

DAYMUNC Resolution Writing Guide

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The Caption

Every organization has its own unique caption or heading designed to simplify the storage, indexing, and retrieval of documents. The various styles used by DAYMUNC are shown below. The easiest way to do the caption is to use MS Word's VIEW>HEADER & FOOTER feature and check the "different first page" checkbox. Note that working papers need not have a caption until they are submitted to the Rapporteur for review; however, they must be present at that time and in the prescribed form to become draft resolutions:

Form for Draft Resolutions:

Code: GA/3/2

Committee: General Assembly

Subject: Condemning All Acts of Terrorism

Sponsors: United States, United Kingdom, France

Signatories: China, Russian Federation, Canada

(followed by two blank lines for spacing)

The code is assigned by the Rapporteur and consists of the committee's initials followed by a virgule (slash mark), the topic number (as assigned in the background guide) followed by another virgule, and its serial number (representing the order the document was received). If the document is an unfriendly amendment, it will have an additional virgule and serial number. So, then, GA/3/2/1 is the first unfriendly amendment of the second draft resolution submitted on topic three in the General Assembly.

The committee name should be written out in full, so the ECOSOC committee would be listed as Economic and Social Council.

The subject is not necessarily the same as the topic listed in the background guide and should reflect the primary purpose of the resolution's primary operative. Its purpose is to uniquely describe the resolution. So while the committee topic could broadly be the "Situation in Iraq," the subject should say something like "Nation-building in Iraq" to make it unique and distinguish it from others addressing the same general topic.

DAYMUNC rules specify that all resolutions and unfriendly amendments must have either three sponsors and three signatories or an amount determined and announced by the chair at the beginning of the conference. Use the standard short form of the country's name rather than the full formal version or abbreviations.

Finally, the automatic line numbering feature should be turned on (found in MS Word's Page Setup feature). Do not manually number each line as it a truly painful experience to remove them later.

Once the draft resolution has been through voting procedure, the sponsors and signatories are removed and the voting record added. If the resolution passed, use the word PASSED followed by the vote tally (yes/no/abstain), if it failed use the word FAILED followed by the vote tally. If the document did not go to vote, or the tally is unknown, mark it DRAFT RESOLUTION. Finally, if it passed by acclamation motion, indicate ADOPTED BY ACCLAMATION. Also, at this point the automatic line numbering should be turned off as line numbers do not show on final resolutions. The rapporteur is responsible to ensure that a copy of the final version's computer file is submitted to the Director General for archival storage at the end of the conference.

The Sentence Subject

The sentence subject is simply the full name of the committee spelled out in capital letters and followed by a comma:

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

It may properly be placed either before or after the preambulatory clauses at the drafter's discretion.

The Preambulary Clauses

Every resolution contains one or more preambulatory clauses which outline the body's authority, historical precedents, and current triggering event. These are dependent adjective clauses and are separated from each other, the sentence subject, and the operative clauses by commas. (Or, in other words, each preambulatory clause must end with a comma). Dependent adjective clauses do not have either subjects or verbs in them and begin with a participle. Recall that a participle is a verb being used as an adjective modifying a noun or pronoun and may have either an auxiliary verb or adverb modifier. Present (imperfect) participles are those ending in -ing and past (perfect) participles of regular verbs end in -ed, -d, -t, -en, -n. Past participles of irregular verbs vary--check the dictionary to be sure. A prepositional phrase modifying a participle is considered an adverbial modifier as in the case of "bearing in mind." Generally, it is safe to stay with the same participle tense although tenses can be mixed if care is taken to keep things straight.

The participle, along with its auxiliary verb, adverbial modifier, or complements, is always italicized. The UN does not underline these and underling is a typographical shorthand that instructs the typesetter to set those words in an italic typeface anyway. Note, also, that the actual rule is not simply italicizing the first word, but, rather, to italicize the participle and its auxiliary verb, adverbial modifier, or complements (which collectively are the first word or words). Both participles or participle phrases are italicized in the case of complex participles but the conjunction is not. A chart of common preambulatory participles is available on this website for delegate use.

Examples:

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, (present participle)

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, (past participle with auxiliary verb)

Fully supporting international efforts to root out terrorism, (present participle with adverbial modifier)

Bearing in mind the importance of international cooperation, (present participle with its modifier)

Recalling and reaffirming the primacy of state sovereignty, (complex participles)

N.B. A quick check to see if a preambulatory phrase is constructed properly is to combine it with the sentence subject and check if what results remains a sentence fragment. Then, combine it with a properly formed operative clause to ensure that combination is still a fragment. If it fails either test, the clause is defective since it must not contain either a subject or a verb.

The Operative Clauses:

Every resolution also contains one or more operative clauses which clearly set out the findings and decisions of the body with respect to the matter in consideration. These are independent verb clauses and are separated from each other by semicolons (or, in other words, each operative clause ends in semicolons except for the final one ending in a period). Independent verb clauses do not include a subject; however, each one begins with a present tense singular verb (generally, the ones that end in the letter "s" such as decides, notes, appoints, etc). The verb (and any modifiers) are always italicized. The UN does not underline these and neither does DAYMUNC. Note, also, that the actual rule is not simply italicizing the first word, but, rather, to italicize the verb and its modifiers (which are the first word or words). A chart of common verbs and verb phrases is available on this website for delegate use. Note also that each individual operative clause is indented and numbered using normal Arabic numbers. MS Word's numbered list feature will do this perfectly--don't try to do it manually, its just not worth the effort. {Hint: if you need to adjust the positioning, use the format paragraph dialogue box to do it--super simple that way} Occasionally it may be desirable to include sub-operative clauses or ordered lists as part of an operative. Note that while both appear similar, sub-operatives are divisible during voting procedure but ordered lists are not. One thing to remember is that the operative portion of the resolution is not an outline but a portion of a complete sentence--while you can freely use sub-operatives and ordered lists, they can not be nested beyond one level (think of the comma and semicolon rules for lists to understand why).

Examples:

Encourages further international cooperation;

Emphasizes the benefits for all involved;

Condemns all acts of international terrorism.

N.B. A quick check to see if an operative clause is constructed properly is to combine it with the sentence subject (without the comma and semicolon and with the addition of a period at the end). The result should be a grammatically correct English sentence. This is because a well formed operative must be a complete predicate for the given subject.

Sub-operative Clauses:

Sub-operative clauses are an expansion of the clause they are subordinate to (i.e. the superior clause) and provide specific additional details. Since they are divisible during voting procedure, they must comply with the same requirements as regular operatives, that is, they begin with present tense singular verbs and end in semicolons. What distinguishes them from normal operatives is that they are indented further and use lower case alphabetic characters in place of the Arabic numerals used by the former. They are italicized identically as well. One thing to note during voting procedure is that a division of a numbered operative includes all of its related lettered sub-operatives. However, individual lettered sub-operatives can be divided out without affecting the numbered operatives or the other lettered sub-operatives. This can be a really useful tool if used judiciously but does require great care to get them to read fluidly as shown below:

Example:

Decides that eradication of global famine is of the highest priority;

Calls for greater international co-operation and support;

Urges all Member States to increase exports of surplus agricultural products as much as possible;

Condemns black market sales of stolen foodstuffs;

Notes with appreciation the accomplishments of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) toward feeding the hungry.

N.B. A quick check to see if a sub-operative is constructed properly is to first use the same method as for regular operatives on each sub-operative and ensure they form proper sentences. Then, check that the superior operative still makes sense by itself without any of its sub-operatives.

Ordered Lists in Operative Clauses

Ordered lists are used when the drafter desires to set out a list of similar elements as part of an operative. They appear as separate items preceded by lower case alphabetic letters and separated by commas. All ordered lists are preceded by a colon. Lists should have three or more elements in them, otherwise, simply join the two elements with a conjunction such as "and" or "or." The next to last element in the list will end with a conjunction such as "and" or "or" and the last

element will end in either a semicolon or nothing depending on where the list is located in the operative. Note also that all elements of the list should share something in common (known as consistency) and be constructed in the same way (known as parallelism), thus, "running" and "to walk" are incorrect while "running" and "walking" are correct. Common problems found in lists are inconsistency in element types or lack of parallelism. Because an ordered list is simply a variation of an unordered list (that is, one embedded in the independent clause with comma delimiters), the elements of the list cannot be divided out during voting procedure. They can appear in either the middle of a resolution or at its end. The list's location governs how it is punctuated as can be seen in the two examples below.

Example of an Ordered List in the Middle of an Operative:

Decides that no individual may be discriminated against on account of his or her:
Race,
Religion,
Age, or
Alienage
in the provision of HIV/AIDS treatment;

Example of an Ordered List at the End of an Operative:

Decides that HIV/AIDS treatment should be provided to everyone regardless of his or her:
Race,
Religion,
Age, or
Alienage;

N.B. Check ordered lists for consistency and parallelism. Ensure that the list fits smoothly into the overall sentence, and that it is not actually a poorly disguised outline masquerading as nested ordered lists.

Example of a Well Formed Draft Resolution

So putting it all together, a simple well formed draft resolution would look like this:

Code: GA/3/2
Committee: General Assembly
Subject: Condemning All Acts of Terrorism
Sponsors: United States, United Kingdom, France
Signatories: China, Russian Federation, Canada

1 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

2

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

3

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
4 Fully supporting international efforts to root out terrorism,
5
6
7 Encourages further international cooperation;
Emphasizes the benefits for all involved;
Condemns all acts of international terrorism.

Example of a Well Formed Draft Amendment

Suppose someone wanted to amend the draft resolution above--a possible draft amendment might look like this:

Code: GA/3/2/1
Committee: General Assembly
Subject: Amendment to GA/3/2
Sponsors: Mexico, Japan, China
Signatories: Brazil, Niger, Egypt

1 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
2 Considering the intent of the above captioned resolution,
3 Noting its narrow and limited scope,
4 Concluding that a broader scope would better serve global interests,
5
6
7
8
9 Revises line 5 to read "Encourages expanded international cooperation";
Deletes line 6 in entirety;
Revises line 7 to read "Condemns all acts of domestic and international terrorism;"
Adds new lines 8 and 9 which read "Reaffirms that no aspect of this resolution is contemplated to infringe any Member State's sovereignty.

Mechanics of the Resolution

Resolutions should be word processed and printed on standard 8-1/2" by 11" paper on one side of the paper with normal one inch margins. Twelve point Times Roman is a good choice for type size and font. Use the automatic features of the word processor to eliminate unnecessary effort. Working papers are submitted to the Rapporteur for review for form by the chair and content by the director. Once approved by both, the Rapporteur assigns the code number and the document becomes a Draft Resolution ready for voting procedure.

Suggestions

With the basics of grammar and style in hand, the question becomes one of what to write about. Presented below are some suggestions of content to include which will help flesh out the drafter's ideas completely.

Preambulary clauses outline the body's authority to act, the past history with respect to the matter at hand, and the triggering event that inspired the resolution.

The authority for the General Assembly, its main subcommittees, the Economic and Social Council, and the Security Council is always the UN Charter. However, the UN Charter is NEVER the authority for any intergovernmental organization or specialized agency of the UN. For those bodies, there are specific constitutive documents for each. For example, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is a specialized agency of the UN and was constituted by Agenda 21 (1992). The African Union is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) and its authority is derived from the Constitutive Act of the African Union (2000).

Resolutions should have a complete history of everything that has been done to date including resolutions, treaties, conventions, statements, studies, and reports. A brief explanation of the general subject of document along with its complete identifying information is an excellent way to present this information rather than generically listing strings of resolutions--thus, rather than expressing that the body is "Recalling Security Council resolutions 691, 722, and 1343," say "Taking note of the various economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council in S/RES/691 (1995), S/RES/722 (1999), and S/RES/1343 (2002)." If the subject matter of the resolutions differ, put them in separate clauses to avoid confusion. If you are referring to documents produced by this body, use a pronoun to refer to it instead of the name of the body. Conventions and treaties are typically cited by the year, the city where it was created and the subject matter (i.e. 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War). For other documents, give the full name of the document and its year in parentheses (i.e. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)).

Without exception, every resolution is created in response to some event or need known as the trigger or trigger event such as a military incursion, a natural disaster, or a growing problem or concern. Whatever it is, it should be fully described--avoid making a mere passing mention of it. Since the resolution may be the document of first impression, it is possible that there would be no documents to reference.

Operative clauses define the action steps that the body thinks will best solve the problem. While there are many possible things that can be done, care should be taken to stay within the mandates of the body. Consider also the relationships between bodies when requesting or directing another body to do something. The UN is not a legislative body, so it does not enact law. The authority of UN resolutions stems from the fact that Member States agree to comply with its resolutions when they voluntarily join. No body may ever make a resolution beyond its mandate.

In general, the membership of intergovernmental organizations completely agree on everything within its mandate (expressed in its constitutive document), their purpose is primarily

implementation (the getting things done part rather than deciding what needs to be done) and they typically work by consensus. Delegates typically find that the implementation part is far more challenging than the policy part--its very easy to conclude that famine is a bad thing, yet difficult to do anything to solve it.

Specialized agencies, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are created to implement policy of UN bodies and are very tightly limited in their scope of authority. For example, the IAEA only has interest in its Member States and its mission is to ensure the peaceful use of atomic energy. It does not have authority over nuclear weapons other than to prevent the subversion of legitimate uses into prohibited ones.

Another practice to avoid is buck passing. This is the practice of referring challenging problems to other bodies or creating new ones and then passing the buck to them. Just about the worst thing is to refer the problem back to the body that assigned it--for example, if the GA tasked the First Committee with addressing a problem, it is completely inappropriate to refer it back to the GA (or anyone else for that matter). You should assume that your body is the appropriate and best one to handle it. If it isn't for some reason, the correct procedure is to challenge the competency of the body with respect to the question and, if successful, adjourn debate on the topic and move on to the next one.

Money is always a primary concern in problem solving. The UN has a limited budget that is sufficient for covering its normal operating expenses and paying its staff people but not for direct implementation of policy. A separate budget exists for sharing the cost of Security Council approved interventions only. This means that if the proposed plan of action costs money, some provisions for covering the costs is necessary or the resolution is moot. A common problem is with proposed solutions that potentially could cost billions of Dollars to solve with no possibility of funding.

Security Council resolutions almost always end with a declaration of continuing seizure (something like Decides to remain actively seized of the matter). What this means is that while a topic is seized, no other UN body may work the issue.

It is a good practice to conclude resolutions passed by plenary bodies (plenary means all Member States belong) with a statement assuring sovereignty (something like Affirms that nothing in this resolution infringes the national sovereignty of any Member State as contemplated in Article Two, Section Seven of the Charter) to prevent someone from voting against it for that reason. This is not relevant in other bodies.

As you negotiate your resolution, seek consensus in the committee. One resolution that everyone agrees with is far better than ten different ones from splintered factions. In fact, most UN resolutions are negotiated until everyone agrees and seldom go to vote. When they do go to vote, they pass with overwhelming majorities. If two resolutions have similar operatives, try to combine them into one. In the end, the committee should speak with one voice. Finally, keep in mind that there are seldom easy solutions for the intractable problems facing the global community of nations and that while many problems cannot be solved, they can be managed. Negotiating solutions is always a challenging endeavor, but also, interesting and fun.