

Guidelines for Discussion and Debate in Council

Most discussion in the Council meeting is informal, with decisions often made by voice vote or show of voting cards without an official count. However, for nonscientific matters that may require extended debate and a formal vote by delegations [Bylaw 2.2], the procedures for carrying out formal business have sometimes not been entirely clear. The Statutes and Bylaws do not prescribe detailed procedures for conduct of meetings, but they do assign to the President the responsibility for ruling on matters that are not clear or decisive. Under that authority, the President proposes to use the following guidelines for formal consideration of nonscientific matters in Council. The terminology and concepts in these guidelines are based on "Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised," a comprehensive and widely used authority on parliamentary procedure.

1. Business is formally brought before Council by a *motion*. A motion may be made by a delegation and seconded by another delegation, or made by an Officer or other individual presenting a report or recommendation from the Bureau or IUPAC committee. This latter type of motion does not require a second because the matter has already been formally considered and approved by the IUPAC body.
2. When a motion has been accepted by the President, it becomes the *pending business* and is considered the *main motion*. No other independent motion may be accepted until action on the pending main motion has been completed. However, *subsidiary motions*, such as amendments to the pending motion, may be considered. Also, under certain circumstances, the pending business may be interrupted to consider another, usually urgent, matter.
3. The motion should be clearly stated so that the intent is unambiguous. The wording of the motion may be modified by agreement with the maker of the motion before it is formally accepted by the President as pending business. After it becomes pending business, the wording may be modified by unanimous consent or through the amendment process.
4. In the course of debate on the motion, one or more *amendments* may be offered as motions that formally change the wording or even the intent of the pending motion. A motion to amend must be germane [relevant] to the main motion and must be stated clearly so that its effect on the main motion is clear. Usually the amendment will propose to make specific modifications in the language of the main motion or to substitute new language. The President will rule on the admissibility of an amendment in terms of clarity and relevance.
5. A proposed amendment requires a second. Once accepted by the President, the motion to amend becomes the pending business and must be debated and resolved before proceeding to consideration of the main motion. A *secondary amendment* may be offered to a pending *primary amendment*, but the secondary amendment may not be further amended because the parliamentary situation would become too confusing. [Normally, in such circumstances, it is preferable to quickly reject the amendments and main motion with the understanding that an alternative motion will be offered to handle the issue.]
6. The President will make efforts to ensure that all interested delegations have an opportunity to speak on a question and will attempt to avoid repetition or to recognize a given delegation several times. However, he may give the maker of a motion the

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opportunity to respond as often as necessary to questions or to explain points that are not clear.

7. When the President believes that debate has brought out the salient points, he will ask whether Council is ready to vote on the pending matter. Alternatively, any delegation may make a motion for the *previous question* [or “the question”]. This motion is *not* debatable but requires a 2/3 affirmative vote for approval. If approved, debate is terminated, and Council proceeds to vote on the pending motion or amendments in sequence.
8. Once a matter has been decided formally, it may normally not be brought up again for discussion and action. However, when subsequent actions or new information make it desirable to reconsider the matter, a motion [with second] may be accepted to *rescind* or *amend something previously adopted*. The motion is debatable and requires either a 2/3 affirmative vote or a majority of assigned votes for approval.
9. During debate on a main motion, a motion is in order to *refer* the matter to a standing or *ad hoc* committee, usually with instructions to carry out a particular analysis or to report at a specific time. Such a motion takes precedence over pending amendments. It is debatable. If approved, consideration of the main motion ceases, but the matter may be automatically raised again as specified in the motion to refer.
10. Debate on a motion may be interrupted by a *privileged motion*, such as a *point of order* that objects to the procedure or a *point of information*, raising an inquiry on a matter of fact.
11. The President will augment these guidelines as needed.