ARTICLE 21

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TEXT OF ARTICLE 21

The General Assembly shall adopt its own rules of procedure. It shall elect its President for each session.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. During the period under review, the General Assembly amended its rules of procedure. The amendments are summarized in section II.A. The practice of the Assembly concerning the elections of its President is found in section II.B.

I. GENERAL SURVEY

2. During the period under review, the General Assembly continued its work aimed at the rationalization of its work and procedures. As a result, the rules of procedure of the Assembly were amended during the fifty-fifth, fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions.1

II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

A. Adoption and amendment of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

   a) General Assembly (resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee)

   Amendments to rule 1 of the rules of procedure

3. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/14 of 3 November 2000, which amended rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

1 A/RES/55/14; A/RES/56/509; A/RES/57/301
Assembly. The Assembly, noting that the Monday immediately preceding the first Tuesday following 1 September falls on a United Nations holiday at Headquarters, and since the closing of the General Assembly sessions should be on a Monday, which should not be a holiday, and the opening of the regular sessions should be on the following day, a Tuesday, decided to amend rule 1 of the rules of procedure to read: “The General Assembly shall meet every year in regular session commencing on the Tuesday following the second Monday in September”.

4. At its fifty-seventh session, the General Assembly, noting that the advancement of the opening date of the regular session as decided in its resolution 55/14 has resulted in insufficient time to ensure preparedness for the session, adopted resolution 57/301 of 13 March 2003, further amending rule 1 of the rules of procedure to read: “The General Assembly shall 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 working day.”

5. By the same resolution 57/301, the Assembly also decided to change the opening and duration of the general debate at future sessions. The Assembly decided that “the general debate in the General Assembly shall open on the Tuesday following the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly and shall be held without interruption over a period of nine working days”. This decision was annexed to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

**Amendments to rule 30, 31 and 99 (a) of the rules of procedure**

6. At the fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly, convinced that a smooth transition between successive presidencies of the General Assembly and successive chairmanships of each of the Main Committees could usefully contribute to improving the work of the Assembly, adopted resolution 56/509 of 8 July 2002, deciding:

(i) to amend rule 30 of the rules of procedure to allow the Assembly to elect a President and twenty-one Vice-Presidents at least three

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2 A/RES/55/14, op.1  
3 A/RES/57/301, op 1  
4 A/RES/57/301, op. 2  
5 A/RES/57/301, op. 4
months before the opening of the session over which they are to preside; 6
(ii) to amend rule 31 of the rules of procedure so that if, at the opening of a session of the Assembly, the President for that session has not yet been elected, the President of the previous session, or the chairman of that delegation from which the President of the previous session was elected, would preside until the Assembly has elected a President; 7 and
(iii) to amend paragraph (a) of rule 99 of the rules of procedure, to allow all the Main Committees to elect a Chairman at least three months before the opening of the session and to elect the other officers, provided for in rule 103, at the latest by the end of the first week of the session. 8

B. Elections of the President of the General Assembly

7. During the period under review, from the fifth-fifth to the sixty-third sessions, only one candidate was nominated, and thus the President of the General Assembly in each case was elected by acclamation. 9

8. At the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions, the President of the General Assembly was elected at the beginning of the session. Following the amendment to rule 30 of the rules of procedure during the fifty-sixth session10, the Assembly elected the President of the General Assembly for the fifth-seventh session at the 106th plenary meeting of the fifty-sixth session, on 8 July 200211. The Assembly continued the practice of electing the President of the General Assembly at least three months prior to the opening of the subsequent session pursuant to rule 30 of the rules of procedure, as amended.

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6 A/RES/56/509, op. 2 (a)
7 A/RES/56/509 op. 2 (b)
8 A/RES/56/509 op. 2 (c)
9 General Assembly decisions 55/302, 56/302, 56/320, 57/418, 58/418, 59/421, 60/418, 61/418 and 62/416
10 A/RES/56/509, op 2 (a)
9. The Presidents of the General Assembly, for the fifty-fifth to sixty-third regular sessions, were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Name (Country)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fifty-fifth</td>
<td>Mr. Harri Holkeri (Finland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifty-sixth</td>
<td>Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifty-seventh</td>
<td>Mr. Jan Kavan (Czech Republic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifty-eighth</td>
<td>Mr. Julian Hunte (Saint Lucia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifty-ninth</td>
<td>Mr. Jean Ping (Gabon)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sixtieth</td>
<td>Mr. Jan Eliasson (Sweden)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixty-first</td>
<td>Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixty-second</td>
<td>Mr. Srgjan Kerim (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixty-third</td>
<td>Mr. Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann (Nicaragua)</td>
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