

**Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs
Supplement No. 8**

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Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs)

Volume II

ARTICLE 18

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ARTICLE 18

TEXT OF ARTICLE 18

1. Each member of the General Assembly shall have one vote.
2. Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of members of the Economic and social Council, the election of members of the Trusteeship Council in accordance with paragraph 1 (c) of Article 86, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions.
3. Decisions on other questions, including the determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. The main headings which appeared in the previous *Supplement* have been maintained for this study.

I. GENERAL SURVEY

2. The present study covers the forty-fourth to the forty-ninth session (its resumption from 26 January to 18 September 1995 being included) and the sixteenth to the eighteenth special sessions, which were held between 19 September 1989 and 18 September 1995. The review of the voting which took place in the General Assembly during the period covered by this *Supplement* reveals a pattern similar to that described in the *Supplement No. 7* of the *Repertory*. During this period, the majority of the Assembly's decisions have been adopted without a vote. The rest of the decisions were mainly adopted with a two-thirds majority vote and the simple majority vote represents an exception. The roll-cast vote procedure is still used in a very few cases. During the period under review, no reference was made to Article 18 in the parliamentary discussions.
3. During its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted 336 resolutions under 244 different numbers (44/1 to 44/244). Of these, 220 were adopted without a vote and 116 received more than a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting; two of these resolutions were voted through a roll-call vote (44/124 A, 44/124 B on the "Question of Antarctica"). During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 78 decisions other than elections and appointments under 72 different names (44/401 to

44/472). Except three decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,¹ all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.

4. During its sixteenth special session held between 12 to 14 December 1989, the General Assembly adopted one resolution (S-16/1) and four decisions other than elections and appointments (S-16/21 to S-16/24), all without a vote.
5. During its seventeenth special session held between 20 to 23 February 1990, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions (S-17/1 and S-17/2) and three decisions other than elections and appointments (S-17/21 to S-17/23), all without a vote.
6. During its eighteenth special session held between 28 to 27 February 1990, the General Assembly adopted three resolutions (S-18/1 and S-18/3) and three decisions other than elections and appointments (S-18/21 to S-18/23), all without a vote.
7. During its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly adopted 344 resolutions under 269 different numbers (45/1 to 45/269). Of these, 258 were adopted without a vote and 86 received more than a two-thirds majority; two of these resolutions were voted through a roll-call vote (45/78 A, 45/78 B on the “Question of Antarctica”). During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 67 decisions other than elections and appointments under 61 different names (45/401 to 45/461). Except four decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,² all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.
8. During its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted 305 resolutions under 242 different numbers (46/1 to 46/242). Of these, 230 were adopted without a vote and 75 received more than a two-thirds majority; two of these resolutions were voted through a roll-call vote (46/41 A, 46/41 B on the “Question of Antarctica”). During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 87 decisions other than elections and appointments under 81 different names (46/401 to 46/481). Except two decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,³ all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.
9. During its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly adopted 305 resolutions under 237 different numbers (47/1 to 47/237). Of these, 230 were adopted without a vote and 75 received more than a two-thirds majority; one of these resolutions was voted through a roll-call vote (47/57 on the “Question of Antarctica”). During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 89 decisions other than elections and appointments under 78 different names (47/401 to 47/478). Except four decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,⁴ all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.

¹ General Assembly decisions 44/425, 44/428 and 44/429.

² General Assembly decisions 45/406, 45/409, 45/410 and 45/416.

³ General Assembly decisions 46/419 and 46/422.

⁴ General Assembly decisions 47/409, 47/413, 47/445 and 47/456.

10. During its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted 334 resolutions under 267 different numbers (48/1 to 48/267). Of these, 269 were adopted without a vote and 63 received more than a two-thirds majority;⁵ one of these resolutions was voted through a roll-call vote (48/80 on the “Question of Antarctica”). During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 128 decisions other than elections and appointments under 111 different names (48/401 to 48/511). Except two decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,⁶ all the other decisions were adopted without a vote.
11. During its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted 327 resolutions under 252 different numbers (49/1 to 49/252). Of these, 259 were adopted without a vote and 66 received more than a two-thirds majority.⁷ During the same period, the Assembly also adopted 111 decisions other than elections and appointments under 103 different names (49/401 to 49/503). Except two decisions which were adopted by more than a two-thirds majority,⁸ all the other decisions were adopted without a vote
12. With regard to elections and appointments to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, following the decision 34/401 on the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the Assembly, the General Assembly dispensed itself with the formal balloting procedure when the number of candidates corresponded to the number of seats to be filled.
13. The General Assembly has continued to hold elections to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council as specified by paragraph 2 of Article 18. The Assembly has not held elections to the Trusteeship Council since its twentieth session.

⁵ Only General Assembly resolutions 48/78 on Israeli nuclear armament, and 48/124 on Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral process, were voted with a simple majority.

⁶ General Assembly decisions 48/421 and 48/424.

⁷ Only General Assembly resolutions 49/75 K on General and complete disarmament and 49/180 on Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral process, were voted with a simple majority.

⁸ General Assembly decisions 49/417 and 49/422.

14. For the sake of clarity, statistical data on the adoption of resolutions and decisions during the period under review are shown in the following table:

	<i>Resolutions adopted</i>				<i>Resolutions not adopted</i>			<i>Decisions adopted</i>			
	<i>Without a vote</i>	<i>By a 2/3 majority</i>	<i>By a simple majority</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Failing 2/3 majority</i>	<i>Failing simple majority</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Without a vote</i>	<i>By a 2/3 majority</i>	<i>By a simple majority</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Regular sessions</i>											
Forty-fourth	220	116	-	336	-	-	-	75	3	-	78
Forty-fifth.....	258	86	-	344	-	-	-	63	4	-	67
Forty-sixth.....	230	75	-	305	-	-	-	85	2	-	87
Forty-seventh.....	230	75	-	305	-	-	-	85	4	-	89
Forty-eighth.....	269	63	2	334	-	-	-	126	2	-	128
Forty-ninth	259	66	2	327	-	-	-	109	2	-	111
<i>Special sessions</i>											
Sixteenth.....	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
Seventeenth.....	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
Eighteenth	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
TOTALS	1472	481	4	1957	-	-	-	553	17	-	570

II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

**A. Practice relating to Article 18 (1)

**B. Practice relating to both paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 18

C. Practice relating to Article 18 (2)

1. QUESTION OF THE APPLICATION OF THE TERM “IMPORTANT” TO PROPOSALS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE QUESTIONS ENUMERATED IN ARTICLE 18 (2).

15. As indicated in the table in paragraph 13 above, the General Assembly has adopted 1957 resolutions during the period under review. It should be noted that only four resolutions were adopted by a simple majority vote. In *Supplements Nos. 1 to 6*, reference has been made to the practice by which General Assembly referred to Article 18 only in those cases where there was a divergence of views as to the majority required for the adoption of a resolution or when a two-thirds majority did

not seem to be assured beforehand.⁹ During the period under consideration, no situation arose in which the continuation or change of this practice could be tested.¹⁰

***a. Considerations involved in determining whether the adoption of a proposal requires a two-third majority*

***b. Cases in which the two-third majority rule has been applied without reference to the “importance” question*

****2. PRACTICE RELATING TO QUESTIONS SPECIALLY ENUMERATED IN ARTICLE 18 (2).**

****D. Practice relating to Article 18 (3)**

⁹ See *Repertory of United Nations Organs, Supplement No. 1*, vol. I, under Article 18, para. 17 to 30; *Supplement No. 2*, vol. I, under Article 18, para. 9 to 29; *Supplement No. 3*, vol. I, under Article 18, para. 17 to 44; *Supplement No. 4*, vol. I, under Article 18, para. 13 to 53; *Supplement No. 5*, vol. II, under Article 18, para. 20 to 56 and *Supplement No. 6*, vol. II, under Article 18, para. 20 to 31.

¹⁰ The same situation was represented in the *Repertory, Supplement No. 7*, vol. II, under Article 18, para. 14.