

REPERTORY OF PRACTICE OF UNITED NATIONS ORGANS
SUPPLEMENT No. 10

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Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs)

ARTICLE 20

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>
Text of Article 20	
Introductory note.....	1
I. General survey.....	2 - 6
II. Analytical summary of practice.....	7- 27
A. <u>Regular annual sessions</u>	7-13
1. Date of meeting.....	7 - 9
2. Adjournment and resumption of session.....	10
3. Place of meeting.....	11
4. Duration of session.....	12
5. Closing date of session.....	13
B. <u>Special sessions</u>	14-22
1. Procedure for summoning.....	14-20
2. Date of meeting.....	21
3. Closing date of session.....	22
C. <u>Emergency special sessions</u>	23- 27
1. Procedure for summoning.....	23- 24
2. Date of meeting.....	25
3. Closing date of session.....	26
4. Adjournment and resumption of session.....	27

ARTICLE 20

TEXT OF ARTICLE 20

The General Assembly shall meet in regular annual sessions and in such special sessions as occasion may require. Special sessions shall be convoked by the Secretary-General at the request of the Security Council or of a majority of the Members of the United Nations.

Introductory Note

1. The general structure of this study follows that of Article 20 in the *Repertory Supplements* 6 to 9.

I. GENERAL SURVEY

2. During the period under review, the General Assembly held nine regular sessions, six special sessions and one emergency special session. The latter was resumed eleven times during the period reviewed in this *Supplement*.

3. In accordance with the provisions of Article 20 of the Charter and rules 1 and 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the Assembly held its fifty-fifth to sixty-third regular sessions from 2000 to 2009 at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

4. In addition to its regular sessions, and in accordance with the provisions of Article 20 of the Charter and of rule 7 of its Rules of Procedure, the Assembly held its twenty-third to twenty-eighth special sessions (2000 to 2005). The meetings were held at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York except for the twenty-fourth special session which was held at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

5. Furthermore, the General Assembly, pursuant to its resolution 377A (V) of 3 November 1950 and rule 7 of its Rules of Procedure, held its tenth emergency special session which was resumed eleven times during the period under review. The meetings were held at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

6. The following table shows the opening and closing dates of the sessions held during the period under review:

Regular Sessions

Session	Opening Date	Closing Date
Fifty-fifth		
Main part	Tuesday, 5 September 2000 ¹	Saturday, 23 December 2000 ²
Resumed part	Friday, 26 January 2001 ³	Monday, 10 September 2001 ⁴
Fifty-sixth		
Main part	Wednesday, 12 September 2001 ⁵	Monday, 24 December 2001 ⁶
Resumed Part	Thursday, 31 January 2002 ⁷	Monday, 9 September 2002 ⁸
Fifty-seventh		
Main part	Tuesday, 10 September 2002 ⁹	Friday, 20 December 2002 ¹⁰
Resumed part	Wednesday, 29 January 2003 ¹¹	Monday, 15 September 2003 ¹²
Fifty-eighth		
Main part	Tuesday, 16 September 2003 ¹³	Tuesday, 23 December 2003 ¹⁴
Resumed part	Monday, 9 February 2004 ¹⁵	Monday, 13 September 2004 ¹⁶
Fifth-ninth		
Main part	Tuesday, 14 September 2004 ¹⁷	Thursday, 23 December 2004 ¹⁸

¹ A/55/PV.1

² A/55/PV.89; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/55/250, section II.C) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

³ A/55/PV.90

⁴ A/55/PV.112

⁵ A/56/PV.1

⁶ A/56/PV.92; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/56/250, section II.D) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

⁷ A/56/PV.93

⁸ A/56/PV.112

⁹ A/57/PV.1

¹⁰ A/57/PV.79; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/57/250, section II.C) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

¹¹ A/57/PV.80

¹² A/57/PV.94

¹³ A/58/PV.1

¹⁴ A/58/PV.79; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/58/250, section II.C) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

¹⁵ A/58/PV.80

¹⁶ A/58/PV.95

¹⁷ A/59/PV.1

¹⁸ A/59/PV.76; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/59/250, section II.C) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

Resumed part	Tuesday, 18 January 2005 ¹⁹	Tuesday, 13 September 2005 ²⁰
Sixtieth		
Main part	Tuesday, 13 September 2005 ²¹	Friday, 23 December 2005 ²²
Resumed part	Monday, 6 February 2006 ²³	Monday, 11 September 2006 ²⁴
Sixty-first		
Main part	Tuesday, 12 September 2006 ²⁵	Friday, 22 December 2006 ²⁶
Resumed part	Friday, 26 January 2007 ²⁷	Monday, 17 September 2007 ²⁸
Sixty-second		
Main part	Tuesday, 18 September 2007 ²⁹	Friday, 21 December 2007 (resumed Saturday, 22 December 2007) ³⁰
Resumed part	Tuesday, 12 February 2008 ³¹	Monday, 15 September 2008 ³²
Sixty-third		
Main part	Tuesday, 16 September 2008 ³³	Tuesday, 23 December 2008 ³⁴
Resumed part	Friday, 20 February 2009 ³⁵	Monday, 14 September 2009 ³⁶

Special Sessions

Session	Opening Date	Closing Date
Twenty-third	Monday, 5 June 2000 ³⁷	Saturday, 10 June 2000 ³⁸

¹⁹ A/59/PV.77

²⁰ A/59/PV.118

²¹ A/60/PV.1

²² A/60/PV.69; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/60/250, section II.D) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

²³ A/60/PV.70

²⁴ A/60/PV.101

²⁵ A/61/PV.1

²⁶ A/61/PV.84; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/61/250, section II.C) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

²⁷ A/61/PV.85

²⁸ A/61/PV.109

²⁹ A/62/PV.1

³⁰ A/62/PV.79; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/62/250, section II.C) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

³¹ A/62/PV.80

³² A/62/PV.122

³³ A/63/PV.1

³⁴ A/63/PV.74; to be precise, this is not the closing date, but the date when the meetings were “recessed” upon the recommendation of the General Committee (see A/63/250, section II.C) until the next General Assembly meeting in the consecutive year.

³⁵ A/63/PV.75

³⁶ A/63/PV.105

³⁷ A/S-23/PV.1

Twenty-fourth	Monday, 26 June 2000 ³⁹	Saturday, 1 July 2000 ⁴⁰
Twenty-fifth	Wednesday, 6 June 2001 ⁴¹	Friday, 8 June 2001 ⁴²
Twenty-sixth	Monday, 25 June 2001 ⁴³	Wednesday, 27 June 2001 ⁴⁴
Twenty-seventh	Wednesday, 8 May 2002 ⁴⁵	Friday, 10 May 2002 ⁴⁶
Twenty-eighth	Monday, 24 January 2005 ⁴⁷	Monday, 24 January 2005 ⁴⁸

Emergency Special Sessions

Tenth	Opening date		Date of adjournment
	24 April 1997 ⁴⁹		
	Date of resumption		
	Wednesday, 18 October 2000 ⁵⁰		Friday, 20 October 2000 ⁵¹
	Thursday, 20 December 2001 ⁵²		Thursday, 20 December 2001 ⁵³
	Tuesday, 7 May 2002 ⁵⁴		Tuesday, 7 May 2002 ⁵⁵
	Monday, 5 August 2002 ⁵⁶		Monday, 5 August 2002 ⁵⁷
	Friday, 19 September 2003 ⁵⁸		Friday, 19 September 2003 ⁵⁹
	Monday 20 October 2003 ⁶⁰		Tuesday, 21 October 2003 ⁶¹
	Monday, 8 December 2003 ⁶²		Monday, 8 December 2003 ⁶³

³⁸ A/S-23/PV.10 (Resumption 1); In accordance with resolution 52/231 of 4 June 1998 para. 1, the twenty-third special session was scheduled to close on Friday, 9 June 2000. However, in view of the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole had not completed its work by 9 June 2000, the meeting was suspended and resumed following the conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on Saturday, 10 June 2000.

³⁹ A/S-24/PV.1

⁴⁰ A/S-24/PV.10 (Resumption 1); In accordance with resolution 53/28 of 19 November 1998 para. 44, the twenty-fourth special session was scheduled to close on Friday, 30 June 2000. However, in view of the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole had not completed its work by 30 June 2000, the meeting was suspended and resumed following the conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on Saturday, 1 July 2000.

⁴¹ A/S-25/PV.1

⁴² A/S-25/PV.6

⁴³ A/S-26/PV.1

⁴⁴ A/S-26/PV.8

⁴⁵ A/S-27/PV.1

⁴⁶ A/S-27/PV.6

⁴⁷ A/S-28/PV.1

⁴⁸ A/S-28/PV.2

⁴⁹ A/ES-10/PV.1

⁵⁰ A/ES-10/PV.13.

⁵¹ A/ES-10/PV.14, temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/7 of 20 October 2000, para. 12.

⁵² A/ES-10/PV.15.

⁵³ A/ES-10/PV.15; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/9 of 20 December 2001, para. 3

⁵⁴ A/ES-10/PV.16.

⁵⁵ A/ES-10/PV.17; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/10 of 7 May 2002, para. 10.

⁵⁶ A/ES-10/PV.18.

⁵⁷ A/ES-10/PV.19; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/11 of 5 August 2002, para. 8.

⁵⁸ A/ES-10/PV.20.

⁵⁹ A/ES-10/PV.20; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/12 of 19 September 2003, para. 4

⁶⁰ A/ES-10/PV.21.

⁶¹ A/ES-10/PV.22; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003, para. 4.

⁶² A/ES-10/PV.23.

⁶³ A/ES-10/PV.23; temporarily adjourned pursuant to decision ES-10/203 of 8 December 2003.

Friday, 16 July 2004⁶⁴

Tuesday, 20 July 2004⁶⁵

Friday, 17 November 2006⁶⁶

Friday, 17 November 2006⁶⁷

Friday, 15 December 2006⁶⁸

Friday, 15 December 2006⁶⁹

Thursday, 15 January 2009⁷⁰

Friday, 16 January 2009⁷¹

II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

A. Regular annual sessions

1. DATE OF MEETING

7. During the period under review, rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, which stipulates the opening date of regular sessions, was amended twice.

8. During the fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 55/14 of 3 November 2000, amended rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure whereby the Assembly would “meet every year in regular session commencing on the Tuesday following the second Monday in September”⁷². The resolution also decided that the amendment shall take effect from 2001 and specified that the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly shall open on Tuesday, 11 September 2001⁷³. However, the General Assembly held the opening meeting of the fifty-sixth session on Wednesday, 12 September 2001⁷⁴, due to the extraordinary circumstances resulting from the incidents that happened in New York on 11 September 2001.

9. During the fifty-seventh session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 57/301 of 13 March 2003, further amended rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure whereby the Assembly would “meet every year in regular session commencing on the Tuesday of the third week in September, counting from the first week that contains at least one

⁶⁴ A/ES-10/PV.24.

⁶⁵ A/ES-10/PV.27; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, para. 8.

⁶⁶ A/ES-10/PV.28.

⁶⁷ A/ES-10/PV.29; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/16 of 17 November 2006, para. 13.

⁶⁸ A/ES-10/PV.30.

⁶⁹ A/ES-10/PV.31; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006, para. 17.

⁷⁰ A/ES-10/PV.32.

⁷¹ A/ES-10/PV.36; temporarily adjourned pursuant to A/RES/ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009, para. 6.

⁷² A/RES/55/14, para. 1.

⁷³ A/RES/55/14, para. 2.

⁷⁴ A/56/PV.1.

working day”.⁷⁵ In accordance with this rule, the General Assembly, from the fifty-eight to sixty-third sessions, met on the Tuesday of the third week in September, counting from the first week that contains at least one working day.⁷⁶

2. ADJOURNMENT AND RESUMPTION OF SESSION

10. There was no amendment to rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that the Assembly “may decide at any session to adjourn temporarily and resume its meetings at a later date.” During the period under review, the General Assembly always “recessed” its meetings in December shortly before Christmas and held additional meetings during the subsequent year.⁷⁷

3. PLACE OF MEETING

11. All the sessions of the General Assembly during the period under review were held at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York in accordance with rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

4. DURATION OF SESSION

12. During the period under review, the General Committee continued to recommend that the average duration of General Assembly sessions during the main part should be approximately thirteen weeks.⁷⁸ The longest main part was during the fifty-fifth session and lasted 15 weeks and 3 days.⁷⁹ The shortest main part was during the sixty-second session and lasted for 13 weeks and 4 days.⁸⁰ Each year, following the “recess” in December, meetings of the General Assembly continued throughout the whole year until the closing of the session in September.

5. CLOSING DATE OF SESSION

13. With regard to the closing date of sessions, the general practice of the General Assembly during the reviewed period remained the same as described in *Repertory Supplement* 8. Upon recommendation of the General Committee, the General

⁷⁵ A/RES/57/301, para. 1.

⁷⁶ Refer to opening dates specified under paragraph 6.

⁷⁷ For exact dates, please refer to the table in paragraph 6 of this study.

⁷⁸ In accordance with Annex IV of the rules of procedure, section II.B, para. 4.

⁷⁹ A/55/PV.1 – A/ 55/PV.89

⁸⁰ A/62/PV.1 – A/62/PV.79

Assembly every year decided to “recess” its sessions in December⁸¹, and to close its sessions in September of the consecutive year, often one day prior to the opening of the next session.⁸²

B. Special sessions

1. PROCEDURE FOR SUMMONING

14. During the period under review, the General Assembly, in accordance with Article 20 of the Charter and rule 8 (a) of its Rules of Procedure, convened its twenty-third to twenty-eighth special sessions.

a. By the General Assembly

15. The twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled: "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" was convened by the Assembly in accordance with its resolutions 52/100 of 12 December 1997 and 52/231 of 4 June 1998, at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.⁸³

16. The twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world” was convened by the Assembly in accordance with its resolutions 50/161 of 22 December 1995 and 53/28 of 19 November 1998, at the United Nations Office in Geneva.⁸⁴

17. The twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was convened by the Assembly in accordance with its resolutions 52/190 of 18 December 1997 and 53/180 of 15 December 1998, at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.⁸⁵

⁸¹ For exact dates, please refer to the table in paragraph 6 of this study.

⁸² For exact dates, please refer to the table in paragraph 6 of this study.

⁸³ A/RES/52/100, para. 45; A/RES/52/231, para. 1.

⁸⁴ A/RES/50/161, para. 24; A/RES/53/28 para. 44.

⁸⁵ A/RES/52/190, para. 12; A/RES/53/180, para. 2.

18. The twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS was convened by the Assembly in accordance with its resolutions 54/283 of 5 September 2000, 55/13 of 3 November 2000 and 55/242 of 22 February 2000, at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.⁸⁶

19. The twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on Children was convened by the Assembly in accordance with its resolutions 51/186 of 16 December 1996 and 54/93 of 7 December 1999, at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.⁸⁷

20. The twenty-eighth special session of the General Assembly to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps was convened by the Assembly in accordance with its resolution 59/26 of 22 November 2004, at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.⁸⁸

***b. By the Security Council*

***c. At the Request of the Members*

2. DATE OF MEETING

21. Please refer to the table in paragraph 6 which shows the opening and closing dates of each session.

3. CLOSING DATE OF SESSION

22. Please refer to the table in paragraph 6 which shows the opening and closing dates of each session.

C. Emergency special sessions

⁸⁶ A/RES/54/283, para. 1; A/RES/55/13, para. 1; A/RES/55/242, paras. 1-2.

⁸⁷ A/RES/51/186, para. 27; A/RES/54/93, para. 1.

⁸⁸ A/RES/59/26, para. 2

23. During the period under review, the General Assembly resumed the tenth emergency special session several times to consider the item “Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory”. The meetings were held at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

1. PROCEDURE FOR SUMMONING

24. A detailed analysis of the procedure for summoning an emergency special session appears in *Supplement No.2*.⁸⁹

2. DATE OF MEETING

25. Please refer to the table in paragraph 6 which shows the dates on which the meetings of the tenth emergency special sessions were resumed and adjourned during the period under review.

3. CLOSING DATE OF SESSION

26. The tenth emergency special session did not close, nor was a date fixed for its closure, during the period under review.

4. ADJOURNMENT AND RESUMPTION OF SESSION

27. The General Assembly, at the end of each resumed meeting, adopted resolutions that decided “to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from Member States”.⁹⁰ The tenth emergency special session stands adjourned.⁹¹

⁸⁹ *Supplement No. 2*, para. 17 – 21.

⁹⁰ A/RES/ES-10/7 para. 12; A/RES/ES-10/9 para 3; A/RES/ES-10/10 para. 10; A/RES/ES-10/11 para. 8; A/RES/ES-10/12 para. 4; A/RES/ES-10/13 para. 4; decision ES-10/203; A/RES/ES-10/15 para 8; A/RES/ES-10/16 para. 13; A/RES/ES-10/17 para. 17; A/RES/ES-10/18 para. 6.

⁹¹ A/RES/ES-10/18 para. 6.