

## The Individual Sessions

### Chairing:

In order to provide structure to the sessions, modified **rules of parliamentary procedure** apply (with certain exceptions).

**The President chairs all sessions.**

**Role of the President:** It is important to recall that these are proceedings among delegates of equal rank. They would usually have known each other for some time and would have interacted often. Thus, the atmosphere is one of collegiality, equality and congeniality. This includes the relationship between the President and the other participants. While the President is formally in charge of the proceedings and entitled to all courtesy and respect, they would usually “propose” and “suggest,” rather than “decree” and “dictate.” The President, more than any other participant, is interested in a harmonious and consensual outcome of the conference.

### Roll Call -- Quorum:

The first order of business will be to establish roll and a quorum. This is done by the President at the beginning of the session and does not require a motion. The President may record absentees informally by comparing their roster to the participant list in the virtual platform. The President may also call on countries to identify themselves as present (note: there is no “present and voting”). If member state representatives will be delayed or temporarily absent for some reason, courtesy requires that they notify the President beforehand.

### Setting the Agenda:

The President will move to set the agenda (to be seconded by delegates). At least half of the country delegations must approve (by raising their virtual hands at your request) in order for the delegation to set the agenda. At this point, you may ask the delegates to propose which topic they would like to introduce first in the morning agenda. In this case, courtesy requires that the delegate be given a maximum of one minute to explain their rationale. If at least two other delegates second the motion, it will immediately be put to a vote, and requires the support of a simple majority of delegates present to be successful. The President will declare the agenda set as such if the vote is successful. The President will say: “<country name> wishes to set the agenda as follows, unless other proposals are put forth at this time.” If there were an

objection by a delegate, the President would respond: “<country name> moves to set the agenda...” Two other delegates would have to second the motion, which would be brought to a vote, following a brief justification (not exceeding one minute). A simple majority is needed to carry the motion.

### **Round Table:**

The *round table* is a tool for moving a discussion forward by asking each delegate to give a short summary (~2 minutes) of their thinking. Each RCEP session begins with a mandatory *round table*, before establishing roll or quorum. Each delegate can think of this as an opportunity to signal their country’s interests and intentions. Are they upset about one of the major topics on the agenda? Are they seeking to look for and draw the attention of potential allies? In both the mandatory and any additional *round table*, delegates should try to use their speaking time in order to build alliances, convince others, and protect their interests.

### **Speaking Order and Time:**

There is no speakers’ list. In a virtual simulation, delegates wishing to speak should use the videoconferencing software’s feature to virtually raise their hands and must be recognized by the President; physically raising one’s hand on video is not sufficient. It is the room President’s obligation to ensure and guide the flow of communication, and to afford each member an equal opportunity to speak. The President is assisted by the Secretary in keeping track of the proceedings including the fair administration of the right to speak. The **length of speaking time** will be set by the President. The proceedings correspond roughly to a “moderated caucus.” **Participants need not address each other through the President. The President, however, may comment on statements and express the view of the Presidency like all other delegates.** Participants may **yield the remaining speaking time** to a fellow member state by indicating so at the end of their speech. If not, the President may call upon another participant. **When time is yielded, only the time remaining to the original speaker is granted to the new speaker.** However, the President may expand this allotment if they feel that it is necessary.

### **Temporary Adjournment (note there is no “caucus”):**

The room President or a delegate may call for a temporary adjournment of a meeting for a specified time (often around 10-15 minutes), and (if necessary) be given a maximum of one minute to explain their rationale (e.g., for the purpose of an Informal Consultation or an Unmoderated Caucus): **If at least two other delegates second the motion**, it will immediately be put to a vote, and requires the **support of at least a simple majority (normally 8 delegates)** to succeed. The President determines the length and will allow no more than TWO temporary adjournments within a 60-minute period. A delegate would say: “<country> moves to have a temporary adjournment for the purpose of an informal consultation/unmoderated caucus.”

**Temporary Adjournments** may be used for each delegate and their attaché to exchange views and to report on the progress of negotiations.

## **Points and Motions:**

Delegates may rise to **points of order** (always permitted, except during a speech and actual voting), **points of information** (after a speech is completed, whenever the President asks “are there any points and motions at this time”), and points of **personal privilege** (extremely rare, always permissible). **Motions** may also be used to combine or divide agenda items or to table an issue. Motions are also in order (determined always by the President) to “close debate on an issue” and bring it to a vote. Motions are always subject to a “second” by two delegates and are brought to a vote immediately.

**Point of Order.** If, during a meeting, a delegate feels that the meeting is running in a manner contrary to these Rules, they may rise to a point of order. The President may overrule or accept the appeal. If accepted, the President may make an immediate ruling, or ask the delegate to speak on the point of order for a maximum of one minute (but they may not speak on the subject of the debate). The President will then immediately rule on the point of order.

**Point of Information.** If a delegate wishes to obtain a clarification of procedure or of any other matter, they may rise to a point of information and receive clarification from the President or anyone else designated by the President.

**Point of Personal Privilege.** If a delegate wishes to raise a question, leave the room for an extended time, or make a request relating to personal comfort or their treatment by other delegates, they may rise to a point of personal privilege and receive an immediate ruling by the President. There is NO vote on this point.

**RULE: ALL MOTIONS BY ANY PARTICIPANTS (OTHER THAN THE PRESIDENT) ARE ALWAYS SUBJECT TO A SECOND BY TWO DELEGATES. THESE MAY BE ASKED TO GIVE AN EXPLANATION OF THE RATIONALE (NO MORE THAN 1 MINUTE). IF SUCCESSFUL THEY WILL BE BROUGHT TO A VOTE IMMEDIATELY.**

## **Round Table**

A device known as a *round table* may also be used, at the discretion of the President. The President asks each head of government in turn to give a short summary (up to 2 minutes) of their thinking on the matter under discussion, thus ensuring that every member state is able to outline its position, and allowing the President to determine whether a compromise is possible.

## **Resolution:**

Resolutions represent the fundamental policy-making power of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. It is through resolutions that Country Delegations impact the actual process of RCEP integration. Resolutions should be designed with the following goals in mind: 1) They should have some impact on the actual policy questions/crises that are driving the discussion; 2) They should represent a broad coalition of regional interests, as all resolutions require **CONSENSUS**; 3) They should be clear, straightforward, and only as detailed as necessary to deal with the broad outlines of an issue (Country Delegations are big picture-oriented!); and 4) They should directly respond to the policy considerations outlined in the Asia Challenge Agenda. In general, unless policies are linked in order to ensure the support of one or more delegations, smaller, more focused resolutions will be more successful. Once a resolution has been successfully passed by the RCEP member states, it will greatly impact the work of the individual governments and their various partnerships.

### **Resolution Submission:**

A resolution on an agenda item, essentially a brief paragraph prefaced with the following operative phrases – "**recommends,**" "**emphasizes,**" "**insists on,**" "**notes,**" "**is particularly pleased,**" "**undertakes,**" "**encourages,**" or "**welcomes**" – must be handed to the Secretary. A proposed resolution must have **three signatures** from **three participants**. There is no distinction between signatories, sponsors, or authors.

### **Resolution Example:**

Resolution title: Emphasizing the need for RCEP member-states to condemn North Korean military aggression

Agenda Topic: I. Bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island /C.

Proposed Solutions/ii. Condemnation Signatories:

Signatories: (Must have three in order to introduce to chair)

In order to ensure that the RCEP member-states are given room to respond unequivocally to the military aggression, we recommend the following additions to the delegation's draft resolution under

I.C.ii.: ii. In full awareness of the gravity of the crisis and the situation faced by RCEP member-states, we must be mindful of the fact that our agreement requires open and healthy domestic debate about issues of great importance. North Korean military aggression, both through the use of conventional and nuclear weapons, necessitates the immediate and unequivocal resolve within RCEP member-states to openly and forcefully condemn North Korea's recent bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island to deter further acts of aggression.

### **Resolution Withdrawal:**

If all signatories to a resolution agree to withdraw a resolution, it will be removed from consideration. This request would be made to the Secretary in the same manner as the initial resolution submission.

### **Resolution Amendment:**

There is no separate amendment process. If all signatories support an amended resolution, the original resolution will be withdrawn and the amended resolution will be added as a new resolution. Otherwise, the amended resolution will be treated as a separate resolution to be considered alongside the original draft. In the latter case, there would still need to be five total signatories.

### **Question and Answer:**

After a resolution has been submitted, the President may call a special Question and Answer session, so that signatories can explain their resolution to the rest of the RCEP delegations. Signatories may choose one or more delegations to represent their resolution, and other delegations are encouraged to ask questions about the resolution. This session operates by the same rules as the rest of the summit meeting. The President has considerable discretion in organizing, calling, and ending Question and Answer sessions.

### **Closure of Debate:**

The President will normally decide on the closure of a debate, but a delegate may move for closure, and (if necessary) be given a maximum of one minute to explain their rationale. If at least two other delegates second the motion, it will immediately be put to a vote and requires the support of at least a simple majority to be successful. The President will declare the debate closed if the vote is successful. Once debate is closed, voting will commence immediately on the agenda items.

### **Voting Procedure:**

Where votes are taken, they should normally be open and made by roll call in alphabetical order by member state, and recorded by the Secretary. Voting will be **entered into the Teams chat feature** and expressed as “Yes,” “No,” or “Abstain.” Once a vote has been declared open, no one will be allowed to speak other than to cast their vote. Once all votes have been cast, the Secretary will tally the vote and immediately announce the result. The decision of the Secretary on a tally will be final.

Resolutions are voted on in the order received by the Secretary of the session.

**Voting on procedural issues** (e.g., adjournments) requires a **simple majority** of the delegates **present** in the session including the Commission President. **One member = one vote!**

**Voting on matters of the agenda** (sequence, division, combination of agenda items, tabling, and delegating the agenda, as well as opening and closing debate) requires a simple majority. **One member, one vote!**

**Voting on substantive issues**, such as resolutions, requires **CONSENSUS** by the **Member States ONLY**.

**Note: there is no “present and voting” or “present” rule in RCEP.**

Following the resolution of all agenda items, the Presidency will issue a comprehensive report summarizing the individual resolutions.

#### **Presidential Statement:**

In order to facilitate progress in the simulation, as well as to reiterate important points already made, the Presidency may deliver a Presidential Statement. The statement would serve to review the movement of the conference or to encourage further discussion on agenda topics.

### **The Closing Plenary Session**

At the end of the conference, there will be a closing plenary session. Its purpose is twofold:

- **To bring any unfinished business to a conclusion** (decision and resolution).
- **To vote on the total package of resolutions negotiated and decided**—Each delegation must endorse the total package by an affirmative vote. In short, **it must be adopted by CONSENSUS**. If there is a last-minute objection or a change in position on an agenda item already agreed to in negotiations, the delegation must indicate this to the President. The agenda item will then be bracketed out and opened up for further action (debate, new resolution, and vote).

### **Crisis**

During each session of the RCEP simulation, a crisis will arise that will require the RCEP delegations to respond.

These crises could arise at any point during the sessions. While they will likely involve the pre-determined policy issue areas, the crisis could considerably impact the context in which this discussion takes place. Delegates should be prepared to be flexible, as necessary, and to take their perspective into new policy domains as circumstances demand.

### Differences from Model UN

For students coming in from a background in Model UN, there are a few notable differences in terminology and rules:

- Standard parliamentary procedure in the RCEP context is the same as the Model EU context and is roughly comparable to a “moderated caucus” in Model UN.
- Temporary adjournments are similar in effect to “unmoderated caucuses” in Model UN.
- Unlike Model UN, there is no speakers’ list.
- There is no distinct amendment process. Unfriendly amendments are treated as new bills. Friendly amendments withdraw the original bill and replace it with a new one.
- Substantive issues require consensus by member states.

### RCEP Procedure at a Glance

What is it?	How do you phrase it?	What does it mean?	Does it need a second?	Can it be amended?	Is it debatable?	Is a vote needed for it to pass?
<b>Main Motion</b>	“I move that...”	We should do this.	Yes (2)	Yes	Yes	50% + 1 (majority)
<b>Amendment</b>	“I move to amend the motion by...”	I have an idea to make this motion better.	Yes (2)	Yes	Yes	50% + 1 (majority)
<b>Close Debate</b>	“I move the question...”	I think that we should vote.	Yes (2)	No	No	50% + 1 (majority)
<b>Unanimously Close Debate</b>	“I call the question...”	Let’s vote – we’ve all had enough discussion.	No	No	No	100% (consensus)
<b>Correction</b>	“Point of information...”	There’s something we should all know about.	No	No	No	No Vote
<b>Personal Privilege</b>	“I raise a point of personal privilege.”	I need to make a request relating to personal comfort or to leave the room.	No	No	No	No Vote

<b>Table</b>	"I move to table this motion until..."	For now, let's move on to the next agenda topic.	Yes (2)	No	No	50% + 1 (majority)
<b>Order (!)</b>	"I raise a point of order."	I protest that we're doing something wrong here.	No	No	No	No Vote (Chair Rules)
<b>Remove from the Table</b>	"I move to take up from the table..."	Let's return to a prior agenda topic.	Yes (2)	No	No	50% + 1 (majority)
<b>Temporary Adjournment</b>	"I move for a temporary adjournment on [topic] for X minutes"	The delegates will talk without moderation— usually to try to write a resolution	Yes (2)	No	No	50% + 1 (majority)