

Editing of resolutions at the United Nations



United Nations

The editing process

The English Translation and Editorial Service edits all United Nations documents, including draft resolutions, to make them:

- Clear
- Accurate
- Consistent
- Grammatically correct
- In conformity with United Nations standards
- Translatable into the other five official languages



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Why is it important for resolutions to be edited?

- They are important **international instruments**.
- The **time pressure** of negotiation and processing can lead to mistakes.
- **Ambiguous language** in the original can result in different interpretations in the other languages.
- Editing ensures that the **principle of multilingualism** is respected.



The editing process

- The editing team will not make changes that alter the meaning of a resolution.
- We recognize that draft resolutions may be intensely negotiated (e.g. by the Group of 77) before submission and may also be subsequently reworked as Vice-Chair's texts.
- Nevertheless, it is preferable to address queries and ambiguities at the earliest opportunity to ensure that delegates are working with the best possible text.



The editing process

- We introduce necessary grammatical and punctuation edits that are in line with United Nations standards, without consulting.
- It is therefore crucial for us to be informed of any elements of the text, including punctuation, that have been closely negotiated or may otherwise be highly sensitive and should not be changed for grammatical reasons.
- We also need to be informed of any particularly sensitive terminology in any of the official languages.
- When a language issue touches on a substantive matter, we will consult.



Draft resolutions

- All draft resolutions are submitted to DGACM for editing, translation, typing, proofreading and printing, usually with a very tight turnaround time.
- The contact information of the main sponsor or facilitator is needed to ensure that queries are answered and the process runs smoothly.
- For draft resolutions based on a previous resolution, the adopted text (A/RES/xx/xx) should be downloaded from ODS and used as the basis for preparation of the new resolution.



Common corrections

- Facts, titles of bodies, meetings, conventions and dates of adoption of resolutions, conventions, declarations, etc. are checked and corrected as needed.
- Grammar and syntax are corrected as needed.
- Minor adjustments to style are made to bring the text in line with United Nations editorial standards and to make the text translatable.



Common corrections

- Acronyms are generally avoided in resolutions and are written out.
- The short forms of country names are used.
- Names of cities are followed by the country name, unless the city is the capital.
- Source footnotes may be added, deleted or updated, in consultation with the author.



Common corrections

- Avoiding personification: a resolution does not decide or recommend an action; it is the body adopting the resolution that decides or recommends the action.
- The use of “including, inter alia” is redundant; one of the two will be deleted, as appropriate.



The structure of resolutions

Paragraphs

Resolutions are essentially one long sentence with three elements:

- The name of the organ (the General Assembly)
- Preambular paragraphs (no numbering)
- Operative paragraphs (numbered)



The structure of resolutions

Subparagraphs

- Subparagraphs are lettered (a), (b), (c).
- Each subparagraph begins with a capital letter.
- The subparagraphs must have a similar structure.



Final resolutions

- Changes made by delegates at the time of adoption, if any, are incorporated into the text.
- The finalized resolutions are issued with **A/RES/xx/xxx** symbols.



Editorial helpdesk and other resources

We are available to offer assistance and advice. Please contact us at:

ETESFrontDesk@un.org



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Other resources

- United Nations Editorial Manual Online (www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual)
- UNTERM (unterm.un.org)
- Official Document System (<https://documents.un.org>; also available at ods.un.org)



Questions or comments?



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