
Article 20

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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 Nos. 6 and 7*.

I. General survey

2. During the period under review, the General Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of Article 20 of the Charter and of rules 1 and 3 of its rules of procedure, convened its forty-fourth to forty-ninth sessions from 1989 to 1994 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

3. In addition to the regular sessions, the General Assembly held three special sessions: the sixteenth special session in 1989, the seventeenth special session in 1990, and the eighteenth special session in 1990, also held at United Nations Headquarters.

4. The following table shows the opening and closing dates and the approximate duration of each session.

	<i>Opening date</i>	<i>Closing date</i>	<i>Approximate duration</i>
<i>Regular sessions</i>			
Forty-third			
Resumed	14 February 1989	7 March 1989	3 weeks
Resumed	18 April 1989	20 April 1989	3 days
Resumed	11 July 1989	11 July 1989	1 day
Resumed	18 September 1989	18 September 1989	1 day
Forty-fourth	19 September 1989	29 December 1989	3 months and 10 days
89th plenary	20 February 1990		1 day
90th plenary	12 March 1990		1 day
91st plenary	26 March 1990		1 day
92nd plenary	2 April 1990		1 day
93rd plenary	17 May 1990		1 day
94th plenary	28 June 1990		1 day
95th plenary	20 July 1990		1 day
96th plenary	11 September 1990		1 day
97th plenary	12 September 1990		1 day
98th plenary	12 September 1990		1 day
99th plenary	14 September 1990		1 day
100th plenary	17 September 1990	17 September 1990	1 day

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	<i>Opening date</i>	<i>Closing date</i>	<i>Approximate duration</i>
Forty-fifth	18 September 1990	21 December 1990	3 months and 3 days
73rd plenary	29 April 1991		1 day
74th plenary	3 May 1991		1 day
75th plenary	13 May 1991		1 day
76th plenary	17 May 1991		1 day
77th plenary	10 June 1991		1 day
78th plenary	21 June 1991		1 day
79th plenary	28 June 1991		1 day
80th plenary	27 August 1991		1 day
81st plenary	13 September 1991		1 day
82nd plenary	16 September 1991	16 September 1991	1 day
Forty-sixth	17 September 1991	20 December 1991	3 months and 3 days
80th plenary	4 February 1992		1 day
81st plenary	14 February 1992		1 day
82nd plenary	2 March 1992		1 day
83rd plenary	19 March 1992		1 day
84th plenary	13 April 1992		1 day
85th plenary	6 May 1992		1 day
86th plenary	22 May 1992		1 day
87th plenary	29 July 1992		1 day
88th plenary	31 July 1992		1 day
89th plenary	24 August 1992		1 day
90th plenary	24 August 1992		1 day
91st plenary	25 August 1992		1 day
92nd plenary	14 September 1992	14 September 1992	1 day
Forty-seventh	15 September 1992	23 December 1992	3 months and 1 week
95th plenary	19 January 1993		1 day
96th plenary	11 February 1993		1 day
97th plenary	16 March 1993		1 day
98th plenary	8 April 1993		1 day
99th plenary	15 April 1993		1 day
100th plenary	20 April 1993		1 day
101st plenary	29 April 1993		1 day
102nd plenary	6 May 1993		1 day
103rd plenary	10 May 1993		1 day
104th plenary	28 May 1993		1 day
105th plenary	15 June 1993		1 day
106th plenary	22 June 1993		1 day
107th plenary	25 June 1993		1 day
108th plenary	28 July 1993		1 day

	<i>Opening date</i>	<i>Closing date</i>	<i>Approximate duration</i>
109th plenary	17 August 1993		1 day
110th plenary	14 September 1993		1 day
111th plenary	15 September 1993		1 day
112th plenary	20 September 1993	20 September 1993	1 day
Forty-eighth	21 September 1993	20 December 1993	3 months and 2 days
88th plenary	21 January 1994		1 day
89th plenary	14 February 1994		1 day
90th plenary	9 March 1994		1 day
91st plenary	24 March 1994		1 day
92nd plenary	5 April 1994		1 day
93rd plenary	14 April 1994		1 day
94th plenary	26 May 1994		1 day
95th plenary	23 June 1994		1 day
96th plenary	23 June 1994		1 day
97th plenary	8 July 1994		1 day
98th plenary	14 July 1994		1 day
99th plenary	27 July 1994		1 day
100th plenary	27 July 1994		1 day
101st plenary	28 July 1994		1 day
102nd plenary	29 July 1994		1 day
103rd plenary	24 August 1994		1 day
104th plenary	14 September 1994		1 day
105th plenary	19 September 1994		1 day
106th plenary	19 September 1994	19 September 1994	1 day
Forty-ninth	23 September 1994	23 December 1994	3 months and 3 days
<i>Special sessions</i>			
Sixteenth	12 December 1989	14 December 1989	3 days
Seventeenth	20 February 1990	23 February 1990	4 days
Eighteenth	23 April 1990	1 May 1990	9 days

II. Analytical summary of practice

A. Regular annual sessions

****(a) Postponement of opening date**

1. Date of meeting

5. During the period under review, there was no amendment to rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that the Assembly “shall meet every year in regular session commencing on the third Tuesday in September”.

****(b) Change in opening date**

2. Adjournment and resumption of session

6. The table following paragraph 4 shows the opening and closing dates and the approximate duration of each session.

3. Place of meeting

7. All the sessions held during the period under review met at the Headquarters of the United Nations, in New York.

4. Duration of session

8. The table following paragraph 4 shows the opening and closing dates and the approximate duration of each session.

5. Closing date of session

9. Beginning with the forty-fifth session, the General Committee abandoned its previous practice of recommending a date for the closure of the General Assembly sessions in fall. Instead, it recommended that General Assembly sessions be recessed in fall and be closed in September, the day before the opening of its next session:

... in the context of the process of renewal and reform under way and in the light of the practice at recent sessions, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the forty-fourth session should recess on 18 December 1990 and close on 16 September 1991.¹

10. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 1990, the General Assembly adopted the recommendation.² Such recommendations were repeated by the General Committee from the forty-sixth to the forty-ninth sessions and in turn were adopted by the General Assembly.

B. Special sessions

1. Procedure for summoning

11. Article 20 of the Charter provides that special sessions “shall be convoked by the Secretary-General

¹ A/45/250.

² See A/45/PV.3.

at the request of the Security Council or of a majority of the Members of the United Nations”.

(a) By the General Assembly

12. The sixteenth special session was summoned by the General Assembly at the 68th plenary meeting of its forty-third session. By its resolution 43/50 of 5 December 1988, the General Assembly decided to hold a special session “on apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa”.

13. The seventeenth special session was summoned by the General Assembly at the 43rd plenary meeting of its forty-fourth session. By its resolution 44/16 of 1 November 1989, the General Assembly decided to hold a special session “to consider as a matter of urgency the question of international cooperation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking, and distribution of narcotic drugs, with a view to expanding the scope of the increasing effectiveness of such cooperation”.

14. The eighteenth special session was summoned by the General Assembly at the 90th plenary meeting of its forty-third session. The General Assembly, in accordance with its decision 43/460, decided to convene from 23 to 27 April 1990 a special session devoted to economic cooperation, in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development of developing countries.

*** (b) By the Security Council*

*** (c) At the request of Members*

2. Date of meeting

15. The table following paragraph 4 shows the opening and closing dates and the approximate duration of each session.

3. Closing date of session

16. The table following paragraph 4 shows the opening and closing dates and the approximate duration of each session.