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Agenda item 19 (a)

Sustainable development: towards the achievement of sustainable development: implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through sustainable consumption and production, building on Agenda 21

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2020

[on the report of the Second Committee ([A/75/457/Add.1](#), para. 14)]

75/212. United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [71/222](#) of 21 December 2016, by which it proclaimed the period from 2018 to 2028 the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”,

Recalling also its resolution [73/226](#) of 20 December 2018 on the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028,

Recalling further Economic and Social Council resolutions [1980/67](#) of 25 July 1980 on international years and anniversaries and [1989/84](#) of 24 May 1989 on guidelines for international decades in economic and social fields and General Assembly resolutions [53/199](#) of 15 December 1998 and [61/185](#) of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years,

Reaffirming its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its



commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also the sustainable development goals and targets related to water resources and sanitation, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and determined to achieve the goal of ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all and other related goals and targets,

Emphasizing that water is critical for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger, that water, ecosystems, energy, food security and nutrition are linked and that water is indispensable for health, well-being and human development, including the empowerment of women, and a vital element of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant goals in the social, environmental and economic fields,

Noting with concern that the world is not on track to achieve water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets at the global level by 2030 at the current rate of progress, which has a tremendous impact on human well-being and on the three dimensions of sustainable development,

Recognizing that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic demonstrates that it is crucial that safe and affordable drinking water, and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene are available, accessible and affordable to all, which is essential to global efforts towards strengthening and achieving universal health coverage, further recognizing that the public health threats of water-borne diseases, pollution and the health impacts of water-related disasters remain imminent, emphasizing in that regard that ecosystem health and human health should be addressed holistically, and recalling that the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation are derived from the right to an adequate standard of living and are inextricably related to the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as well as the right to life and human dignity,

Noting with concern that climate change is one of the factors that can exacerbate the global water stress and the need for climate adaptation strategies to address water issues, and acknowledging that disasters, many of which are exacerbated by climate change and are increasing in frequency and intensity, significantly impede progress towards sustainable development,

Acknowledging that integrated disaster risk-informed water resource management is necessary for successful disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, and recalling the commitment to step up efforts on all fronts to tackle desertification, land degradation, erosion and drought, biodiversity loss and water scarcity, which are seen as major environmental, economic and social challenges for global sustainable development,

Recognizing that water-related issues, including the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets, need to be better reflected in the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming that the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, has a central role in overseeing the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the global level,

Recognizing synergies between the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,¹ the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change² and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,³

Emphasizing that the achievement of the water-related goals and targets would contribute to the successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda,⁴ the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,⁵ the Convention on Biological Diversity⁶ and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,⁷

Recalling the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the General Assembly,⁸ which recognizes the urgent need to accelerate action on all levels and by all stakeholders, in order to fulfil the vision and Goals of the 2030 Agenda,

Recalling also the launch of the ambitious and accelerated response to reach our common vision by 2030, and the pledge to make the coming decade one of action and delivery for sustainable development,

Taking note of the *United Nations World Water Development Report 2020*, the outcome document of the High-level Panel on Water, entitled “Making every drop count: an agenda for water action”, the *Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation*, the outcomes and Ministerial Declaration of the eighth World Water Forum, held in Brasilia from 18 to 23 March 2018, the outcomes of the United Nations special thematic sessions on water and disasters, the outcomes of the Budapest Water Summit in 2019 and the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework,

Noting with concern the findings contained in the special reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C* and *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*,

Taking note of the Final Declaration,⁹ the Co-Chairs’ summary¹⁰ and the Call for Action and Partnerships of the High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, co-organized by the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations, held in Dushanbe from 20 to 22 June 2018,

Welcoming the activities related to water undertaken by Member States, the Secretariat and the organizations of the United Nations system, inter alia, through inter-agency work, as well as contributions from major groups, for the observance and implementation of the Decade,

Recalling the Secretary-General’s Plan: Water Action Decade 2018–2028, launched during the high-level event of the seventy-second session of the General

¹ Resolution [69/313](#), annex.

² See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21, annex.

³ Resolution [69/283](#), annex II.

⁴ Resolution [71/256](#), annex.

⁵ Resolution [69/15](#), annex.

⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

⁸ Resolution [74/4](#), annex.

⁹ [A/73/166](#), annex I.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, annex II.

Assembly, held at the initiative of the President of the General Assembly on 22 March 2018, World Water Day,

1. *Reaffirms* its decision, in accordance with its resolution 71/222 on the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, to review the implementation of the Decade at its seventy-seventh session;

2. *Also reaffirms* its decision, in accordance with its resolution 73/226, to convene, in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023, coinciding with World Water Day, the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, which are a greater focus on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives, on the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects, as well as on the furtherance of cooperation and partnerships at all levels, in order to help to achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹¹ which will result in a summary of the proceedings of the Conference, to be prepared by the President of the General Assembly, as its outcome document, that will feed into the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

3. *Welcomes* the generous offer by the Governments of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands to co-host and assume the costs of the Conference;

4. *Decides* that the Conference shall:

(a) Assess the progress made in the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including the Secretary-General's Plan: Water Action Decade 2018–2028, while reaffirming the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) Identify possible challenges and obstacles related to the achievement of the objectives of the Decade, as well as opportunities and innovative ways and means to support their implementation and acceleration of progress, in order to help to achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(c) Exchange views and develop actions and initiatives needed for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the objectives during the second half of the Decade;

(d) Support further action, initiatives and success, and enhance means of implementation and partnerships as well as cooperation at all relevant levels, including international cooperation, as appropriate, to accelerate the achievement of the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal 6, and promote the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including with regard to sustainable development and integrated management of water resources, including through collaborative approaches;

(e) Share ongoing efforts, best practices and experience gained in the implementation of the objectives of the Decade;

(f) Involve all relevant stakeholders, bringing together Governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, other interested international bodies, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector, philanthropic organizations and other actors to assess challenges and

¹¹ Resolution 70/1.

opportunities relating to, as well as support further action to implement, the objectives of the Decade and the water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(g) Invite States and other relevant stakeholders to announce voluntary commitments contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the Decade;

(h) Contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by providing an input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in accordance with resolutions 67/290 of 9 July 2013, 70/1, and 70/299 of 29 July 2016, unless otherwise agreed in line with the aforementioned resolutions;

5. *Also decides* that the Conference shall elect from among the representatives of participating States the following officers: two Presidents, one from Tajikistan and one from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and 13 Vice-Presidents,¹² one of whom shall be designated as Rapporteur-General;

6. *Further decides* that the Conference shall comprise an opening and a closing ceremony, six plenary meetings and five interactive dialogues in accordance with annex II to the present resolution;

7. *Decides* that interactive dialogues will be held in parallel with the plenary meetings in accordance with annex II to the present resolution;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to appoint a Secretary-General of the Conference to serve as focal point within the Secretariat for providing support to the organization of the Conference;

9. *Decides* that the organizational arrangements for the interactive dialogues will be as follows:

(a) The interactive dialogues shall be collaborative and multi-stakeholder in nature, with due regard for gender and geographical balance;

(b) Proposals for themes of the interactive dialogues will be prepared in a background note by the Secretary-General of the Conference, in consultation with Member States, with the support of UN-Water and relevant United Nations entities;

(c) Each interactive dialogue will be presided over by two co-chairs, one from a developing country and one from a developed country, to be appointed by the Presidents of the Conference;

(d) The Secretary-General of the Conference will select a moderator and up to four panellists for each of the interactive dialogues and will prepare concept papers on each of the themes of the interactive dialogues;

(e) The panel discussions, facilitated by the moderator, will be followed by an interactive debate among States and other relevant stakeholders;

(f) Summaries of the interactive dialogues should be submitted to the Conference at its closing meeting;

10. *Encourages* participation in the Conference at the highest possible level;

11. *Recommends* the provisional agenda set forth in annex I to the present resolution for adoption by the Conference;

¹² Three from each of the following groups: African States; Asia-Pacific States; Eastern European States; Latin American and Caribbean States; and Western European and other States. The election of the Presidents will, however, have the effect of reducing by one the number of Vice-Presidents allocated to the regions from which each of the Presidents is elected.

12. *Decides* that the Conference shall be organized in accordance with the organization of work set forth in annex II to the present resolution;

13. *Recommends* the provisional rules of procedure set forth in annex III to the present resolution for adoption by the Conference, which are based on the established practice of the General Assembly and its conferences;

14. *Reaffirms* its decision, in accordance with its resolution 73/226, that the Conference shall be preceded by regional and global preparatory meetings, as appropriate, and informed by existing water-related meetings at the regional and global levels, and that all costs relating to the Conference and its preparation shall be financed through voluntary contributions, and in this connection requests the Secretary-General to coordinate the preparatory process and to invite all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions and other relevant organizations, within their respective mandates, to provide support to the review process and the Conference;

15. *Reiterates its request* to the President of the General Assembly, through voluntary contributions, to convene in New York, in 2021, a one-day high-level meeting to promote the implementation of the water-related Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, in support of the implementation of the Decade and the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

16. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to hold a one-day preparatory meeting, by November 2022, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, to finalize the themes of the interactive dialogues and other outstanding organizational matters, ensuring the participation of all relevant stakeholders, with interpretation services on an as-available basis;

17. *Welcomes* the generous offer of the Government of Tajikistan to convene a high-level international conference in 2022 in Dushanbe to support an effective preparation for the midterm comprehensive review;

18. *Also welcomes* the contribution from other existing water-related meetings that may serve to provide input for the preparatory process for the Conference, and further welcomes the generous offers of the Government of Portugal to host a high-level symposium on water during the United Nations Ocean Conference, of the Government of Germany to host a high-level conference on water, of the Government of Japan to support the organization of the Asia-Pacific Water Summit in April 2022, of the Government of Senegal to host the ninth World Water Forum from 21 to 26 March 2022, and of other Member States to organize meetings intended to feed into the midterm comprehensive review;

19. *Encourages* Member States, relevant United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as other relevant partners, including the private sector, to continue to contribute to the review and implementation of the Decade, including through capacity-building, in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

20. *Reiterates* the critical importance of effective review of the implementation of the Decade at the national, regional and international levels, as appropriate, and encourages Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, international donors, the private sector, financial institutions, foundations and other donors in a position to do so to support the preparations for the Conference through voluntary contributions to a trust fund in support of preparations for the Conference and to support the participation of representatives of developing countries, priority being given to representatives of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, including coverage of economy-class

air tickets, daily subsistence allowances and terminal expenses, in the meetings of the Conference and its preparatory meeting;

21. *Decides* that the Conference and its preparatory process shall be open to all States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies;

22. *Invites* other relevant stakeholders, including organizations and bodies of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, other interested international bodies and non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector and philanthropic organizations, whose work is relevant to the Conference, accredited in accordance with the provisions set forth in annex II to the present resolution, to participate as observers in the Conference and its preparatory meeting;

23. *Decides* that accreditation to the Conference and the preparatory meeting shall be in accordance with the provisions set forth in annex II to the present resolution;

24. *Stresses* the importance of the participation and full involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including women, children, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, in the implementation of the Decade at all levels;

25. *Invites* the Secretary-General, with the support of UN-Water, to continue taking appropriate steps, within existing resources, to support and organize the activities of the Decade at the global, regional and country levels, taking into account the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and other relevant United Nations structures, and to support those Member States, which lack capacity, at their request, in the implementation of the Decade and the 2030 Agenda;

26. *Reiterates its requests* to the Secretary-General, with the support of UN-Water, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other entities of the United Nations system, to prepare a report for the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, to assess progress in the implementation of the first half of the Decade, including the Secretary-General’s Plan: Water Action Decade 2018–2028, and, taking into account best practices and lessons learned, to identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives needed to overcome them during the second half of the Decade and activities planned by Member States, the Secretary-General and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, as appropriate, which will serve as an input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

*48th plenary meeting
21 December 2020*

Annex I

Provisional agenda of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028

New York, 22 to 24 March 2023

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Election of the two Presidents.

3. Adoption of the rules of procedure.
4. Adoption of the agenda of the Conference.
5. Election of officers other than the Presidents.
6. Organization of work, including the establishment of subsidiary organs, and other organizational matters.
7. Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
 - (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee;
 - (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.
8. General debate.
9. Interactive dialogues.
10. Outcome of the Conference.
11. Adoption of the report of the Conference.
12. Closure of the Conference.

Annex II

Proposed organization of work of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028

New York, 22 to 24 March 2023

1. The United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028 will be held in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023.

I. Organization of work

A. Plenary meetings

2. The Conference will consist of a total of six plenary meetings, to be held as follows:

Wednesday, 22 March: from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

Thursday, 23 March: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

Friday, 24 March: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 5 p.m.

3. The plenary meetings will be devoted to statements.
4. The list of speakers for the plenary meetings will be established on a first-come first-served basis, with the customary protocol that ensures that Heads of State or Government speak first, followed by other heads of delegation. The European Union will be included in the list of speakers. Detailed arrangements will be communicated in a timely manner through a note by the Secretariat.
5. At the opening of the Conference, to take place during the first plenary meeting to be held on Wednesday, 22 March, from 9 to 10 a.m., consideration will be given to all procedural and organizational matters, including the adoption of the rules of procedure and the agenda, the election of the two Presidents of the Conference, the

election of officers, the establishment of subsidiary organs, as appropriate, the appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee, arrangements for the preparation of the report of the Conference and other matters. At the first plenary meeting, statements will be made by the Presidents of the Conference, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Chair of UN-Water.

6. The plenary meetings will also hear statements, in accordance with the practices of the General Assembly, from representatives of intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, international bodies, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as major groups and other stakeholders accredited to the Conference as observers in accordance with the present annex.

7. The final plenary meeting, to be held on the afternoon of Friday, 24 March, is expected to conclude with, *inter alia*, reporting on the interactive dialogues, to be followed by the adoption of the report of the Conference.

8. The plenary meetings will run in parallel with the interactive dialogues, unless otherwise specified in the present resolution.

B. Interactive dialogues

9. The Conference will include five interactive dialogues, to be held in parallel with the plenary meetings, as follows:

Wednesday, 22 March: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

Thursday, 23 March: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

Friday, 24 March: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

10. Summaries of the interactive dialogues should be submitted to the Conference at its closing plenary meeting and included in the final report of the Conference.

C. Main Committee

11. The Main Committee, established in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference, will meet, if necessary, in parallel with plenary meetings, except during the opening and closing of the Conference, and will be responsible for finalizing any outstanding matters.

II. Credentials of representatives to the Conference: appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

12. The Credentials Committee will be appointed according to the rules of procedure of the Conference.

III. Accreditation: international organizations and other entities

13. Relevant intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions and international bodies that were accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development may participate in the deliberations of the Conference and its preparatory meeting, as appropriate, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference.

14. Interested intergovernmental organizations that were not accredited to the Summit referred to in paragraph 13 above may apply to the General Assembly for accreditation following the established accreditation procedure.

IV. Accreditation: non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders

15. The non-governmental organizations and major groups as identified in Agenda 21,¹³ in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as those that were accredited to the Summit referred to in paragraph 13 above, shall register in order to participate.

16. The President of the General Assembly shall also draw up lists of representatives of other relevant non-governmental organizations, including civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector and philanthropic organizations whose work is relevant to the Conference, who may participate in the Conference and the preparatory meeting as observers, taking into account the principles of transparency and of equitable geographical representation, and shall submit the proposed lists to Member States for their consideration on a non-objection basis. The President of the General Assembly shall bring a list to the attention of the General Assembly before the preparatory meeting and, in any case, no later than September 2022, and, where applicable, shall bring another list to the attention of the Assembly before the Conference and, in any case, no later than January 2023.¹⁴

17. The provisions of paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2013 shall apply mutatis mutandis to the Conference and its preparatory process.

V. Secretariat

18. The Secretary-General of the Conference will serve as focal point within the Secretariat for providing support to the organization of the Conference, in cooperation with the representatives of the two Presidents.

VI. Documentation

19. In accordance with the practice followed at previous United Nations conferences, the official documentation of the Conference will include documents issued before, during and after the Conference.

20. In accordance with the practice followed at previous United Nations conferences, it is recommended that the Conference adopt a report consisting of the decisions of the Conference, a brief account of the proceedings and a reportorial account of the work of the Conference and the action taken at the plenary meetings.

21. Summaries of the plenary meetings and interactive dialogues and a list of voluntary commitments announced at the Conference should also be included in the report of the Conference.

VII. Organization of parallel meetings and other events of the Conference

22. Parallel meetings and other events, including those of major groups and other stakeholders, will be held during the same hours as the plenary meetings and interactive dialogues, space permitting. Interpretation services will be provided for such meetings, as available.

¹³ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

¹⁴ The lists will include proposed as well as final names. The general basis of any objections, if requested by one or more States Members of the United Nations or States members of the specialized agencies, will be made known to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the requester.

VIII. Side events

23. Side events, including briefings, seminars, workshops and panel discussions on issues related to the implementation of the Decade, will be organized by participants in the Conference. Guidelines for organizing such events and the calendar of those events will be made available on the Conference website.

IX. Media coverage

24. Press materials will be prepared by the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat for journalists covering the Conference. In addition, regular press releases will be issued on the results of plenary meetings, interactive dialogues and other events. All relevant documentation will be made available on the Conference website.

25. The plenary meetings, the interactive dialogues and the press conferences will be broadcast live to the media area. A programme of special media briefings and press conferences will be announced.

Annex III

Provisional rules of procedure of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028

I. Representation and credentials

Rule 1

Composition of delegations

The delegation of each State participating in the Conference and that of the European Union shall consist of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Rule 2

Alternates and advisers

The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

Rule 3

Submission of credentials

The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, if possible, not less than one week before the date fixed for the opening of the Conference. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of the State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or, in the case of the European Union, by the President of the European Commission.

Rule 4

Credentials Committee

A Credentials Committee of nine members shall be appointed at the beginning of the Conference. Its composition shall be based on that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference without delay.

Rule 5
Provisional participation in the Conference

Pending a decision of the Conference on their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the Conference.

II. Officers**Rule 6**
Elections

The Conference shall elect from among the representatives of participating States the following officers: two Presidents, one from Tajikistan and one from the Kingdom of the Netherlands,¹⁵ each of whom shall preside separately. The Conference shall also elect 13 Vice-Presidents, one of whom shall be designated as Rapporteur-General, as well as a chair for the Main Committee established in accordance with rule 46. The officers shall be elected with a view to ensuring the representative character of the General Committee. The Conference may also elect such other officers as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

Rule 7
General powers of the presiding President

1. The Presidents shall take turns in presiding at the plenary meetings of the Conference. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon her or him elsewhere by these rules, the presiding President shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. The presiding President shall rule on points of order and, subject to those rules, shall have complete control over the proceedings and the maintenance of order thereat. The presiding President may propose to the Conference the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times each representative may speak on a question, the adjournment or closure of the debate and the suspension or adjournment of a meeting.

2. The presiding President remains, in the exercise of her or his functions, under the authority of the Conference.

Rule 8
Acting President

1. If both Presidents are to be absent from a meeting or any part thereof, they may designate one of the Vice-Presidents to preside.

2. A Vice-President acting as President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

Rule 9
Replacement of a President or the Presidents

If either of the Presidents is unable to perform her or his functions, a new President shall be elected. If both Presidents are unable to perform their functions, new Presidents shall be elected.

¹⁵ Three from each of the following groups: African States; Asia-Pacific States; Eastern European States; Latin American and Caribbean States; and Western European and other States. The election of the two Presidents will, however, have the effect of reducing by one the number of Vice-Presidents allocated to the regions from which each of the Presidents is elected.

Rule 10
Voting rights of the presiding President

The presiding President, or a Vice-President acting as the presiding President, shall not vote in the Conference, but may appoint another member of her or his delegation to vote in her or his place.

III. General Committee

Rule 11
Composition

The two Presidents, the Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur-General and the Chair of the Main Committee shall constitute the General Committee. One of the two Presidents, as agreed between them, or, in their absence, one of the Vice-Presidents designated by them, shall serve as Chair of the General Committee. The Chair of the Credentials Committee and other committees established by the Conference in accordance with rule 48 may participate, without the right to vote, in the General Committee.

Rule 12
Substitute members

If a President or a Vice-President of the Conference is to be absent during a meeting of the General Committee, she or he may designate a member of her or his delegation to sit and vote in the Committee. In case of absence, the Chair of the Main Committee shall designate the Vice-Chair of that Committee as her or his substitute. When serving on the General Committee, a Vice-Chair of the Main Committee shall not have the right to vote if she or he is a member of the same delegation as another member of the General Committee.

Rule 13
Functions

The General Committee shall assist both Presidents in the general conduct of the business of the Conference and, subject to the decisions of the Conference, shall ensure the coordination of the work of the Conference.

IV. Secretariat of the Conference

Rule 14
Duties of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations or a designated representative shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary organs.
2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations or a designated representative shall direct the staff required by the Conference.

Rule 15
Duties of the secretariat of the Conference

The secretariat of the Conference shall, in accordance with the present rules:

- (a) Provide simultaneous interpretation of speeches made at meetings;
- (b) Receive, translate, reproduce and circulate the documents of the Conference;
- (c) Publish and circulate the official documents of the Conference;

- (d) Prepare and circulate records of public meetings;
- (e) Make and arrange for the keeping of sound recordings of meetings;
- (f) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents of the Conference in the archives of the United Nations;
- (g) Generally perform all other work that the Conference may require.

Rule 16**Statements by the Secretariat**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, or any member of the Secretariat designated for that purpose, may, at any time, make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

V. Opening of the Conference**Rule 17****Temporary President**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations or, in his absence, any member of the Secretariat designated by him for that purpose, shall open the first meeting of the Conference and preside until the Conference has elected its Presidents.

Rule 18**Decisions concerning organization**

The Conference shall, at its first meeting:

- (a) Adopt its rules of procedure;
- (b) Elect its officers and constitute its subsidiary organs;
- (c) Adopt its agenda, the draft of which shall, until such adoption, be the provisional agenda of the Conference;
- (d) Decide on the organization of its work.

VI. Conduct of business**Rule 19****Quorum**

The presiding President may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the States participating in the Conference are present. The presence of a majority of the States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.

Rule 20**Speeches**

1. No representative may address the Conference without having previously obtained the permission of the presiding President. Subject to rules 21, 22 and 25 to 27, the presiding President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they indicate their desire to speak. The secretariat shall be in charge of drawing up a list of speakers.
2. Debate shall be confined to the question before the Conference and the presiding President may call a speaker to order if her or his remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
3. The Conference may limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each participant may speak on any question. Permission to speak on a motion

to set such limits shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour of and to two opposing such limits, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. In any event, with the consent of the Conference, the presiding President shall limit each intervention on procedural matters to five minutes. When the debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the presiding President shall call her or him to order without delay.

Rule 21
Points of order

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be immediately decided by the presiding President in accordance with the present rules. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the presiding President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the presiding President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the States present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Rule 22
Precedence

The Chair or the Rapporteur of the Main Committee, or of other subsidiary organs, may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by the body concerned.

Rule 23
Closing of the list of speakers

During the course of a debate, the presiding President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Conference, declare the list closed.

Rule 24
Right of reply

1. Notwithstanding rule 23, the presiding President shall accord the right of reply to a representative of any State participating in the Conference or of the European Union who requests it. Any other representative of a State may be granted the opportunity to make a reply.
2. The statements made under the present rule shall normally be made at the end of the last meeting of the day, or at the conclusion of the consideration of the relevant item if that is sooner.
3. Representatives of a State or of the European Union may make no more than two statements under the present rule at a given meeting on any item. The first shall be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes. Representatives shall, in any event, attempt to be as brief as possible.

Rule 25
Adjournment of debate

A representative of any State participating in the Conference may at any time move the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour and to two opposing the adjournment, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 26**Closure of debate**

A representative of any State participating in the Conference may at any time move the closure of the debate on the question under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified her or his wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 27**Suspension or adjournment of the meeting**

Subject to rule 38, a representative of any State participating in the Conference may at any time move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. No discussion on such motions shall be permitted and they shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 28**Order of motions**

The motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or other motions before the meeting:

- (a) To suspend the meeting;
- (b) To adjourn the meeting;
- (c) To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion;
- (d) To close the debate on the question under discussion.

Rule 29**Submission of proposals and substantive amendments**

Proposals and substantive amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General or her or his designated representative, who shall circulate copies to all delegations in the languages of the Conference. Unless the Conference decides otherwise, substantive proposals shall not be discussed or put to a decision unless copies have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting. The presiding President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments, even though those amendments have not been circulated or have been circulated only the same day.

Rule 30**Withdrawal of proposals and motions**

A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before a decision on it has been taken, provided that it has not been amended. A proposal or a motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any representative.

Rule 31**Decisions on competence**

Subject to rule 28, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Conference to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

Rule 32
Reconsideration of proposals

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered unless the Conference, by a two-thirds majority of the States present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded to only two speakers opposing reconsideration, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote.

VII. Decision-making

Rule 33
General agreement

The Conference shall make its best endeavour to ensure that the work of the Conference is accomplished by consensus.

Rule 34
Voting rights

Each State participating in the Conference shall have one vote.

Rule 35
Majority required

1. Subject to rule 33, decisions of the Conference on all matters of substance shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the States present and voting.
2. Except as otherwise provided in the present rules, decisions of the Conference on all matters of procedure shall be taken by a majority of the States present and voting.
3. If the question arises whether a matter is one of procedure or of substance, the presiding President of the Conference shall rule on the question. An appeal against that ruling shall be immediately put to the vote, and the presiding President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the States present and voting.
4. If a vote is equally divided, the proposal or motion shall be regarded as rejected.

Rule 36
Meaning of the phrase "States present and voting"

For the purpose of the present rules, the phrase "States present and voting" means States casting an affirmative or negative vote. States which abstain from voting shall be regarded as not voting.

Rule 37
Method of voting

1. Except as provided in rule 44, the Conference may vote by show of hands, except that a representative may request a roll call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the States participating in the Conference, beginning with the delegation whose name is drawn by lot by the presiding President. The name of each State shall be called in all roll calls, and its representative shall reply "yes", "no" or "abstention".
2. When the Conference votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands and a recorded vote shall replace a roll call. A representative may request a recorded vote, which shall, unless a representative requests otherwise, be taken without calling out the names of the States participating in the Conference.

3. The vote of each State participating in a roll-call or a recorded vote shall be inserted in any record of or report on the meeting.

Rule 38
Conduct during voting

After the presiding President has announced the commencement of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting, except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting.

Rule 39
Explanation of vote

1. Representatives may make brief statements, consisting solely of explanations of vote, before the voting has commenced or after the voting has been completed. The presiding President may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations. The representative of a State sponsoring a proposal or motion shall not speak in explanation of vote thereon, except if it has been amended.

2. When the same matter is considered successively in several organs of the Conference, a State should, as far as possible, explain its vote only in one such organ, unless its vote in one organ is different from that in another organ.

Rule 40
Division of proposals

A representative may move that parts of a proposal be decided on separately. If a representative objects, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour of and to two opposing the division. If the motion is carried, those parts of the proposal that are subsequently approved shall be put to the Conference for decision as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal have been rejected, the proposal shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Rule 41
Amendments

A proposal is considered an amendment to another proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal. Unless specified otherwise, the word "proposal" in these rules shall be regarded as including amendments.

Rule 42
Order of voting on amendments

When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Conference shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom, and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

Rule 43
Order of voting on proposals

1. If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Conference decides otherwise, be voted on in the order in which

they were submitted. The Conference may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

2. Revised proposals shall be voted on in the order in which the original proposals were submitted, unless the revision substantially departs from the original proposal. In that case, the original proposal shall be regarded as withdrawn and the revised proposal shall be treated as a new proposal.

3. A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal shall be put to the vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

Rule 44 **Elections**

All elections shall be held by secret ballot unless, in the absence of any objection, the Conference decides to proceed without taking a ballot when there is an agreed candidate or slate of candidates.

Rule 45 **Balloting**

1. When one or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of votes shall be elected.

2. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of places to be filled, additional ballots shall be held to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

VIII. Subsidiary organs

Rule 46 **Main Committee**

The Conference may establish a Main Committee.

Rule 47 **Representation on the Main Committee**

Each State participating in the Conference and the European Union may be represented by one representative on the Main Committee. They may assign to the Committee such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Rule 48 **Other committees and working groups**

1. In addition to the Main Committee referred to above, the Conference may establish such committees and working groups as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

2. Subject to the decision of the plenary of the Conference, the committees may set up subcommittees and working groups.

Rule 49**Members of committees, subcommittees and working groups**

1. The members of the committees and working groups of the Conference, referred to in rule 48, paragraph 1, shall be appointed by the two Presidents, subject to the approval of the Conference, unless the Conference decides otherwise.
2. Members of the subcommittees and working groups of committees shall be appointed by the Chair of the committee in question, subject to the approval of that committee, unless the committee decides otherwise.

Rule 50**Officers**

Except as otherwise provided in rule 6, each committee, subcommittee and working group shall elect its own officers.

Rule 51**Quorum**

1. The Chair of the Main Committee may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one quarter of the States participating in the Conference are present. The presence of a majority of the States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.
2. A majority of the members of the General Committee or the Credentials Committee or of any committee, subcommittee or working group shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 52**Officers, conduct of business and voting**

The rules contained in sections II, VI (except rule 19) and VII above shall be applicable, mutatis mutandis, to the proceedings of committees, subcommittees and working groups, except that:

- (a) The Chairs of the General Committee and the Credentials Committee and the Chairs of the committees, subcommittees and working groups may exercise the right to vote, provided that they are representatives of participating States;
- (b) Decisions of committees, subcommittees and working groups shall be taken by a majority of the members present and voting, except that the reconsideration of a proposal or an amendment shall require the majority established by rule 32.

IX. Languages and records**Rule 53****Languages of the Conference**

Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the languages of the Conference.

Rule 54**Interpretation**

1. Speeches made in a language of the Conference shall be interpreted into the other five languages.

2. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the Conference if the delegation concerned provides for interpretation into one of the languages of the Conference.

Rule 55
Languages of official documents

Official documents of the Conference shall be made available in the languages of the Conference.

Rule 56
Sound recordings of meetings

Sound recordings of the plenary meetings of the Conference, the interactive dialogues and of the meetings of the Main Committee shall be made and kept in accordance with the practice of the United Nations. Unless otherwise decided by the Conference or the Main Committee, no such recordings shall be made of any of the other meetings held during the Conference.

X. Public and private meetings

General principles

Rule 57

The plenary meetings of the Conference and the meetings of any committee shall be held in public unless the body concerned decides otherwise. All decisions taken by the plenary of the Conference at a private meeting shall be announced at an early public meeting of the plenary.

Rule 58

As a general rule, meetings of the General Committee, the Credentials Committee, subcommittees or working groups shall be held in private.

Rule 59
Communiqués on private meetings

At the close of a private meeting, the presiding officer of the organ concerned may issue a communiqué through the Secretary-General of the United Nations or a designated representative.

XI. Other participants and observers

Rule 60
Intergovernmental organizations and other entities¹⁶ having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly

Representatives designated by intergovernmental organizations and other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly have the right to participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group.

¹⁶ For the purpose of the present rules, the term "other entities" includes the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Olympic Committee, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Rule 61**Associate members of regional commissions¹⁷**

Representatives designated by the associate members of regional commissions listed in the footnote below may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group.

Rule 62**Representatives of the specialized agencies and related organizations¹⁸**

Representatives designated by the specialized agencies and related organizations may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Rule 63**Representatives of other intergovernmental organizations and other international bodies**

Save where otherwise specifically provided with respect to the European Union in these rules of procedure, representatives designated by other intergovernmental organizations and other international bodies invited to the Conference may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Rule 64**Representatives of interested United Nations organs**

Representatives designated by interested organs of the United Nations may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Rule 65**Representatives of non-governmental organizations¹⁹**

1. Non-governmental organizations accredited to participate in the Conference may designate representatives to attend public meetings of the Conference and the Main Committee as observers.

¹⁷ American Samoa, Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Curaçao, French Polynesia, Guam, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Puerto Rico, Sint Maarten, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.

¹⁸ For the purpose of the present rules, the term "related organizations" includes the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Criminal Court, the International Organization for Migration, the International Seabed Authority, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the World Trade Organization.

¹⁹ Paragraph 23.3 of Agenda 21 provides that "Any policies, definitions or rules affecting access to and participation by non-governmental organizations in the work of United Nations institutions or agencies associated with the implementation of Agenda 21 must apply equally to all major groups". Agenda 21 defines major groups as comprising women, children and youth, indigenous people, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and their trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community and farmers. Therefore, based on Agenda 21, rule 65 shall apply equally to non-governmental organizations and other major groups.

2. Upon the invitation of the presiding officer of the Conference and subject to the approval of the Conference, such observers may make oral statements on questions in which they have special competence. If the number of requests to speak is too large, the non-governmental organizations shall be requested to form themselves into constituencies, such constituencies to speak through spokespersons.

Rule 66

Written statements

Written statements submitted by the designated representatives referred to in rules 60 to 65 shall be circulated by the secretariat to all delegations in the quantities and the languages in which the statements are made available to it at the site of the Conference, provided that a statement submitted on behalf of a non-governmental organization must be related to the work of the Conference and be on a subject in which the organization has a special competence. Written statements shall not be made available at United Nations expense and shall not be issued as official documents.

XII. Suspension and amendment of the rules of procedure

Rule 67

Method of suspension

Any of these rules may be suspended by the Conference provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given, which may be waived if no representative objects. Any such suspension shall be limited to a specific and stated purpose and to a period required to achieve that purpose.

Rule 68

Method of amendment

These rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the Conference taken by a two-thirds majority of the States present and voting, after the General Committee has reported on the proposed amendment.
