BIPM

Rules of Procedure of the General Conference on Weights and Measures

Adopted on 15 October 2026
by the General Conference
on Weights and Measures

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Introduction

1. These Rules of Procedure govern meetings of the General Conference on Weights and Measures.
2. They are intended to be complementary to the Metre Convention, insofar as any of the Rules proceed therefrom. In the event of a conflict between these Rules of Procedure and the Metre Convention, the Metre Convention prevails. Notwithstanding, these Rules are not intended to be legally binding.
3. The terms given below will be referred to throughout the Rules of Procedure as follows:
   - Metre Convention and Annexed Regulations: Metre Convention
   - General Conference on Weights and Measures (or CGPM): General Conference
   - International Committee on Weights and Measures (or CIPM): International Committee
   - Director of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (or Director of the BIPM): Director
   - High Contracting Parties to the Metre Convention and other States acceding to the Metre Convention: Member States
   - Associate States and Economies of the General Conference: Associate Members
   - Intergovernmental organizations and States entitled to observe the General Conference: Observers.

Chapter 1, Meetings

Rule 1, Frequency

1. Ordinarily, the General Conference will be convoked and convened every four years. Meetings may be convened more or less frequently, consistent with the achievement of the purpose of the Organization, except that the interval between two subsequent meetings of the General Conference will not exceed six years.

Rule 2, Convocation and Presidency

1. The General Conference will be convoked by decision of the International Committee, instructing the Director to:
   a. notify the President of the French Academy of Sciences and Member States accordingly; and
   b. invite Associate Members and Observers to observe the General Conference.
2. The President of the French Academy of Sciences will assume the presidency of the General Conference and chair the meeting of the General Conference. The President of the French Academy of Sciences does not have a right to vote at the General Conference.
3. If the President of the French Academy of Sciences is incapacitated or the position is vacant on the opening date of the meeting, a Chair of the meeting will be appointed by decision of the General Conference, upon the recommendation of the International Committee.

Rule 3, Opening Date, Venue and Duration

1. Upon convocation of the General Conference, the Director will consult the President of the French Academy of Sciences and will propose meeting dates and a venue within the vicinity of Paris for decision by the International Committee.
2. Member States, Associate Members, Observers and the Foreign Ministry of France will ordinarily be given no less than six month's advance notice by the Director of the opening date, anticipated duration and venue of the meeting of the General Conference.
3. Meetings of the General Conference will be for such duration as its discussions and instigation of measures necessitate. Unless decided otherwise by the General Conference, the meeting will be declared closed by the Chair on the anticipated closing date.

Rule 4, Arrangements for Meetings

1. Meetings of the General Conference should ordinarily be convened in the physical presence of participants and attendees at the venue. However, alternatively:
    a. on the proposal of Member States, any Member State may participate in the General Conference through a secure electronic system for part or all of the meeting; and
    b. the International Committee, the Director and staff members, Associate Members, Observers, and any invited guest may attend part or all of the meeting through a secure electronic system.
2. Any participation by a Member State in the General Conference through such secure electronic system will possess delegates of their entire competence in accordance with the Metre Convention and these Rules of Procedure.
3. Unless overruled by decision of the General Conference, the Chair may declare that part of the meeting takes place in confidence and suspend transcription and the summary of proceedings.
4. Unless overruled by decision of the General Conference, the Chair may declare that part of the meeting takes place in public, achieved either physically at the venue of the meeting or through a secure electronic system.
5. The Director will be responsible for all necessary arrangements for meetings of the General Conference.

Rule 5, Election Commission

1. Following the closing of a meeting, the General Conference is no longer convoked in accordance with the Metre Convention. However, to possess the Organization of a body between meetings to administer the renewal of the International Committee in accordance with the Metre Convention and these Rules of Procedure, there will be an Election Commission.
2. At each meeting, the General Conference will elect nine Member State representatives to the Election Commission each belonging to a different Member State. The General Conference will endeavour to ensure fair regional representation and fair representation of States with maximum, intermediary and minimum contribution levels within the Election Commission. All proposals from Member States for membership submitted in advance to the Secretary of the International Committee, will be considered by the General Conference. The members of the International Committee will be ineligible.

3. As necessary, the Election Commission will convene at its own initiative or at the request of the International Committee. The Director will be responsible for all necessary arrangements for meetings of the Election Commission. The Election Commission will establish its own rules of procedure and will define the criteria for the election of the International Committee and the corresponding process.
4. The Election Commission will remain constituted until vacated and reconstituted by election of a new Election Commission at the next meeting of the General Conference. Any vacancy arising on the Election Commission between two General Conferences will be provisionally filled by a representative appointed by the Member State to which the vacating member belonged.

Chapter 2, Agenda and Documents

Rule 6, Agenda

1. A provisional agenda will be prepared by the International Committee and transmitted by the Director to Member States no less than six months in advance of the opening date of the meeting of the General Conference.
2. Any Member State or the International Committee may, at least four months before the opening date of the meeting, request the Director to include supplementary agenda items. Such supplementary agenda items should be transmitted by the Director to Member States and the International Committee, at least one month before the opening date of the meeting.
3. In consultation with the President and the Secretary of the International Committee, the Director will prepare a revised agenda, consolidating the provisional agenda and supplementary agenda items for submission to the General Conference. This revised agenda will be considered and adopted by decision of the General Conference at the start of the meeting.
4. The Chair of the meeting may request advice on any agenda item from the Secretariat of the General Conference. Following adoption of the agenda, agenda items may only be deleted, amended or added by decision of the General Conference.

Rule 7, Documents

1. Provisional agenda and supplementary agenda items will be accompanied by explanatory memoranda, supporting materials and draft decisions of the General Conference, as appropriate.
2. Any additional documentation required for consideration of the provisional agenda and supplementary agenda items will be transmitted by the Director to Member States and the International Committee as soon as possible following notification of the convocation of the General Conference.

Chapter 3, Attendance and Credentials

Rule 8, Attendance

1. Member States may be represented at the General Conference by delegates and alternate delegates, aided by technical advisors. Each Member State has the right to one vote.

2. Associate Members and Observers may be represented at the General Conference by observers, aided by technical advisors. They have no voting rights.
3. Members of the International Committee are entitled to attend the General Conference. Unless they have been appointed to represent their Member State, they have no voting rights.
4. The Director is entitled to attend the General Conference, with no voting rights.
5. Guests and staff members may be invited by the International Committee and the Director to observe the General Conference. They have no voting rights.

Rule 9, Credentials

1. Delegates will possess credentials issued by their head of State, head of government, Foreign Ministry or any other competent authority of their State. Such credentials will identify the principal delegate of a Member State and one or more alternates.
2. Observers will possess credentials issued by the competent authorities of the State, non-State Economy, or the intergovernmental organization they are representing.
3. Credentials will be submitted to the Director as soon as possible following notification of the convocation of the General Conference. The identities of technical advisors will be similarly submitted to the Director.
4. The Director will examine and report to the General Conference on credentialling for the meeting. The Director will return any faulty credentials as soon as possible for re-submission. Non-credentialled delegates and observers and unidentified technical advisors will be denied access to the General Conference. In the event of any disputed credentialling, the Director will refer the matter through the Chair, for decision by the General Conference.

Chapter 4, Chairing and Secretariat

Rule 10, Chairing

1. In addition to discharging the competences conferred upon them elsewhere by these Rules of Procedure, the Chair of the General Conference will be competent to:
    a. declare the opening and the closing of the meeting;
    b. direct discussions and instigate measures, in accordance with the agenda;
    c. control proceedings, determine the order of speakers and maintain the efficiency and good order of the meeting;
    d. recognize and call upon speakers;
    e. call to order insufficiently relevant and concise speakers;
    f. unless overruled by decision of the General Conference, immediately decide on points of order;
    g. unless overruled by decision of the General Conference, limit the time allowed to speakers and the number of times each speaker is allowed to speak;

h. unless overruled by decision of the General Conference, suspend, adjourn and close the meeting;

i. unless overruled by decision of the General Conference, preside over part of a meeting in confidence or in public;

j. unless overruled by decision of the General Conference, determine the application and interpretation of these Rules of Procedure;

k. put matters to a vote and announce decisions; and

l. otherwise ensure adherence to these Rules of Procedure.

2. If the Chair finds it necessary to be temporarily absent during the meeting, the President of the International Committee will act as Chair. However, if the absence of the Chair is necessitated for more than two days, an acting Chair will be appointed by decision of the General Conference to preside for the remainder of the meeting. The President of the International Committee acting as Chair and any appointed acting Chair will preside at the General Conference and have all the competences of the Chair, in accordance with these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 11, Secretariat

1. The Secretary of the International Committee will be at the disposal of the General Conference to act as the Secretary of the meeting. The Secretary of the meeting will be appointed by decision of the General Conference. The appointed Secretary of the meeting will be the Chair of the Secretariat.

2. The Secretary of the meeting, the Director and the Principal Legal Advisor of the Organization will constitute the Secretariat of the General Conference. The Secretariat will:

   a. schedule the meeting, in consultation with the President of the International Committee;

   b. coordinate the work of the meeting;

   c. consider points of order and the order in which items on the agenda are to be dealt with;

   d. consider requests to delete, amend or add agenda items; and

   e. support and advise the Chair in presiding at the General Conference.

3. The Chair may at any time call upon members of the Secretariat to address the General Conference concerning the proceedings.

Chapter 5, Languages and Records

Rule 12, Languages

1. Speakers at the General Conference should use either French or English. The Chair will not recognize speakers using any other languages to address the General Conference.

2. Arrangements will be made for the simultaneous translation at the General Conference of French speakers into English and English speakers into French. No other translation services will be afforded by the Organization.

Rule 13, Records

1. Arrangements will be made for the verbatim transcription of the General Conference. The transcripts will be made available to delegates, observers and members of the International Committee upon request.
2. As soon as possible and within one year of the end of a meeting of the General Conference, the Organization will publish proceedings of the meeting in French and English. The official record of the meetings is the French version.

Chapter 6, Proceedings

Rule 14, Quorum

1. The presence of delegates representing a majority of Member States will be required in order for the General Conference to deliberate and to take decisions.

Rule 15, Speeches

1. No person attending the meeting may address the General Conference unless recognized by the Chair.
2. The Chair will ordinarily call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The Chair may call to order insufficiently relevant and concise speakers and may limit the time allowed to speakers and the number of times each speaker is allowed to speak. The Chair may afford a right of reply to delegates, consistent with maintaining the efficiency of the meeting.

Rule 16, Procedure

1. In the course of the meeting, any delegate may raise a point of order arising from these Rules of Procedure and such point of order will be immediately ruled upon by the Chair. If then immediately appealed by a delegate, the ruling by the Chair will be put to a vote. The appealed ruling of the Chair will stand, unless overruled by decision of the General Conference.

Rule 17, Decisions

1. The Chair may ascertain and announce a decision of the General Conference on an absence-of-objection basis. If any Member State then immediately objects to such a decision the matter will be put to a vote.
2. Matters concerning the assessment of financial contributions by Member States will not proceed to a vote, but will be decided on the basis of absence-of-objection. Such consensus will be facilitated by the Secretariat, ascertained through a roll-call of the Member States.
3. All other decisions of the General Conference will be obtained by voting.

Rule 18, Voting

1. Votes will be cast on behalf of Member States by their principal delegate or alternates, consistent with their credentials.

2. The Chair will determine to close debate and proceed to a vote of the General Conference and announce the matter for decision. Roll-call voting will be in the French alphabetical order of Member States.
3. Election of members of the International Committee will be determined by secret ballot, in accordance with Rule 20 of these Rules of Procedures. Election of members of the Election Commission will be determined by secret ballot, in accordance with Rule 5 of these Rules of Procedure.
4. Decisions of the General Conference put to vote may be obtained by roll-call voting conducted by the Secretary of the meeting. Member States may explain their roll-call voting, before voting, subject to considerations of relevance and concision, as determined by the Chair. No delegate will interrupt the voting except on a point of order concerning the voting under way.
5. Each Member State possesses one vote in the General Conference. Abstentions will be regarded as the Member State not voting. All matters that proceed to a vote are decided by a majority of the Member States voting. Equally divided voting will be regarded as rejecting the matter for decision. The outcome of the vote and consequent decision of the General Conference will be announced by the Chair.

Chapter 7, Renewal of the International Committee

Rule 19, Candidacy for the International Committee

1. Following the convocation of the General Conference, the Election Commission will:
    a. draw up the list of provisionally elected members of the International Committee seeking election by the General Conference, those resigning from the International Committee and incumbent members of the International Committee seeking re-election;
    b. invite Member States to declare nominations for candidacy to the International Committee.
2. The list of all candidacies received, complete with application files, will be included in the final documentation for the meeting.

Rule 20, Election of Members

1. At each meeting of the General Conference, there should be nine outgoing members of the International Committee. This should be achieved by:
    a. the membership ending of all members provisionally elected to vacancies between meetings of the General Conference;
    b. resignation of members; and
    c. as necessary, the balance drawn by lot.
2. If there are fewer than nine outgoing members of the International Committee the Election Commission will stage a drawing by lot of incumbent members of the International Committee in due time and under an independent supervision. Any member thereby chosen by lot should be regarded as an outgoing member of the International Committee and may be a candidate for election.

3. All candidates for election to the International Committee will be evaluated by the Election Commission against published criteria, in accordance with an open, transparent and merit-based process and the General Conference will receive recommendations relatedly, from the Election Commission.
4. After having taken note of the recommendation of the Election Commission, at each meeting Member States will elect by secret ballot the number of members of the International Committee necessary to restore it to its full complement. Each Member State will be able to vote a number of times, equal to the number of outgoing members of the International Committee. Candidates will be elected in order of the most votes polled, until the full complement of the International Committee is restored. If necessary, there will be one or more run-offs between candidates polling equal votes.
5. The outcome of election to the International Committee by the General Conference will be announced by the Chair. The International Committee will remain constituted until vacated and reconstituted by election of a new International Committee at the next meeting of the General Conference.

Chapter 8, Modification, Suspension and Entry into Operation

Rule 21, Modification and Suspension

1. Modification or temporary suspension of these Rules of Procedure will only be determined by decision of the General Conference if the matter is included on the revised agenda submitted to the meeting.

Rule 22, Entry into Operation

1. These Rules of Procedure will enter into operation on the date they are adopted by decision of the General Conference.

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