

OTHER BODIES

In addition to the main committees, the General Assembly is assisted mainly by these bodies:

- (1) The General Committee, composed of the President, 17 Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, and the chairmen of the seven main committees, is a steering group that meets during the first week of the session to recommend the inclusion of items in the agenda, the allocation of an agenda item to committee, and to supervise the smooth running of the Assembly's work.
- (2) The Credentials Committee, appointed by the President at each session, verifies the credentials of the representatives (both the USSR and USA traditionally have been members).
- (3) The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions provides expert examination of the UN budget.
- (4) The Committee on contributions advises the General Assembly on the apportionment of the expenses of the organization among the members.
- (5) The Committee on Conferences advises the General Assembly on the program of conferences and acts on behalf of the General Assembly between sessions.

Subsidiary and ad hoc bodies are also set up as necessary.

VOTING

Voting on important questions, such as recommendations on peace and security, election of members to the main organs, admission, suspension and expulsion of members, trusteeship questions and budgetary matters, is by two-thirds majority. Voting on other questions is by simple majority. Each member of the General Assembly has one vote.

In determining two-thirds or simple majorities, only "yes" and "no" votes are counted, not abstentions. However, in UN practice an abstention has come to be a respected and widely-used method of indicating a government's position on issues on which a variety of conflicting factors come into play and where a simple "yes" or "no" vote would not be an accurate reflection of the attitude of a government. Quite often explanations of a Member State's vote are made before or after the vote.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

The General Assembly meets once a year in regular session for about three months, commencing on the third Tuesday in September. Special sessions may also be convened at the request of the Security Council, a majority of the UN members, or one member if the majority of members concur. An emergency special session may also be called within 24 hours of a request by the Security Council on the vote of any nine members of the Council, by a majority of the UN members, or by one member if the majority concur.

Sessions are opened by the President of the previous session (or the chairman of his country's delegation) and the first task on the agenda, after the appointment of the Credentials Committee, is the election of a new President for the next 12 months. The convention is firmly established that he should not be a representative of a great power. The President is elected by secret ballot, but normally private arrangements are made before the session opens to find a candidate for whom an impressive majority of the votes can be mustered. The