakeholders such as international organizations, private sector representatives, members of academia or representatives of civil society.

II. Rules of procedure

2. All Sectoral Committees and other subsidiary bodies may adopt their own Rules of Procedure on the basis of ECE Rules of Procedure and, where applicable, Rules of Procedure of ECOSOC, taking into account these guidelines. Otherwise it will be presumed that they are governed by the Rules of Procedure of the Commission and, where applicable, Rules of Procedure of ECOSOC and taking into account these guidelines *mutatis mutandis*.

III. Communication with the member States

3. The secretariat will continue to communicate with the member States in accordance with the official channels of communication. In cases where the secretariat communicates directly with national experts and counterparts, all correspondence will be copied to the Permanent Representations. Similarly, when the secretariat requires assistance in identifying national experts, it will communicate with the line ministries with a copy to the Permanent Representations.

IV. Accreditation process for participants/representatives to intergovernmental bodies

4. In meetings of subsidiary bodies, member States shall be represented by officially designated representatives whose names shall be communicated to the secretariat by the respective Permanent Representations, and made available by the secretariat.

5. Officially designated representatives of the member States who work in the Geneva Permanent Representations and are duly authorized, including persons accredited to the Executive Committee, may take part in the meetings without any restrictions to participate in the discussion and in the decision-making process.

6. Officially designated representatives and other participants to all bodies of the ECE should be registered by the secretariat in the respective lists of participants which will be communicated to the Permanent Representations.

V. Nomination and election of Chairpersons and other members of the Bureaux of intergovernmental bodies

7. Candidates for the Bureaux of the Sectoral Committees and other subsidiary bodies shall be nominated by member States based on the person's expertise, professionalism, and expected support from the membership. The candidatures for election should be made available to all member States well in advance of the elections and preferably agreed upon.

8. The members of the Bureaux shall be elected by the respective body according to the relevant Rules of Procedure and following consultations among member States. Elected Bureau members serve collectively in the interest of all member States. In the absence of Rules of Procedure of such body, the composition of the Bureau should take into account expertise, with due regard to as wide a geographical representation as possible; the term of office should be up to two years. Bureau members including the Chair can be re-elected for an additional term.

9. A Bureau may invite major stakeholders active in the area of the subprogramme to attend the meetings of the Bureau and contribute to its work, without the right to vote.

VI. Functions of the Bureaux

10. The key functions of the Bureaux are:

(a) To monitor and ensure implementation of the programme of work and of past decisions and recommendations during intersessional periods;

(b) To ensure effective and transparent preparations of forthcoming sessions and, for that purpose, to collectively outreach and consult with all member States, and other stakeholders as appropriate;

(c) To ensure effective conduct of business during the sessions in full compliance with their respective Rules of Procedure, taking into account these guidelines, and to facilitate reaching agreement on decisions and recommendations.

11. In addition to these tasks, the Bureaux help the consensus-building process by means of transparent and inclusive consultations on draft outcomes of the subsidiary bodies, including draft decisions, conclusions and recommendations that might be proposed by representatives of member States.

12. The Bureaux do not adopt the conclusions, recommendations, decisions and meeting reports of the subsidiary bodies.

13. In its activities the Bureaux should coordinate with the secretariat on all relevant issues.

VII. Procedures for the adoption of decisions and reports of intergovernmental bodies

14. When taking a decision, the Commission and its subsidiary bodies shall continue their existing practice of making every effort to reach a consensus.

On draft decisions

15. Without prejudice to the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, any draft conclusions, recommendations or decisions which ECE bodies within their competence are expected to discuss and adopt at their meetings, should be prepared in line with items 9 to

12 and distributed by the secretariat to all participants and Geneva Permanent Representations at least ten days before the start of the meeting, for information, so as to allow participants to finalize their position during the meeting in order to adopt conclusions, recommendations and decisions. This does not prejudice the possibility for member States to propose additional agenda items, draft conclusions, recommendations or decisions at the meeting. Should the submission of draft proposals not be possible ten days prior to a meeting, the prevailing Rules of Procedure will be used to determine how such draft proposals will be considered in order not to block the decision-making process.

16. The secretariat should make available only those draft conclusions, recommendations or decisions for discussion and adoption that are proposed by one or more member States.

17. The secretariat can make proposals on administrative issues within its prerogatives.

18. Draft conclusions, recommendations and decisions are formally adopted by the subsidiary body at the end of the session. Drafts should be projected on a screen, where possible, and read out by the Chair.

19. If a draft conclusion, recommendation or decision cannot be adopted at the meeting for technical reasons, the subsidiary body may decide to circulate it to all Geneva Permanent Representations for subsequent approval.

On draft reports

20. A draft report of the meeting, which reflects in a concise and factual manner the discussion and the views expressed by participants, should be circulated well in advance of the end of the meeting for comments and adoption by member States at the end of the meeting.

21. If the draft report cannot be circulated at or adopted during the meeting for technical reasons, the subsidiary body may decide to distribute it to all Geneva Permanent Representations for subsequent approval.
