

Northwest Model United Nations – Seattle 2021

General Assembly – Explanatory Note

Overview

The General Assembly is the primary deliberative organ of the United Nations, and is one of the committees simulated annually at NWMUN-Seattle. The General Assembly is in many ways the default committee at NWMUN; delegates who prepare generally for NWMUN are usually well-prepared for the General Assembly. However, there is one particular practice of the General Assembly, which NWMUN simulates on Sunday morning (the final day of the conference) each year, which requires more explanation: The election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council.

The purpose of this Explanatory Note is to provide an overview of the process from each delegate’s perspective. The Background Guide has more information on this procedure from historical perspective, and we encourage delegates to read both the Background Guide and this Explanatory Note to develop a more complete understanding of the process.

General Assembly Elections of Security Council Members

The Security Council has fifteen members. Five are elected each year for a two-year term, with those elected in 2021 serving for all of 2022-2023. The remaining five are the permanent members of the Security Council. The General Assembly elects the non-permanent members of the Security Council by regional group. More information on the regional groups is in the Background Guide.

Each year, the General Assembly elects five Member States to serve a two-year term on the Security Council. Each candidate for a non-permanent seat is placed in their specific regional group and runs against other members of their regional group. Whichever state from the regional group receives support from two-thirds of the General Assembly as a whole is elected. If the regional group is allocated two seats, the two countries that receive support from two-thirds of the Assembly are elected.

At NWMUN-Seattle, these elections are simulated during the morning session on the final day of the conference. The committee will “pause” their discussion of the current agenda item in order to take part in the elections.

When the elections begin, the first thing that will occur is a suspension of the meeting, called for by the Chair. During this suspension, delegates should break up into regional groups. Within each regional group, delegates will indicate their desire to stand as a candidate on behalf of their regional group. All Member States can run for a seat on the Security Council, except for the five states leaving the Council and the ten Member States (the permanent five, and the five elected last year) who are already on the Council. Although in the United Nations, the regional groups tend to come to consensus regarding which Member States will be elected from their region, it is not technically necessary to earn the support of one’s regional group in order to be elected. If one’s regional group does not have a seat up for election (for example, the Eastern European group during an even-numbered year), then it is typical for Member States to focus on who they want to elect from other regions.

After the suspension, each delegate will receive a ballot, with spaces for each of the regional groups allocated a seat that year:

Even-Numbered Years (e.g. NWMUN-Seattle 2022)	Odd-Numbered Years (e.g. NWMUN-Seattle 2021)
Africa: _____	Africa: _____
Asia: _____	Asia: _____
Latin America and the Caribbean: _____	Eastern Europe: _____
Western European and Others Group: _____	Latin America and the Caribbean: _____
Western European and Others Group: _____	

Each delegate will then vote for one Member State in each space. If a group has two spots, like the African states in odd-numbered years, the order of votes does not matter. Upon submission of the ballot, delegates will resume discussing the normal topic while the staff counts the votes. After counting, the staff will pause the topical discussion to announce the vote totals, including which Member States received the votes necessary to be elected on behalf of their regional group, and which seats are yet unresolved. If there remain unresolved seats, the staff will then suspend the meeting again to allow for further discussion and then circulate another ballot. This ballot will have only the remaining spots available. This process repeats, with seats gradually being resolved due to a state being elected, until all five seats are filled.

Thank you! We look forward to seeing you this November!