

Annex: Editing of Proposals at the United Nations

1. Introduction: The editing process

The **Editing Section** edits all United Nations documents, including **draft resolutions**, to make them clear, accurate, consistent, grammatically correct, in conformity with United Nations editorial standards and translatable into the other five official languages.

Editors will not make changes that alter the meaning of a resolution

When a language issue touches on a substantive matter, the editor will consult.

It is helpful for the editors to be informed of which passages have been closely negotiated.

Why is it important for resolutions to be edited?

They are important **international instruments**

4. The structure of resolutions

Paragraphs

Resolutions are essentially one long sentence with three elements:

- The name of the organ (the General Assembly)
- Preambular paragraphs
- Operative paragraphs

Subparagraphs

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

An example of proper parallel subparagraph structure (from resolution 66/167):

- 6. *Calls upon* all States:
 - (a) To take effective measures to ensure...
 - (b) To foster religious freedom and pluralism...
 - (c) To encourage the representation of...
 - (d) To make a strong effort to...

Another good example of proper subparagraph structure (from resolution 66/94):

- 10. *Reaffirms* the importance...of the work of the Commission ... and in this connection:
 - (a) Welcomes the initiatives of the Commission...
 - (b) Expresses its appreciation to the Commission...
 - (c) Takes note with interest of the comprehensive approach...
 - (d) Expresses its appreciation to the Governments...

5. Changes that editors make to resolutions

Editors will:

Acronyms

Acronyms will be spelled out in full the first time they occur in both the preamble and the operative part. Thereafter, a shortened version of the title may be used.

Dates

Dates of meetings, adoption of conventions, declarations, etc., will be checked and corrected if necessary.

Names of countries

In United Nations documents and resolutions, the short form of the names of countries is used. For a list of the official short names of countries see unterm.un.org.

Names of cities

Names of cities are followed by the country name, unless the city is the capital.

Punctuation

Editors are experts in punctuation issues and will apply United Nations style. If a punctuation mark becomes a matter of political sensitivity, the editors must be informed.

Personification

A resolution or report does not decide/recommend/launch/convene/extend a mandate, etc; it is the author or body adopting the resolution or report that takes the action.

Example:
“General Assembly resolution 65/14 requested the Secretary-General to report...”
will be changed to read:
“The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/14, requested the Secretary-General to report...”

Notes/Takes note

Notes is used in the sense of “observes”.

Takes note is used when the object is a report, statement or decision. A body should not take note of (or welcome) its own past decision.

Reiterates

If the General Assembly “reiterates” something, it means that it is repeating something it said in a previous resolution.

Otherwise, a more appropriate verb, such as “affirms”, “stresses” or “emphasizes” should be used.

Reiterates

If “reiterates” is used, some context must be given.

Example from resolution 67/246:

6. *Reiterates* that accountability is a central pillar of effective and efficient management that requires attention and strong commitment at the highest level of the Secretariat, as defined in paragraph 8 of

its resolution 64/259 of 29 March 2010;

Reiterates

If the Assembly does not wish to provide context the verb “reaffirms” may be used:

Example

Reaffirms paragraph 37 of its resolution 62/87 and paragraph 2 of its resolution 64/228,

Footnotes