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## **Rules of Procedure of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) <sup>(1)</sup>**

### **I. PARTICIPATION**

#### **Rule 1 – Principal participants**

The representatives of the 36 Member States of UNESCO elected to the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC), hereafter referred to as “the Intergovernmental Committee” shall participate in the Intergovernmental Committee with voting rights.

#### **Rule 2 – Representatives and observers**

- 2.1 Member States and Associate Members of UNESCO may participate as observers in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee.
- 2.2 Non-Member States which have set up a permanent observer mission to UNESCO may take part as observers in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee, on the invitation of the Director-General
- 2.3 The United Nations and the other organizations of the United Nations system with which UNESCO has concluded an agreement providing for reciprocal representation may take part as observers in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee.
- 2.4 International governmental or non-governmental organizations with similar objectives to those of the International Bioethics Committee may be invited to take part as observers in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee.
- 2.5 Representatives and observers may take part in the work of the Intergovernmental Committee without the right to vote, subject to the provisions of Rule 8.3.

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1. Adopted by IGBC at its 3rd session on 23 June 2003 in Paris and amended at its 5th session on 20 July 2007 and at its 7<sup>th</sup> session on 5 September 2011.

## **II. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE**

### **Rule 3 – Elections**

- 3.1 The Intergovernmental Committee shall elect from among its members a Chairperson, four Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, with due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical representation.
- 3.2 The election of the Bureau will be held at a session convened as soon as possible after the election of the members of IGBC by the General Conference.
- 3.3 The members of the Bureau shall remain in office until the election of the new Bureau.
- 3.4 Members of the Bureau shall be eligible for election for a second consecutive term.

### **Rule 4 – Bureau**

- 4.1 The Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee shall be composed of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur and of the Secretary-General of the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO (IBC).
- 4.2 The Bureau shall be responsible for coordinating the work of the Intergovernmental Committee, setting the date, time and agenda of meetings and in general for assisting the Chairperson in carrying out his/her duties.

### **Rule 5 – Duties of the Chairperson**

- 5.1 In addition to exercising the powers which are conferred upon him/her elsewhere by these rules, the Chairperson shall declare the opening and closure of each meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee. He/she shall direct the discussions, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. He/she shall rule on points of order and, subject to the present rules, shall control the proceedings and the maintenance of order. He/she shall not vote, but may designate a member of his/her delegation to vote in his/her place.
- 5.2 If the Chairperson is absent during a meeting or any part thereof, he/she shall appoint one of the Vice-Chairpersons to take his/her place, who, sitting as Chairperson, shall have the same powers and responsibilities as the Chairperson.

### **Rule 6 – Publicity of meetings**

Meetings shall be held in public unless the Intergovernmental Committee decides otherwise.

### **Rule 7 – Quorum**

- 7.1 The quorum shall consist of a majority of the principal participants in the Intergovernmental Committee.
- 7.2 The Intergovernmental Committee shall not decide on any matter unless there is a quorum.

### **Rule 8 – Order of speeches and limitation of speaking time**

- 8.1 The Chairperson shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their wish to speak.

- 8.2 The Chairperson may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker when circumstances call for such a decision.
- 8.3 The representatives and observers mentioned in Rule 2 may take the floor with the prior consent of the Chairperson.

#### **Rule 9 – Points of order**

- 9.1 In the course of a debate any of the principal participants may raise a point of order and such point of order shall immediately be decided by the Chairperson.
- 9.2 An appeal may be made against the ruling of the Chairperson. It shall be put to the vote immediately, and the Chairperson's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the principal participants present and voting.

#### **Rule 10 – Procedural motions**

- 10.1 During the discussion of any item, any of the principal participants may table a motion for the suspension or adjournment of the meeting, or for the adjournment or closure of the debate.
- 10.2 Motions tabled under Rule 10.1 shall be put to the vote immediately. Subject to Rule 9.1, the following motions shall have precedence, in the following order, over all other proposals or motions:
  - (a) to suspend the meeting;
  - (b) to adjourn the meeting;
  - (c) to adjourn the debate on the item under discussion;
  - (d) to prolong the session if this has no budgetary implication;
  - (e) for the closure of the debate on the item under discussion.

#### **Rule 11 – Proposals and amendments**

- 11.1 Proposals and amendments may be tabled by the principal participants: they shall be transmitted in writing to the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Committee which shall circulate them to all the principal participants.
- 11.2 As a general rule, no proposal or amendment shall be examined or put to the vote if it has not been distributed sufficiently far in advance to all the principal participants, in the working languages of the Intergovernmental Committee.

#### **Rule 12 – Working languages**

- 12.1 The working languages of the Intergovernmental Committee shall be English and French. Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish will be used during meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee, depending on its composition.
- 12.2 Interpretation of the statements made during meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee in one of the working languages shall be provided into the other language(s).
- 12.3 The documents of the Intergovernmental Committee shall be issued in English and French.

#### **Rule 13 – Voting**

- 13.1 Each of the principal participants shall have one vote in the Intergovernmental Committee and the subsidiary bodies on which they are represented.

- 13.2 Subject to the provisions of Rules 17 and 18, decisions shall be taken by a majority of the principal participants present and voting.
- 13.3 The purposes of these rules, the expression "principal participants present and voting" means principal participants casting an affirmative or negative vote. Principal participants who abstain from voting shall be regarded as non-voting.
- 13.4 Voting shall normally be by show of hands.
- 13.5 When the result of a vote by show of hands is in doubt, the Chairperson may take a second vote, by roll-call. Vote by roll-call shall be taken if it is requested by not less than two principal participants before voting begins.
- 13.6 When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Intergovernmental Committee shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the Chairperson to be furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom in his/her judgment, and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote.
- 13.7 If one or more amendments are adopted, the whole of the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.
- 13.8 A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal.
- 13.9 If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Chairperson shall put them to the vote in the order in which they were submitted, unless the Intergovernmental Committee decides otherwise. The Intergovernmental Committee may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.
- 13.10 A proposal may be withdrawn by its author at any time before voting begins, provided that it has not been amended. A proposal that has been withdrawn may be reintroduced by another participant.

#### **Rule 14 – Reports**

The Intergovernmental Committee shall submit a report on its work to the Director-General, who shall transmit it to the General Conference.

### **IV. SECRETARIAT**

#### **Rule 15 – Secretariat**

- 15.1 The Director-General of UNESCO or his representative shall participate in the work of the Intergovernmental Committee without the right to vote. They may at any time make either oral or written statements to the Intergovernmental Committee concerning any question under discussion.
- 15.2 The Director-General of UNESCO shall appoint UNESCO officials who will staff the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Committee.
- 15.3 The secretariat shall receive, translate and distribute all official documents of the Intergovernmental Committee and shall provide interpretation of the discussions in accordance with the provisions of Rule 2 of these rules. It shall perform all other duties necessary for the proper conduct of the work of the Intergovernmental Committee.

## **V. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **Rule 16 – Amendments**

These Rules of Procedures may be amended by a decision of the Intergovernmental Committee taken by a two-thirds majority of the principal participants present and voting.

### **Rule 17 – Suspension**

The application of certain rules in these Rules of Procedure may be suspended by a decision of the Intergovernmental Committee taken by a two-thirds majority of the principal participants present and voting.