



**RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION
OF THE AMERICAS**

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1. CONDUCT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1.1 Agenda

- The agenda of an Executive Committee meeting must include a certain number of statutory points presented in the following order and subject to specific provisions set forth in the statutes:
 - 1- Roll call, declaration of quorum, and accreditation of observers present
 - 2- Reading and approval of proposed agenda
 - 3- Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting
 - 4- Presentation of president's activity report
 - 5- Presentation of financial report and budget
 - 6- Report on committees' work
 - 7- Questions of a political nature (if any)
 - 8- Presentation of secretariat activity reports
 - 9- Other matters

- The agenda is prepared by the executive secretariat in cooperation with the other secretariats, and approved by the president.

- The secretariats then have it translated and distribute it to Executive Committee members under their responsibility at least 30 days before the meeting is held.

- Executive Committee members may ask the executive secretariat to add items to the agenda up to fifteen days before the meeting is held. These additions are subject to the president's approval. The new version of the agenda, if any, is forwarded to the other secretariats, which ensure it is distributed to the members under their responsibility.

Any documents pertaining to items added to the agenda (draft recommendations, draft amendments of statutes, etc.) must be forwarded up to fifteen days before the meeting is held, so that they can be translated and distributed to all Executive Committee members before the meeting is held.

1.2 Debate procedure

1.2.1 Powers of the president

- The president
 - Runs Executive Committee and General Assembly meetings, notably by assigning the right to speak;
 - Gives the floor to a member for and a member against any procedural motion that is opposed, then immediately puts the motion to a vote;
 - Ensures debates run smoothly and calls to order any speaker who strays from the topic under discussion;
 - Under special circumstances, may limit the time allocated for discussion on a given topic.

1.2.2 Holding of debates

- Consensus must be sought in debate so that adopted recommendations express the viewpoint of all COPA members.
- Debate must be limited to matters under study. The president may adjourn debate at any time and suggest that the principal parties to it continue discussions informally to reach an agreement.
- Debates are recorded in full at each Executive Committee and General Assembly meeting. This recording will be kept for two years at the Executive Secretariat and then destroyed.
- Following each Executive Committee meeting, minutes shall be prepared by the executive secretary and forwarded to the other secretariats for translation and distribution to members under their responsibility.

1.3 Presence of observers at Executive Committee meetings

- When the meeting begins, the president must ask the Executive Committee to accredit the participation of observers who are present by providing their names and those of the organizations they represent.
- The criteria guiding observer accreditation are twofold: the compatibility of observers with COPA goals and an evaluation of their potential contribution to the organization's goals.
- Accredited observers may only take the floor with the approval of the president.
- The following standards apply to meeting room setup:
 - Executive Committee members shall be identified by name tags, which must be visible throughout the entire meeting.
 - One section of the meeting table shall be reserved for observers, whose name tags shall be a different color from the one of the tags of the Executive Committee members.

2. ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND DOCUMENTS¹ BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2.1 *Consideration of documents*

- No recommendation may be adopted by the Executive Committee or General Assembly unless previously submitted in writing in the four official COPA languages.
- The executive secretariat shall send draft recommendations to the other secretariats for translation and distribution to Executive Committee members from the assemblies for which they are responsible.
- The presentation of recommendations as indicated above shall not limit the right of COPA delegations to inform the General Assembly or Executive Committee of any political or economic situation affecting their country. In such cases, we recommend that the parliamentarians concerned submit a note in writing indicating the main points they wish to make.
- At the Executive Committee meeting, only regular members may propose recommendations.
- At the General Assembly, each parliamentarian who is a delegation member may propose recommendations. However, in accordance with Section 16 of the statutes, each delegation present is entitled to one vote cast by the delegation leader.

2.2 *Urgent items*

- Draft recommendations sent after the fifteen-day deadline may be placed on the agenda of an Executive Committee meeting if this instance, at a two third majority of attending members, deems urgent the immediate inclusion of these projects on the meeting's agenda. Draft recommendations that are not deemed urgent are entered as priority items on the agenda of the subsequent Executive Committee meeting.
- Recommendation sponsors may ask for the opportunity to defend the urgency of their draft recommendation at the Executive Committee's meeting.

¹ "Recommendation" refers to any proposed motion, resolution, or opinion on which the organization is called to take a position.

"Document" refers to any report or other document tabled at a meeting.

2.3 Amendments

- Amendments to draft recommendations may be submitted until such recommendations are adopted.
- Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing.
- Amendments shall target specific text and may only add, delete, or modify the content of the initial draft.
- If two or more amendments concern the same words of a draft recommendation, the amendment that diverges most from the specific text is given review priority.
- If two or more amendments cancel each other out, adoption of the first leads to rejection of the other amendment(s) pertaining to the same words. If the first amendment is rejected, the next amendment in order of priority is put to a vote and so on for each additional amendment.
- As needed, the president may ask an editorial committee to go over proposed amendments and suggest revisions. These revisions may only be undertaken with the approval of all sponsors of the proposed recommendation and amendments.
- At the Executive Committee meeting, only regular members may propose amendments.
- At the General Assembly, each parliamentarian who is a delegation member may propose amendments. However, in accordance with Section 16 of the statutes, each delegation present is entitled to one vote cast by the delegation leader.

2.4 Voting procedure

- Only Executive Committee members are entitled to vote at Executive Committee meetings.
- The Executive Committee generally adopts its recommendations by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote of two-thirds of members who have the right to vote and are present is required to adopt draft recommendations. In such cases, the president specifies the number of votes required based on the number of participants present.
- Prior to Executive Committee voting, the presence and participation of parliamentarians who have the right to vote are verified, notably with regard to requirements in Section 18 of the statutes.
- In the event an Executive Committee member is opposed, he/she shall have the right to record a dissenting opinion.
- General Assembly voting is governed by Section 16 of the statutes.

2.5 Distribution of adopted recommendations

- Recommendations adopted by the Executive Committee and General Assembly are forwarded to the other secretariats by the executive secretariat so that the translations into COPA's four official languages can be adjusted, and the texts distributed within thirty days.

3. TREASURY

- Expenditures are made by the treasurer with the express authorization of the president or following a resolution by Executive Committee members. Payment of the expenditures thus authorized is made only on presentation of the appropriate supporting documents.
- The treasurer sends each COPA member an annual contribution request and takes any other steps he or she deems necessary to obtain payment of contributions by each organization member.
- Contributions are due at the start of the fiscal year.
- The treasurer shall present a financial statement at each Executive Committee meeting.
- The financial statement shall be presented in writing and submitted to all members present.
- The financial statement shall include a table illustrating the contributions paid by COPA members and the expenditures made by the organization.
- The financial statement shall include a budget item indicating the funding of projects for the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.

4. SECRETARIATS' MEETING

- A meeting between the COPA president and secretariat representatives shall be held before each Executive Committee meeting and during the General Assembly.
- The secretariats' meeting is closed. Only the COPA president, the treasurer, and one representative from each of the Mexico, Brazil, and Québec secretariats are admitted. Each participant may be accompanied by up to two advisors.
- In the event that a decision on an issue submitted to the secretariats is put to a vote, the representative from each secretariat and the president are each entitled to one vote. In case of a tie, the president has the deciding vote.

- The purpose of the secretariats' meeting is to
 - Insure that the draft agendas of meetings of the Executive Committee, permanent thematic working committees, and General Assembly are in conformity with the Rules of procedure;
 - Go over the documents that will be presented at this meeting and verify their availability in COPA's four official languages;
 - Evaluate the urgency of any draft recommendation submitted after the deadline;
 - Discuss administrative or technical problems;
 - Particularly as part of a General Assembly, go over committee documents (reports, draft recommendations) that will be presented in the plenary session and verify their availability in COPA's four official languages.

- If circumstances require, the president may convene a special secretariats' meeting.

5. SECOND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PART OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- As part of the General Assembly, a second Executive Committee meeting lasting no more than two hours shall be held prior to the plenary session.

- Under sections 10 and 24 of the COPA statutes and Section 4 of the By-Laws of the Permanent Thematic Working Committees of COPA, the goals of this meeting are to
 - 1- Exchange points of view on the formation of the new COPA Executive Committee;
 - 2- Propose candidates for the positions of president, first vice president, regional vice presidents, and treasurer;
 - 3- Nominate members for Committee Boards, as per committee proposals;
 - 4- Recommend approval of the Final Declaration.

6. PERMANENT THEMATIC WORKING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Permanent thematic working committee meetings shall be subject to the rules of procedure governing Executive Committee meetings and the adoption of recommendations and documents, with any adaptations deemed necessary.

These Rules of procedure were adopted on June 2nd, 2006 at the 7th General Assembly of COPA, Quito, Ecuador.