

CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The delegation of a Member shall consist of not more than five representatives, and as many advisers, technical advisers, experts and persons of similar status as may be required by the delegation (Rule 25 of the General Assembly Rules of Procedure).

An alternate representative may act as a representative upon designation by the Chairman of the delegation (Rule 26 of the General Assembly Rules of Procedure).

In practice, no distinction is made between a delegate and alternate delegate representative. The Canadian Delegation to any session of the United Nations General Assembly is appointed by Cabinet upon the recommendation of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA). Normally, the delegation will consist of ten members: five representatives and five alternates. The chairman of the delegation is usually the SSEA and the vice-chairman the Canadian Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Individual members of the delegation are assigned responsibilities for one or other of the seven main committees. Invariably, the SSEA returns to Ottawa during the session and direction of the delegation devolves upon the vice-chairman.

In addition to the delegates themselves, a number of advisers are named, at least one for each of the seven main committees. The Permanent Mission in New York and the Bureau of United Nations Affairs in Ottawa provide most of the advisers assigned to the delegation but officers from other missions, other divisions in Ottawa, and other government departments may also be appointed (often for short periods to cope with specific agenda items).

OBSERVERS ON THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

For a number of years, it has been the practice of the Canadian Government to appoint representatives from the various national political parties as parliamentary observers to sessions of the General Assembly. Senators and Members of Parliament have been selected in rough accordance with the number of seats held by each party in the respective legislative chambers. On occasion, private citizens with a professional concern for United Nations affairs have also been appointed as observers in one or another capacity.

It is believed that as an individual becomes more aware of the potential and limitations of the United Nations system, so his ability to identify and evaluate possible courses of action for the resolution of international problems is enhanced. Also, even though most Parliamentarians are familiar with the problems under discussion in the United Nations, experience as an observer may contribute to a deeper understanding of specific issues troubling the world community and the way these issues affect Canada.