

FAQs for Fifth Committee Coordinators

This document is an informal working paper, built on elements contained in “Tips for Facilitators (2019)” (see Annex), which was initiated by the Office of the Chair of the 73rd session, in coordination with experienced coordinators. While “Tips for Facilitators (2019)” remains largely valid, it reflects the information as it stood at that time and has in some respects been overtaken by subsequent developments.

1. What is the role of coordinators?

“Facilitators are expected to be proactive and problem solvers in order to drive delegations – and the session - to a conclusion” (Tips for Facilitators (2019)).

Coordinators preside over **informal consultations and the negotiation process** (see Figure 1) for “their” specific reports and facilitate negotiations with the aim of bringing them to a successful conclusion. They neutrally and transparently support delegations in negotiating a consensus outcome, including by convening **informal informal consultations** or **informal informal informal consultations** (“going offline”).

Figure 1: Fifth Committee Process overview

	Formal introduction	Informal consultations and negotiation process				Formal adoption
		1st informal consultation	2nd informal consultation	(varied)	3rd informal consultation (time permitting)	
Actions	Introduction of reports by the Secretariat, ACABQ and other actors Statements by Member States	Q&A on reports First and second reading of the skeletal Setting of deadlines <i>(Any language agreed upon is considered “adopted”)</i>	Introduction of language 1st reading Negotiations 2nd reading <i>(Any language agreed upon is considered “adopted”)</i>	Negotiations among Member States <i> Oftentimes in “informal-informal” or “informal-informal-informal consultations”</i>	Informal adoption of outstanding paragraphs, followed by adoption of resolution as a whole <i>(Any language agreed upon is considered “adopted”)</i>	Formal adoption of all draft resolutions Statements by Member States
Roles	Chaired by Chair or Vice-Chairs Full Secretariat support	Chaired by Coordinators of item/question Full Secretariat support	Chaired by Coordinators of item/question Full Secretariat support	Depending on negotiator preference	Chaired by Coordinator of item/question 5C Secretariat support	Chaired by Chair or Vice-Chairs Full Secretariat support
Guiding Principles	<i>Rules of procedure of the Assembly, relevant resolutions and decisions</i>	<i>Working practices and methods of the Committee</i> <i>Rules of procedure of the Assembly, relevant resolutions and decisions</i>				<i>Rules of procedure of the Assembly, relevant resolutions and decisions</i>
Facilities and services	Interpretation provided (6 languages) Held during official UN working hours Details reflected in POW, Journal and iGov Location: Conference Rooms Open meeting • Live webcast • Live list of speakers (prior inscription) • Summary Records • Meetings Coverage	Interpretation provided (6 languages) Held during official UN working hours Details reflected in POW Location: Conference Rooms Closed meeting • Member States, • Participating officials (“witness list”)	Interpretation provided (6 languages) Held during official UN working hours Details reflected in POW Location: Conference Rooms Closed meeting • Member States, • Participating officials (“witness list”)	No Interpretation Location varies May happen at any time of the day/night	Interpretation provided (6 languages) Held during official UN working hours Details reflected in POW Location: Conference Rooms Closed meeting • Member States, • Participating officials (“witness list”)	Interpretation provided (6 languages) Held during official UN working hours Details reflected in POW, Journal and iGov Location: Conference Rooms Open meeting • Live webcast • Live list of speakers (prior inscription) • Summary Records • Meetings Coverage

GA action on Fifth Committee reports

2. How do coordinators guide the Committee through the first and second readings of skeletal and Rev.1?

The detailed process of the first and second reading of a draft text is outlined below and also available in the [FAQ on the Fifth Committee and its working practices](#) on the Fifth Committee website. Coordinators play a key role in guiding the Committee by presiding over the first and second readings of skeletal and Rev.1.

When considering a draft text, the Committee will go through a first and second reading, initially for the skeletal resolution, followed by Rev.1. For urgent or straightforward items where there is a clear consensus, an outcome may be adopted on the basis of the skeletal draft resolution, with any required amendments at that meeting. In such cases, no additional language would be submitted and, consequently, no Rev.1 would be issued.

Before setting a deadline for language submission, the coordinator will normally do a first and second reading of the skeletal resolution, depending on the availability of time and agreement of the Committee.

First and second reading of the “skeletal resolution”

SKELETAL	First reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goal: Comprehension of language, in particular technical and financial➔ Question asked by coordinator: “Are there any questions?”
	Second reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goal: Substantive discussion of language and possible adoption➔ Questions asked by coordinator: “Are there any comments? Can we adopt?”

The objectives of the reading of a skeletal resolution are:

- 1) *First reading: comprehension of language (“Are there any **questions?**”)*

During the first reading, the coordinator will go through the text (paragraph by paragraph, more frequently, page by page) and **ask whether there are any questions**. This is to make sure that all participants understand the technicalities of the language. During the first reading, the merit of a specific paragraph is not discussed as this will happen during the second reading.

- 2) *Second reading: substantive discussion of language (“Are there any **comments?**” / “**Can we adopt?**”)*

In the second reading, the coordinator will again go through the text, this time paragraph by paragraph (this *cannot* be done page by page) and will normally **ask whether there are any comments**. In the absence of any request for the floor, the coordinator will normally **move to propose to adopt a paragraph** (which will frequently prompt a reaction).

While sometimes there is appetite to adopt a few skeletal paragraphs delegations frequently ask that certain paragraphs or the skeletal as a whole be put in brackets. While there is no formal definition of “bracketing”, placing text in brackets indicates that the language is not yet agreed and remains under negotiation pending consensus.

The Committee may not always do a first and/or second reading of the skeletal resolution, for instance if time runs out or if delegations express the wish to wait with a second reading until after language is submitted. If no reading takes place at this stage, it can take place at the same time as the reading of Rev.1.

Once Rev.1 has been compiled to contain all language submitted by delegations, the coordinator will call for another meeting, through the Bureau, to conduct the first and second reading of Rev.1.

First and second reading of “Rev.1”

REV.1	<p>First reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Goal: Introduction of main elements of language by proponents</i> <p>Second reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Goal: Substantive discussion of language and possible adoption</i>➔ <i>Questions asked by coordinator: “Are there any questions or comments? Can we adopt?”</i>
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In theory and past Fifth Committee practice, the coordinator would initially invite language proponents to introduce their language in one single intervention, in the order in which the language was submitted. After that, they would guide the Committee through the first reading of Rev.1, paragraph by paragraph (allowing clarification questions to the language proponent(s) or to the Secretariat), followed by the second reading of Rev.1, paragraph by paragraph (allowing delegations to discuss the merit of every paragraph and potentially adopt or bracket it).

Over the years, owing to scarcity of time, the Committee has moved towards an “abbreviated” approach to the reading: it frequently considers the introduction of language as first reading, allowing more time to focus on unadopted and/or new language (highlighted in bold) in the second reading.

The objectives of the “abbreviated” reading of Rev.1 are:

3) *First reading: introduction of language*

The coordinator will give the floor to all proponents to **introduce their language** in one single intervention, in the order in which the language was submitted. Proponents are encouraged to highlight the main elements of their language and explain their position to set the context for the following negotiations.

4) *Second reading: substantive discussion of language (“are there any **questions or comments? Can we adopt?”**)*

The coordinator will go through Rev.1 paragraph by paragraph (considering alts together), inviting both clarification questions as well as discussion of the substance. In addition to asking questions, delegations may discuss the merits of a paragraph, signal support, or request that a paragraph be placed in brackets. Language proponents may also take the floor to withdraw specific paragraph(s), including in favour of a separately proposed paragraph. In the absence of requests for the floor, the coordinator may proceed to propose the **adoption of a paragraph. While the second reading should result in agreement on an agreed draft, often it is not possible to reach overall agreement due to time constraints, given the overall heavy agenda, and the volume of proposals, whether similar or contrary, in each draft resolution.**

In some instances, particularly when considering long draft resolutions, the Committee may decide to “**put the entire text into brackets**”. This allows the Committee to proceed through the document (often page by page or chapter by chapter) and engage in a more open and candid discussion, without the immediate pressure of adopting language.

3. What is a “roadmap” in the context of informal consultations?

For “larger” items under which multiple reports are considered by the Committee, the coordinator may prepare, in consultation with the Fifth Committee secretariat, a “roadmap” to facilitate the smooth conduct of the Q&A and subsequent steps.

The roadmap typically lists the time slots assigned to the coordinator for Q&A, the reports considered and the order in which they are taken up. It is normally circulated ahead of the first meeting, together with the skeletal.

4. What should coordinators consider when setting deadlines for the submission of language?

- **Ambitious but realistic deadlines:** “Language deadlines should be ambitious, but also realistic” (Tips for Facilitators (2019)). The Fifth Committee secretariat can advise, if needed. Where a deadline is particularly ambitious, coordinators may wish to socialize the planned deadline informally with lead negotiators before announcing it to the Committee.
- **Verification in the room:** When setting the deadline for language submission in the room, coordinators normally ask delegations whether there are any objections and if there are, they will seek to address them within the constraints of the session.
- **Specific timing:** Avoid the use of “COB” and instead set a specific time (e.g. 6 pm), particularly in the case of very ambitious deadlines.
- **Avoiding extensions:** Coordinators should seek to avoid extending language deadlines. It is recalled that established practice provides for the submission of language while a limited number of responses remain outstanding, with the option to update submissions as additional responses are received. Where an extension is requested, coordinators may wish to consult with their respective Bureau representatives to assess any impact on the programme of work. **Reminders:** coordinators may consider sending a reminder to the Committee the day before or the morning of the deadline.
- **Copying 5C Secretariat:** Any language received should be copied to the Fifth Committee secretariat (c5-cpc-dmspc@un.org), which will acknowledge receipt and include it in Rev.1.

5. What is the use of the “gavel” in informal consultations?

Coordinators use the gavel to:

- Manage time and maintain order during informal consultations.
- Informally adopt paragraphs or the draft resolution as a whole.
- Agree on deadlines, next steps and outcome.
- Make clear that no further requests for the floor will be accepted.

6. Suspend or adjourn a meeting: what is the difference?

Meetings of the Fifth Committee take place in a meeting consisting of a three-hour period, either from 10am to 1pm or 3pm to 6pm. During the three-hour period:

- A meeting is **suspended**, usually for a short break, to resume within the three-hour period. This may occur, for example, when another informal consultation is scheduled to take place in the same time slot. Participants are expected to return when the meeting resumes.
- A meeting is adjourned if there is nothing else to be considered in the three-hour period and the meeting formally ends. All participants - including delegations, interpreters, and conference officers - may leave when the meeting adjourns.

7. How should informal consultations or informal-informal consultations be requested or cancelled?

“It is the facilitator’s responsibility to request/cancel meetings, manage the time for different stages of negotiations and communicate to the Committee on developments. It is important that the facilitator provides regular updates to the Bureau on the status of the deliberations.” (Tips for Facilitators (2019)).

Informal consultations and informal-informal consultations requiring a room should be requested through the Fifth Committee Bureau, in close coordination with the Fifth Committee Secretariat. Such communication should be made as early as possible to allow adequate planning and the necessary arrangements, including setting the room up for screensharing by the coordinator, if necessary.

8. How should the final outcome be communicated prior to formal adoption?

Once agreement has been reached, the coordinator shares the text with the Fifth Committee Secretariat for preparation of the necessary documentation.

If time permits, the coordinator convenes a final informal consultation to informally adopt the agreed outcome. However, due to the high volume of work and the compressed timelines that often define the Committee’s sessions, it is not uncommon that this may take place late at night, without interpretation and with only the presence of the Fifth Committee Secretariat. Alternatively, the step is skipped, and the item moves directly to the formal adoption stage from the “informal informals”.

More recently, the Committee has also relied on a “silence procedure” approach, whereby the coordinator circulates the agreed draft and communicate that it is to be considered adopted if no delegation raises an objection within a specified timeframe.