# Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs

**Supplement No. 10**

(Advance version, to be issued in volume II of Supplement No. 10 (forthcoming) of the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs)

## Article 20

### Contents

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


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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Opening Date</th>
<th>Closing Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifty-fifth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main part</td>
<td>Tuesday, 5 September 2000¹</td>
<td>Saturday, 23 December 2000²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resumed part</td>
<td>Friday, 26 January 2001³</td>
<td>Monday, 10 September 2001⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifty-sixth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main part</td>
<td>Wednesday, 12 September 2001⁵</td>
<td>Monday, 24 December 2001⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resumed Part</td>
<td>Thursday, 31 January 2002⁷</td>
<td>Monday, 9 September 2002⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifty-seventh</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main part</td>
<td>Tuesday, 10 September 2002⁹</td>
<td>Friday, 20 December 2002¹⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resumed part</td>
<td>Wednesday, 29 January 2003¹¹</td>
<td>Monday, 15 September 2003¹²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifty-eighth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main part</td>
<td>Tuesday, 16 September 2003¹³</td>
<td>Tuesday, 23 December 2003¹⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resumed part</td>
<td>Monday, 9 February 2004¹⁵</td>
<td>Monday, 13 September 2004¹⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifth-ninth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main part</td>
<td>Tuesday, 14 September 2004¹⁷</td>
<td>Thursday, 23 December 2004¹⁸</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Opening Date</th>
<th>Closing Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twenty-third</td>
<td>Monday, 5 June 2000</td>
<td>Saturday, 10 June 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 A/59/PV.77
30 A/59/PV.118
31 A/60/PV.1
32 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.
33 A/60/PV.101
34 A/60/PV.1
35 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.
36 A/61/PV.1
37 A/61/PV.1
38 A/61/PV.1
39 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.
40 A/62/PV.80
41 A/62/PV.122
42 A/62/PV.1
43 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.
44 A/63/PV.1
45 A/63/PV.75
46 A/63/PV.105
47 A/S-23/PV.1
Emergency Special Sessions

Tenth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening date</th>
<th>Date of adjournment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 April 1997</td>
<td>Friday, 20 October 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 18 October 2000</td>
<td>Thursday, 20 December 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 7 May 2002</td>
<td>Tuesday, 7 May 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 5 August 2002</td>
<td>Monday, 5 August 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, 19 September 2003</td>
<td>Friday, 19 September 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 20 October 2003</td>
<td>Tuesday, 21 October 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 8 December 2003</td>
<td>Monday, 8 December 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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28 A/ES-10/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.

29 A/ES-10/PV.23; temporarily adjourned pursuant to decision ES-10/203 of 8 December 2003.
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 2001\(^{73}\). However, the General Assembly held the opening meeting of the fifth-sixth session on Wednesday, 12 September 2001\(^{74}\), 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

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\(^{64}\) 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 December\textsuperscript{81}, and to close its sessions in September of the consecutive year, often one day prior to the opening of the next session.\textsuperscript{82}

\textbf{B. Special sessions}

\textbf{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.

\textit{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{81} For exact dates, please refer to the table in paragraph 6 of this study.
\textsuperscript{82} For exact dates, please refer to the table in paragraph 6 of this study.
\textsuperscript{83} A/RES/52/100, para. 45; A/RES/52/231, para. 1.
\textsuperscript{84} A/RES/50/161, para. 24; A/RES/53/28 para. 44.
\textsuperscript{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

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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.