

# Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

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The Rules of Procedure for crisis committees and courts are at the discretion of the directors. However, all delegates are asked to read all the rules included in this guide.

1. **Scope:** These rules shall be self-sufficient, and shall be considered adopted in advance of sessions. These rules shall apply to all sessions of the committees conducted in English (with the exception of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights). No other rules of procedure shall apply to these committees.
2. **Language:** Committees at HACIA will be run in their corresponding language (English or Spanish). This rule may be suspended with the unanimous consent of all committee delegates and the Co-Chairs.
3. **Credentials:** The credentials of all delegation members shall be issued upon arrival and registration at the conference and assumed to be in order unless a member of HACIA Democracy's Staff is informed of the error.
4. **Powers of Committee Chairs:** Co-Chairs shall preside over all sessions of committee. These officers shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting; moderate discussions; accord the right to speak; decide on points of order; and generally comply with and enforce the provisions of these rules of procedure. Only one Co-Chair shall moderate at any given time and will be referred to within these rules as the Acting Chair.
5. **Statements by the Board of Directors:** Any member of the HACIA Democracy Board of Directors may at any time make either oral or written statements to the committee.
6. **Members:** All delegation members shall attend every session of their respective committees unless excused by a Co-Chair of their committee. Delegates shall vote on each procedural question unless so excused. Delegates may not authorize other individuals to cast their votes or record their presence. No delegate shall be recognized without his or her credentials and placard, unless granted special concession by the Acting Chair.
7. **Quorum:** A majority of the committee delegates shall constitute a quorum at all committee meetings. No substantive vote may be taken in the absence of a quorum, although general debate can proceed at the discretion of the Acting Chair.
8. **Courtesy:** All delegates shall show courtesy and respect to conference staff and to other delegates. No delegate shall refer offensively to any other delegate or group represented in the committee. The Acting Chair shall call to order any delegate who fails to comply with this rule.

## Introductory Procedure

9. **Introductory Business:** At the first meeting of all committee sessions, the order of business shall include the following:
  - a. *Opening statement by committee Co-Chairs*
  - b. *Announcement of quorum finding*

*c. Motion to set the agenda*

10. **Announcement of Quorum Finding:** Roll shall be called to establish the existence of a quorum. The Acting Chair will then announce the number of members present and voting in the total body and whether or not that number constitutes a quorum.
11. **Agenda:** After a quorum has been found and the committee declared open, the next order of business in the initial committee meeting shall be a motion to set the agenda. The only motion in order at this time will be a motion to set the agenda, which shall be in the following form, “I move that Topic X be placed first on the agenda.” Such a motion requires a second and is debatable. A speaker’s list shall be drawn up with speakers speaking for and against the motion. A motion to close debate shall be in order after the committee has heard one speaker for the motion and one against the motion. A simple majority shall be required to adopt the agenda. A motion to set the agenda to another topic is in order only after the Committee has either adopted or rejected a bill or resolution on the current topic, except if the President requests that the committee take action on an emergency situation.

## General Debate

12. **Speakers List:** After the agenda has been determined, a speakers list shall be established for the purpose of general debate on the topic under discussion. Any delegate wishing to place his or her name on the speakers list will be so recognized by the Acting Chair at his or her discretion.
13. **Speeches:** No delegate may address the committee without having previously obtained the permission of the Acting Chair. Chairs may call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
14. **Time Limit on Speeches:** The Acting Chair may limit the time allotted to each speaker in general debate and on both substantive and procedural motions. If a delegate exceeds the allotted time, the Acting Chair shall call the speaker to order without delay.
15. **Yields of Time:** A delegate granted the right to speak on a substantive issue may yield any remaining time in one of three ways:
  - a. **Yield to another delegate**, *who may then rise and address the committee for the remaining time.*
  - b. **Yield to questions**, *whereby the Acting Chair will recognize questions from the floor. Acting Chairs may, at their discretion, call to order any delegate whose question is leading or rhetorical, and not designed to elicit information. Only the speaker’s answers to questions will be deducted from their remaining time*
  - c. **Yield to the chair**, *whereby the speaker’s time is ended, and the floor is open to procedural motions or further speakers.*

Only one yield is allowed. A speaker who is yielded to may not yield at all. Yields are in order only on substantive speeches.

16. **Comments:** If a substantive speech involves no yields, delegates, other than the initial speaker, may make a motion to comment for no more than thirty seconds on the specific content of the speech just completed. There is a maximum of two comments allowed, regardless of the remaining time. No delegate may yield time allotted for a comment. No comments shall be in order during debate on a procedural motion.
17. **Motion for Testimony:** When the floor is open, the Acting Chair or any delegate may rise to ask that the

Committee hear the testimony of an expert on the issue before the committee. This expert may be a delegate from another Committee, a conference staff member, or a special observer. The motion requires a second, is not debatable, and requires the vote of a majority of the committee to pass. The Acting Chair may limit the time that an expert may testify as well as time for follow-up questions. The Acting Chair may also rule such a motion out of order at any time. Such a decision is not subject to appeal.

## Points and Motions

18. **Point of Order:** A delegate may rise to a Point of Order if he or she feels that the rules of procedure are not being followed correctly. The Acting Chair shall decide on questions of order in accordance with these rules of procedure. The Acting Chair may rule out of order any improper or dilatory motion. While raising a point of order, a delegate may not go into the substance of the matter under discussion. Points of order may only interrupt a speaker when the speech itself is out of order.
19. **Point of Personal Privilege:** When necessary, a delegate may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege to request the correction of conditions impairing his or her personal comfort. Such questions shall have precedence over all others and shall be resolved by the Acting Chair. A point of personal privilege may interrupt a speaker, but should be so used with considerable discretion.
20. **Point of Parliamentary Inquiry:** When the floor is open, a delegate may rise under this point to ask the Acting Chair a question regarding the rules of procedure.
21. **Motion to Adjourn or Suspend the Meeting:** When the floor is open, a delegate may move for the suspension of the meeting, to suspend all committee functions until the next committee meeting, or the adjournment of the meeting, to adjourn all committee functions for the duration of the conference and the yearly session. Such motions are not debatable and shall be put to an immediate vote. Such motions require a majority to pass and may be ruled out of order at the discretion of the Acting Chair. Such rulings are unappealable.
22. **Motion to Caucus:** A motion to caucus is in order any time when the floor is open and prior to a motion to close debate. The delegate must explain the purpose of the caucus and specify a time limit not exceeding twenty minutes. The motion shall immediately be put to a vote. A majority of members present and voting is required for passage. The Acting Chair may rule this motion out of order at any time. Such a decision is not subject to appeal.
23. **Moderated Caucus:** In a moderated caucus, the Chair departs momentarily from the speakers' list and recognizes delegates to speak from their seats. It is particularly useful at moments of faster-paced discussion, which would be hindered by regular speakers' list expositions. A motion to a moderated caucus is made in the same way as a motion to caucus. The Chair may rule the motion out of order at any time, and his or her decision is not subject to appeal.
24. **Right of Reply:** If a delegate feels that another delegate has insulted his or her personal or national integrity, he or she may petition the Acting Chair for a right of reply. A right of reply must be submitted in writing to the Chair, explaining the incident. If the Chair grants the right of reply, he or she will ask the delegate who made the offensive comment to apologize. A right of reply to a right of reply is not in order. Moreover, the decision of the Chair to grant a right of reply or not is unappealable.
25. **Motion to Close Debate:** When the floor is open, a delegate may move to close debate on any substantive or procedural matter under discussion. The Acting Chair may recognize up to two speakers opposed to the

motion. No speaker in favor of the motion shall be recognized. Closure of debate requires the support of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

26. **Motion to Suspend Debate:** When the floor is open, a delegate may move to suspend debate on a topic, bill, or amendment currently before the committee. The motion requires a two-thirds vote to pass and shall be debatable to the extent that the Acting Chair will entertain one speech for and one against the motion. No debate or action shall be allowed on any matter on which debate has been suspended.
27. **Motion to Resume Debate:** A motion to resume debate on a topic, bill, or amendment on which debate has been suspended shall require a majority vote to pass and shall be debatable to the extent of one speaker for and one speaker against the motion. Passage of such a motion shall return the committee to the docket and speakers list that existed before the suspension of debate.
28. **Motion to Appeal:** Any decision of the Acting Chair, except for those that are explicitly stated to be unappealable, may be appealed immediately by a delegate. The Acting Chair may speak briefly in defense of the ruling. The appeal shall then be put to a vote, and the decision of the Chair shall stand unless overruled by a majority of those members present and voting. The Director's decision not to sign a bill is not appealable. A Yes vote indicates support of the Chair's ruling, whereas a No vote means support of the appeal. The Chair's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of No votes.

## Substantive Proposals

29. **Working Papers:** Delegates may propose working papers for committee consideration. Working papers are intended to aid the committee in its discussion and formulation of bills and need not be written in a specific format. Working papers require the signature of the Acting Chairs to be distributed to the committee and do not require formal introduction.
30. **Resolutions:** All resolutions shall require the signature of the Co-Chairs for distribution to the committee. In order to obtain the Co-Chairs' signatures, the proposed document must bear the signatures of other five members of the committee. The Acting Chair may modify the number of required signatories, and this action is not subject to appeal.
31. **Introduction of Resolutions:** Once a bill has been approved by the Co-Chairs, signed, and distributed to members of the committee, a delegate may move to introduce the bill to the committee. The delegate shall be recognized to speak, but only to read or summarize the operative clauses of the bill. After this summary, the Acting Chair shall call for a vote to introduce the bill. In order to pass, the motion requires the vote of a majority of the committee. A vote in favor of introducing the bill is no commitment to support it; instead, it means that the delegate agrees to discuss it on the floor. If the motion passes, the Chair will then open a speakers' list for, against, and about the resolution. As with setting the agenda, the speakers' list will include a minimum of two speakers for and two speakers against moving to vote on the bill; it is left to the discretion of the Acting Chair to allow for more speakers on either side if deemed necessary. A motion to close debate on the bill is in order after two speakers of each side have been heard. Upon the passage of such a motion, the committee will move to a direct vote on the bill.
32. **Competence:** A motion to question the competence of the Committee to discuss a resolution or amendment is in order only immediately after the resolution has been introduced. The motion requires a majority to pass and is debatable to the extent of one speaker for and one against.

33. **Amendments:** Delegates may amend any bill which has been introduced. An amendment must have the approval of the Co-Chairs and the signatures of three members of the committee to be distributed to the committee. The Acting Chair may modify the number of required signatories, and this action is not subject to appeal. Once the amendment has been distributed, a delegate may move to introduce the amendment. After the proponent of the motion to introduce the amendment is recognized for the sole purpose of reading or summarizing the amendment, a majority vote of the committee shall be required to introduce the amendment. This motion is not debatable. After an amendment is introduced, general debate shall be suspended and a speakers list drawn up for and against the amendment. A motion to close debate shall be in order after at least one speaker has been heard both for and against the amendment. Upon the passage of such a motion, the committee will move to a direct vote on the amendment. A motion to amend an amendment is not in order. Once the committee has acted on the amendment, general debate shall resume. If an amendment is approved, it is considered an integral part of the text of the bill under consideration.

## Voting

34. **Voting:** Each committee delegate shall have one vote. Votes shall be taken by a show of placards, except in the case of a roll call vote. A two-thirds majority will be required to pass any bill or amendment. This designation is not subject to appeal. “Members present and voting” shall be defined as members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting on substantive matters are considered as not voting for the purposes of calculating committee majorities.
35. **Roll Call Voting:** After debate is closed on a bill or resolution or on an amendment, any delegate may request a roll call vote. Such a motion may be made from the floor and must be seconded by one-fourth of the committee. In a roll-call vote, the Acting Chair shall call the roll in alphabetical order, starting with a country picked at random. Delegates may vote Yes, No, Abstain, or Pass. A delegate who passes during the first sequence of the roll call must vote during the second sequence. Delegates may request the right to explain their votes during either the first or second sequence. The Acting Chair shall then call for changes of votes. Delegates may not request explanations at this time. Then, all delegates who requested an explanation shall be granted the right to briefly explain their votes. The Acting Chair shall then announce the outcome of the vote. Motions for roll call votes on procedural motions are out of order. Refer to the Roll Call Voting chart in the appendix of this Staff Guide.
36. **Reconsideration:** A motion to reconsider is in order after a bill or amendment has been rejected, and must be made by a delegate who voted on the prevailing side of the original vote. The Acting Chair shall recognize up to two speakers opposing the motion, after which the motion to reconsider shall be put to an immediate vote. A two-thirds majority of the members present and voting is required for reconsideration.
37. **Precedence:** Points and motions shall be considered in the following order:
1. Point of Personal Privilege
  2. Point of Order
  3. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry
  4. Motion to Set the Agenda
  5. Motion to Appeal a Decision of the Chair
  6. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting
  7. Motion to Suspend the Meeting
  8. Motion to Caucus
  9. Motion for Testimony
  10. Motion to Close Debate
  11. Motion to Suspend Debate
  12. Motion to Withdraw a Bill or Amendment

13. Motion to Introduce an Amendment

14. Motion to Introduce a Bill

15. Motion to Resume Debate

16. Motion to Reconsider Yields: May be made only after substantive speeches:

(1) to another delegate;

(2) to questions; and

(3) to the Chair. No delegate initially yielded to may yield. Two comments are in order after substantive speeches if no yield is made.

# Quick Reference Chart



Rules are in order of descending order of precedence from top of chart to bottom.

#	Motion	Debatte	Vote	Second	Notes
19	Point of Personal Privilege				May Interrupt speaker in extraordinary cases if delegate is unable to participate in committee business.
18	Point of Order				Used if delegate thinks rules of procedure are being violated. May interrupt speaker.
20	Point of Parliamentary Inquiry				Used to ask Co-Chair about parliamentary procedure. May not interrupt speaker.
11	Motion to Set the Agenda		1/2	Yes	Speakers' list drawn up for and against motion. Motion to close debate in order only after 1+ / 1-. Motion to set agenda to a second topic in order only after committee has adopted or rejected bill/resolution on first issue, unless President requests emergency action.
21	Motion to Appeal a Decision of the Chair	Chair	1/2		Co-Chair is only speaker and defends ruling. "Yes" = Co-Chair's decision overturned. "No" = upheld
22	Motion to Adjourn the Meeting	None	1/2		Only in order at the end of the final committee session.
22	Motion to Suspend the Meeting	None	1/2		In order at the end of all sessions except final session.
23	Motion to Caucus	None	1/2		Requires purpose and time limit; maximum 20 minutes. Can be moderated (directed by Chair) or unmoderated (free-form).
17	Motion for Testimony	N/A	1/2	Yes	
24	Motion to Close Debate	0+ / 2-	2/3		Must be made in reference to a particular bill, resolution, constitutional plan, or amendment. Once debate is closed, committee moves to immediate vote on item in question.
25	Motion to Suspend Debate	1+ / 1-	2/3		Must be made in reference to a particular topic, bill, resolution, constitutional plan, or amendment.
31	Motion to Withdraw a Bill or Amendment	Original sponsor	none		Withdrawn item can be introduced at any time.
33	Motion to Introduce an Amendment	Sponsor	1/2		Requires signature of 3 delegates and the Co-Chairs. After amendment is introduced, a new speakers' list for and against the amendment is drawn up.
31	Motion to Introduce a Bill, Resolution, or Constitutional Plan	Sponsor	1/2		Requires signature of 5 delegates and the Co-Chairs. Delegates should not refer to bill, resolution, or constitutional plan in their speeches until it is formally introduced into committee.
27	Motion to Resume Debate	1+ / 1-	1/2		Undoes a Motion to Suspend Debate
37	Motion to Reconsider	0+ / 2-	2/3		Must be made by delegate on prevailing side of original vote.

**Yields:** May be made only after substantive speeches (1) to another delegate; (2) to questions; and (3) to the Chair. No delegate initially yielded to may yield. Two comments are in order after substantive speeches if no yield is made.

**Roll Call Vote:** Second from 1/4 committee. 1st round: yes (with/without privileges), no (with/without privileges), abstain, or pass. 2nd round: those who passed must vote, no passes, requests for privileges granted. 3rd round: final vote changes allowed, no privileges. Time for speaking privileges follows the end of the vote.





# Sample Resolution



This sample resolution is a modified version of OAS Permanent Council Resolution 707, adopted on October 16, 1997.

Committee: OAS Permanent Council  
Topic: Solidarity with Colombian Democracy  
Sponsors: Brazil, Panama, Nicaragua

The Permanent Council,

Recalling that the Charter of the Organization of American States establishes that representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace, and development of the region;

Reaffirming that the Charter further establishes, as one of its essential purposes, the promotion and consolidation of representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention;

Regretting that despite efforts by the Colombian Government, a series of violent acts is having a negative impact on the climate of freedom needed for Colombian citizens to exercise their right to elect departmental and municipal officials on October 26;

1. Expresses its fullest possible solidarity with the people and Government of Colombia so that the forthcoming elections may be held in a climate of peace and stability and, in particular, so that the rights of all Colombians to elect officials and to be elected may be respected;
2. Rejects violence once again as a means of settling conflicts and condemns any threat or act of intimidation against the electoral candidates or against voters during the Colombian electoral process;
3. Supports the efforts made by the Government of Colombia, which, with the participation of different sectors of society, is seeking to bring to a halt the armed conflict in Colombia through dialogue and negotiation, so as to bring about a just and lasting peace

