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## Article 18

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## 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 the present study.

## I. General survey

2. The present study covers the forty-fourth to forty-ninth sessions (including the resumption of the forty-ninth session from 26 January to 18 September 1995) and the sixteenth to eighteenth special sessions. The review of the voting in the General Assembly during the period covered reveals a pattern similar to that described in *Supplement No. 7* of the *Repertory*. During this period, the majority of the Assembly's decisions were adopted without a vote. Most of the other decisions were adopted by a two-thirds majority vote, with the simple majority vote representing 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. At its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted 336 resolutions under 244 different numbers (44/1 to 44/244). Of these, 220 were adopted without a vote and 116 received the positive vote of more than a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting; two of those resolutions were voted on through a roll-call vote (44/124 A and 44/124 B on the question of Antarctica). At the same session, the Assembly also adopted 78 decisions other than elections and appointments under 72 different names (44/401 to 44/472). With the exception of three decisions which

were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,<sup>1</sup> all the decisions were adopted without a vote.

4. At its sixteenth special session, held from 12 to 14 December 1989, the General Assembly adopted one resolution (S-16/1) and four decisions on matters other than elections and appointments (S-16/21 to S-16/24), all without a vote.

5. At its seventeenth special session, held from 20 to 23 February 1990, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions (S-17/1 and S-17/2) and three decisions on matters other than elections and appointments (S-17/21 to S-17/23), all without a vote.

6. At its eighteenth special session, held from 27 to 28 February 1990, the General Assembly adopted three resolutions (S-18/1 and S-18/3) and three decisions on matters other than elections and appointments (S-18/21 to S-18/23), all without a vote.

7. At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly adopted 344 resolutions under 269 different numbers (45/1 to 45/269). Of these, 258 were adopted without a vote and 86 received more than a two-thirds majority;

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<sup>1</sup> GA decisions 44/425, 44/428 and 44/429.

two of those resolutions were voted on through a roll-call vote (45/78 A and B on the question of Antarctica). At the same session, the Assembly also adopted 67 decisions on matters other than elections and appointments, under 61 different names (45/401 to 45/461). Except for four decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,<sup>2</sup> all the decisions were adopted without a vote.

8. At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted 305 resolutions under 242 different numbers (46/1 to 46/242). Of these, 230 were adopted without a vote and 75 received more than a two-thirds majority; two of these resolutions were voted on through a roll-call vote (46/41 A and B on the question of Antarctica). At the same session, the Assembly also adopted 87 decisions on matters other than elections and appointments, under 81 different names (46/401 to 46/481). With the exception of two decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,<sup>3</sup> all the decisions were adopted without a vote.

9. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly adopted 305 resolutions under 237 different numbers (47/1 to 47/237). Of these, 230 were adopted without a vote and 75 received more than a two-thirds majority; one of these resolutions was voted on through a roll-call vote (47/57 on the question of Antarctica). At the same session, the Assembly also adopted 89 decisions on matters other than elections and appointments, under 78 different names (47/401 to 47/478). With the exception of four decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,<sup>4</sup> all the decisions were adopted without a vote.

10. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted 334 resolutions under 267 different numbers (48/1 to 48/267). Of these, 269 were adopted without a vote and 63 received more than a two-thirds majority;<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> GA decisions 45/406, 45/409, 45/410 and 45/416.

<sup>3</sup> GA decisions 46/419 and 46/422.

<sup>4</sup> GA decisions 47/409, 47/413, 47/445 and 47/456.

<sup>5</sup> Only GA resolutions 48/78, on Israeli nuclear armament, and 48/124, on respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral process, were adopted by a simple majority.

one of these resolutions was voted on through a roll-call vote (48/80 on the question of Antarctica). At the same session, the Assembly also adopted 128 decisions other than elections and appointments under 111 different names (48/401 to 48/511). With the exception of two decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,<sup>6</sup> all the decisions were adopted without a vote.

11. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted 327 resolutions under 252 different numbers (49/1 to 49/252). Of these, 259 were adopted without a vote and 66 received more than a two-thirds majority.<sup>7</sup> At the same session, the Assembly also adopted 111 decisions on matters other than elections and appointments, under 103 different names (49/401 to 49/503). With the exception of two decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,<sup>8</sup> all the decisions were adopted without a vote.

12. With regard to elections and appointments to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, following decision 34/401 on the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the Assembly, the General Assembly dispensed with the formal balloting procedure when the number of candidates corresponded to the number of seats to be filled.

13. The General Assembly has continued to hold elections to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council as specified in paragraph 2 of Article 18. The Assembly has not held elections to the Trusteeship Council since its twentieth session.

14. 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:

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<sup>6</sup> GA decisions 48/421 and 48/424.

<sup>7</sup> Only GA resolutions 49/75 K, on general and complete disarmament, and 49/180, on respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral process, were adopted by a simple majority.

<sup>8</sup> GA decisions 49/417 and 49/422.

	Resolutions adopted				Resolutions not adopted			Decisions adopted			
	Without a vote	By a 2/3 majority	By a simple majority	Total	Failing 2/3 majority	Failing simple majority	Total	Without a vote	By a 2/3 majority	By a simple majority	Total
<i>Regular sessions</i>											
Forty-fourth	220	116	–	336	–	–	–	75	3	–	78
Forty-fifth	258	86	–	344	–	–	–	63	4	–	67
Forty-sixth	230	75	–	305	–	–	–	85	2	–	87
Forty-seventh	230	75	–	305	–	–	–	85	4	–	89
Forty-eighth	269	63	2	334	–	–	–	126	2	–	128
Forty-ninth	259	66	2	327	–	–	–	109	2	–	111
<i>Special sessions</i>											
Sixteenth	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	4	–	–	4
Seventeenth	2	–	–	2	–	–	–	3	–	–	3
Eighteenth	3	–	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	–	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 472</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1 957</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>570</b>

## 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)

15. As indicated in the table following paragraph 14 above, the General Assembly adopted 1,957 resolutions during the period under review. It should be noted that only four resolutions were adopted by a simple majority vote. In *Supplements Nos. 1 to 6*, reference has been 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

beforehand.<sup>9</sup> During the period under consideration, no situation arose in which the continuation or change of this practice could be tested.<sup>10</sup>

*\*\* (a) Considerations involved in determining whether the adoption of a proposal requires a two-thirds 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 specially enumerated in Article 18 (2)

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

<sup>9</sup> See *Repertory, Supplement No. 1*, vol. I, under Article 18, paras. 17 to 30; *Supplement No. 2*, vol. I, under Article 18, paras. 9 to 29; *Supplement No. 3*, vol. I, under Article 18, paras. 17 to 44; *Supplement No. 4*, vol. I, under Article 18, paras. 13 to 53; *Supplement No. 5*, vol. II, under Article 18, paras. 20 to 56 and *Supplement No. 6*, vol. II, under Article 18, paras. 20 to 31.

<sup>10</sup> The same situation was reflected in the *Repertory, Supplement No. 7*, vol. II, under Article 18, para. 14.