

Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs
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Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs)

Volume II

ARTICLE 18

CONTENTS

Paragraphs

Text of Article 18

Introductory note.....	1
I. General Survey.....	2-13
II. Analytical summary of practice.....	14
**A. Practice relating to Article 18 (1)	
**B. Practice relating to both paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 18	
C. Practice relating to Article 18 (2)	
1. Question of the application of the term “important” to proposals without reference to the questions enumerated in Article 18 (2)	14
**a. Considerations involved in determining whether the adoption of a proposal requires a two-third majority	
**b. Cases in which the two thirds majority rule has been applied without reference to the “importance” of the question	
**2. Practice relating to questions specifically enumerated in Article 18 (2)	
**D. Practice relating to Article 18 (3)	

ARTICLE 18

TEXT OF ARTICLE 18

1. Each member of the General Assembly shall have one vote.
2. Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of members of the Economic and social Council, the election of members of the Trusteeship Council in accordance with paragraph 1 (c) of Article 86, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions.
3. Decisions on other questions, including the determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. The main headings which appeared in the previous *Supplement* have been maintained for this study.

I. GENERAL SURVEY

2. The present study covers the resumption of the thirty-ninth session, the fortieth to the forty-third session (its resumption included) and the thirteenth to fifteenth special sessions, which were held between 9 April 1985 and 20 April 1989. The review of the voting which took place in the General Assembly during the period covered by this *Supplement* reveals a certain change in the pattern compared to that described in previous studies of Article 18 in the *Repertory* and its *Supplements Nos. 1 to 6*. Namely, unlike previously when the majority of the Assembly's decisions was made by the affirmative vote of more than two-thirds of the members present and voting, during this period, the majority of the decisions have been made without a vote. The rest of the decisions were mainly adopted with a two-thirds majority vote; the simple majority vote represents an exception. The roll-cast vote procedure is still used in a very few cases. During the period under review, no reference was made to Article 18 in the parliamentary discussions.
3. During the resumption of its thirty-ninth session, held between 9 and 12 April 1985, the General Assembly adopted three resolutions (39/247 B to 39/249) and five decisions (39/457 to 39/461), all without a vote.

4. During its fortieth session, the General Assembly adopted 352 resolutions under 259 different numbers (40/1 to 40/259). Of these, 201 were adopted without a vote and 150 received more than a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting¹; three of these resolutions were voted through a roll-call vote (40/156 A, 40/156 B and 40/156 C on the “Question of Antarctica”). During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 78 decisions other than elections and appointments (40/401 to 40/ 478). Except five decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority², all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.
5. During its thirteenth special session held between 27 May to 1 June 1986, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions (S-13/1 and S-13/2) and three decisions other than elections and appointments (S-13/21 to S-13/23), all without a vote.
6. During its fourteenth special session held between 17 to 20 September 1986, the General Assembly adopted one resolution (S-14/1), which received more than a two-thirds majority, and two decisions other than elections and appointments (S-14/21 to S-14/23) without a vote.
7. During its forty-first session, the General Assembly adopted 311 resolutions under 213 different numbers (41/1 to 41/213). Of these, 162 were adopted without a vote and 148 received more than a two-thirds majority³; three of these resolutions were voted through a roll-call vote (41/88 A, 41/88 B and 41/88 C on the “Question of Antarctica”). During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 70 decisions other than elections and appointments. Except six decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority⁴, all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.
8. During its forty-second, the General Assembly adopted 324 resolutions under 233 different numbers (42/1 to 42/233). Of these, 182 were adopted without a vote and 142 received more than a two-thirds majority. During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 67 decisions other than elections and appointments. Except six decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority⁵, all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.
9. During its fifteenth special session held between 31 May to 25 June 1988, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions (S-15/1 A and S-15/1 B) and four decisions other than elections and appointments (S-15/21 to S-15/24), all without a vote.
10. During its forty-third, the General Assembly adopted 327 resolutions under 233 different numbers (43/1 to 43/233). Of these, 190 were adopted without a vote and 137 received more than a two-thirds majority; seven of these resolutions were voted

¹ Only one General Assembly resolution was adopted with a simple majority, resolution 40/141, on the Situation of the human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

² General Assembly decisions 40/414, 40/415, 40/432, 40/445 and 40/451.

³ Only one General Assembly resolution was adopted with a simple majority, 41/159, on the Situation of the human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

⁴ General Assembly decisions 41/405, 41/408, 41/420, 41/440, 41/442 and 41/450.

⁵ General Assembly decisions 42/417, 42/420, 42/421, 42/429, 42/440 and 42/441.

through a roll-call vote (43/83 A, 43/83 B on the “Question of Antarctica”; 43/175 A, 43/175 B, 43/157 C, 43/176 and 43/177 on the “Question of Palestine”). During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 67 decisions other than elections and appointments. Except three decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority⁶, all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.

11. With regard to elections and appointments to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, following the decision 34/401 on the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the Assembly, the General Assembly dispensed itself with the formal balloting procedure when the number of candidates corresponded to the number of seats to be filled.
12. The General Assembly has continued to hold elections to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council as specified by paragraph 2 of Article 18. The Assembly has not held elections to the Trusteeship Council since its twentieth session.
13. For the sake of clarity, statistical data on the adoption of resolutions and decisions during the period under review are shown in the following table:

	<i>Resolutions adopted</i>				<i>Resolutions not adopted</i>			<i>Decisions adopted</i>			
	<i>Without a vote</i>	<i>By a 2/3 majority</i>	<i>By a simple majority</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Failing 2/3 majority</i>	<i>Failing simple majority</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Without a vote</i>	<i>By a 2/3 majority</i>	<i>By a simple majority</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Regular sessions</i>											
Thirty-ninth (resumed).....	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	5	-	-	5
Fortieth.....	201	150	1	352	-	-	-	73	5	-	78
Forty-first.....	162	148	1	311	-	-	-	64	6	-	70
Forty-second.....	182	142	-	324	-	-	-	61	6	-	67
Forty-third.....	190	137	-	327	-	-	-	64	3	-	67
<i>Special sessions</i>											
Thirteenth.....	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
Fourteenth.....	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Fifteenth.....	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
TOTALS	742	578	2	1322	-	-	-	276	20	-	296

⁶ General Assembly decisions 43/410, 43/413 and 43/460.

II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

****A. Practice relating to Article 18 (1)**

****B. Practice relating to both paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 18**

C. Practice relating to Article 18 (2)

1. QUESTION OF THE APPLICATION OF THE TERM “IMPORTANT” TO PROPOSALS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE QUESTIONS ENUMERATED IN ARTICLE 18 (2).

14. As indicated in the table in paragraph 13 above, the General Assembly has adopted 1322 resolutions during the period under review. It should be noted that only two resolutions were adopted by a simple majority vote. In previous *Supplements*, reference was made to the practice by which General Assembly referred to Article 18 only in those cases where there was a divergence of views as to the majority required for the adoption of a resolution, or when a two-thirds majority did not seem to be assured beforehand⁷. During the period under consideration, no situation arose in which the continuation or change of this practice could be tested.

***a. Considerations involved in determining whether the adoption of a proposal requires a two-third majority*

***b. Cases in which the two-third majority rule has been applied without reference to the “importance” question*

****2. PRACTICE RELATING TO QUESTIONS SPECIALLY ENUMERATED IN ARTICLE 18 (2).**

****D. Practice relating to Article 18 (3)**

⁷ See *Repertory of United Nations Organs, Supplement No. 1*, vol. I, under Article 18, para. 17 to 30; *Supplement No. 2*, vol. I, under Article 18, para. 9 to 29; *Supplement No. 3*, vol. I, under Article 18, para. 17 to 44; *Supplement No. 4*, vol. I, under Article 18, para. 13 to 53; *Supplement No. 5*, vol. II, under Article 18, para. 20 to 56; *Supplement No. 6*, vol. II, under Article 18, para. 20 to 31.