



TRIUMVIRATE

CONSTITUTION¹

Last update: January 22th, 2009

Article 1: Definition, Mandate and Composition

1.1. Description

- a. The Triumvirate is the interparliamentary assembly of North America.

1.2. Composition

- a. The Triumvirate is composed of delegates, who are elected members of the federal and federated legislative assemblies of North America.
- b. Each federal State may be represented by a statutory number of nine delegates, plus one additional delegate per population of fifty million people. Each federated State may be represented by a statutory number of one delegate, plus one additional delegate per population of ten million people (the number of delegates to which each federated and federal State is entitled is stipulated in Appendix I).
- c. Officials elected to the federal, provincial and/or territorial assemblies of Canada, the United States and Mexico are eligible to become delegates.
- d. The General Assembly may invite non-parliamentary experts to address the Assembly, following an invitation from the Executive Committee, or express their support for a document.

Article 2: Objectives

The role of the Triumvirate is to facilitate consensus building and joint management of issues relating to North-American integration, to promote political dialogue, democracy, human development, economic growth and sustainable development in North America.

Article 3: Structures

3.1. Mandate of the General Assembly

- a. The General Assembly is the highest organ of the Triumvirate.
- b. The General Assembly adopts all the resolutions necessary for the accomplishment of the objectives of the Triumvirate.

¹ The masculine form is used in this document simply to facilitate reading and should be interpreted in all cases as referring to both men and women.

- c. The Assembly meets once a year following a call to that effect by its Speaker.
- d. The annual Assembly is held in one of the three North American countries.
- e. Outside its regular schedule, the General Assembly may be called by the Executive Committee or at the request of twenty percent of its delegates (Article 3.2).
- f. The General Assembly adopts an agenda proposed by the Executive Committee following a proposal by the general secretariat (Article 3.2).
- g. The General Assembly is responsible for adopting the Constitution and the Standing Order. Any modification must be approved by two-thirds of its delegates. The suspension of the Constitution or Rules of Procedures requires a unanimous decision of the delegates.
- h. The Assembly is responsible for admitting or suspending delegates in accordance with the rules defined in its Standing Order and the objectives of the Triumvirate.
- i. The Assembly may suspend for an indefinite period any delegate who is found to be disrespectful or who deliberately fails to meet his financial obligations to the Triumvirate. Suspension implies that the delegate will not be invited to the activities of the Triumvirate, the withdrawal of privileges offered by the Triumvirate, and the suspension of voting rights and the right to participate in debates.
- j. Delegates are seated at the Assembly in alphabetical order by country and subsequently by State they represent, and this in the native language of the country or state they represent.

3.2 The Executive Committee

- a. The General Assembly is mandated to elect all the members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has a one year mandate.
- b. The Executive Committee defines the orientations of the activities of the Triumvirate. It mandates the chairpersons of the commissions to present the draft resolutions to the General Assembly.
- c. The Executive Committee is composed of :
 - One Speaker;
 - One Deputy Speaker;
 - The political commission's chairpersons.
- d. The quorum of the Executive Committee is the absolute majority of its members.
- e. The Executive Committee meets as often as necessary, and at least once during the General Assembly.
- f. The Speaker of the General Assembly acts as the chair of the Executive Committee. He is responsible for preparing the agenda, and for calling and chairing The Executive Committee's meetings and debates. He represents the Triumvirate before other parliaments or parliamentary organizations at official events. He reports to the Assembly yearly on the activities and decisions of the Executive Committee.
- g. The Deputy Speaker assists the Speaker. He is required to replace the Speaker at the latter's request or whenever the Speaker is unable to exercise his functions and responsibilities.
- h. The Executive Committee is assisted by the general secretariat.

3.3 General Secretariat

- a. The general secretariat falls under the authority of the Assembly. It is composed of a Secretary General elected for a three-year mandate by the General Assembly and a team appointed by the Secretary General.
- b. The secretariat assists the Speaker in preparing and organizing the Assembly. It is responsible for ensuring that the Triumvirate operates smoothly. The hiring policy of the secretariat favors representation among its staff of citizens of the three North-American countries, and it operates in the three official languages of the Triumvirate.
- c. The general secretariat assists the Speaker during the General Assembly and is responsible for preparing the list of speakers before and during debates, for counting votes, for ensuring proper follow-up of the decisions of the Assembly, and for publishing the results of the deliberations of the Triumvirate. Members of the general secretariat have no voting rights.

3.4. Commissions

- a. The General Assembly may form political commissions to discuss draft resolutions that are submitted. The Assembly assigns the names, jurisdictions and members to each commission, following the general secretariat's proposals. The members of the designated commission will then meet to examine the issues assigned to the commission and to formulate a report which gathers the commission's suggestions regarding the draft resolution.
- b. Each commission meets annually, upon convocation by the commission chairperson or at the request of twenty percent of its members.
- c. Commissions prepare reports on draft resolutions, which they submit to the General Assembly (Regulation 2.b).
- d. Each commission is composed of delegates, appointed by the general secretariat to the General Assembly, among which a chairperson and a secretary are elected.
- e. The delegates of each commission proceed to the election of a chairperson and a secretary during the first political commission session.
- f. The commission chairperson presides over discussions and ensures that the commission is operating smoothly. He presents the report of the committee at a plenary session (Article 4.5).
- g. The secretary counts the commission votes during sessions and prepares a report of the commission debates and opinions.
- h. A commission chairperson may call on experts (non-parliamentary) to contribute to commission discussions and solicit their support for the adoption of a final report.

3.5. Caucus

- a. The national caucus brings together all the members of the General Assembly of a single country to discuss the positions of each member and to encourage the development of alliances and common positions on resolutions submitted in commissions.
- b. The members of each caucus proceed with the election of a chairperson as well as to the appointment of a representative of the federal delegates and a representative of the federated delegates, during the first caucus session.

- c. The chairperson of the caucus presides over the debates and ensures the agenda is respected.
- d. The representatives of the federal and federated delegates are invited to consult one another through out the caucus sessions in order to encourage the development of common positions regarding the resolutions submitted in commissions.
- e. A caucus chairperson may call on experts (non-parliamentary) to contribute to caucus discussions.

Article 4: Conduct of Debates at the General Assembly

4.1. Quorum

The General Assembly will have a quorum when half of the delegates of each country are present.

4.2. Role of the Speaker of the General Assembly

- a. The Speaker opens, suspends, and adjourns General Assembly sessions. He presides over the debates of the Assembly, sees to it that members conduct themselves properly, and calls to order any speaker who strays from the topic under discussion. The Deputy Speaker can deputize for him.
- b. The Speaker renders a decision immediately and without debate on any requests pertaining to points of order.
- c. The Speaker immediately resolves any incidents occurring during the session.
- d. The Speaker ensures that at all times, the members of the Assembly respect the times they are allocated during debates.

4.3 Taking the Floor

A member of the Assembly may only take the floor when so authorized by the Speaker.

4.4 Priority

During regular debates, the following motions will take priority, in the following order, over any other motions (Regulation 1):

1. Point of order;
2. Suspension of a sitting;
3. Adjournment of debate;
4. Close of the debate.

4.5. Presentation of Commission Reports

Commission chairpersons present their commissions' report to the General Assembly.

4.6. Debate Periods

During a General Assembly, debate periods are allocated to delegates after the submission of commission reports.

4.7. Adoption of Draft Resolutions

- a. A group of at least five delegates and one lobbyist of the Triumvirate may move that a draft resolution be examined by the General Assembly. This group may submit to the General Assembly any amendments to the draft resolution in the form of recommendations (Regulation 2.d).
- b. A delegate may introduce a request for a Debate on a current topic. Such a request must be followed by a draft resolution on the matter (Regulation 2.e).
- c. Voting is conducted as follows:
 - I. The Assembly votes on the recommendations presented in plenary session by a group of at least five delegates and one lobbyist.
 - II. The Assembly votes on all amendments proposed in the commissions' report. Voting may be done on the block of amendments or on individual amendments, depending on the proposer's proposition (formulation) of the amendment (Regulation 1.e).
 - III. Voting is done on the entire amended draft resolution.
 - IV. The Assembly votes on the draft resolutions submitted for debate on a current matter.

Article 5: Voting at the General Assembly

5.1. Voting Right

Every delegate has one vote.

5.2. Double Majority

- a. The adoption of a resolution requires a double majority. Each group of delegates of a same federal state has a veto. Delegates representing federal states of a country must adopt the resolution by an absolute majority.
- b. Each national group of federated States has the right to a veto. Delegates representing federated parliaments of a given country must adopt the resolution by an absolute majority.
- c. Abstention does not count as a vote.

5.3 Voting Procedure

- a. Voting is first conducted by a show of hand.
- b. If there is a clear majority, then the Speaker calls it.
- c. If necessary, the Speaker may call a nominal country-by-country vote. He then proceeds in alphabetical order of country name, based on the countries' respective native languages. For each country, the federal states delegates vote, in alphabetical order, and are followed by the federated assemblies' delegates.
- d. A delegate may request a nominal vote with the support of at least four other delegates.

Article 6: Conduct of Debates in Commission

6.1. Quorum

The quorum is established at the majority of the members of the commission.

6.2. Role of the Commission Chairperson

- a. The commission chairperson presides over debates and grants and withdraws the right to speak (Regulation 3.4).
- b. The chairperson may decide on the amount of time to be allocated for formal and informal deliberations.
- c. The chairperson draws conclusions and identifies areas of agreement and of disagreement during debates.
- d. The chairperson may invite experts (non-parliamentary) who are not members of the commission to testify before it.
- e. A vote of confidence may be submitted if the motion is formulated by a member, if it is seconded and if it obtains the majority of votes of the commission. A chairperson may also be dismissed from his duties by the general assembly if a motion, at this regard, obtains two-thirds of the members of the Assembly's votes. In this eventuality, the members of the commission must proceed immediately to the election of a new chairperson.

6.3. Taking the Floor

- a. A member of a commission may only take the floor when so authorized by the chairperson.

6.4. Voting in Commissions

- a. Commissions vote on amendments submitted for debate.
- b. Commissions seek to reach a consensus on matters they are assigned. A vote is only called when it is obvious that a consensus cannot be reached.
- c. Decisions are based on a majority of votes cast by the commission members. Abstention does not count as a vote.

Article 7: Working Languages

7.1. Official Languages

The working languages of the Triumvirate are English, Spanish and French, without prejudice to Article 7.3.

7.2. General Assembly

Deliberations during the General Assembly are made in English, Spanish and French, unless informed otherwise by the General Secretariat.

7.3. Other Organs

The secretariat publishes official Assembly documents in the three Triumvirate languages. Commission business is conducted in one of the three official languages, set by the general secretariat.

STANDING ORDERS

Regulation 1: Motions during General Assembly and Commission Debates

- 1.a. Point of Order:
 - I. Session incident raised by an Assembly delegate respecting the breach of a regulation.
 - II. Requests to speak respecting points of order take precedence over all other requests to speak.
 - III. On points of order, the Speaker makes a decision immediately, in accordance with regulatory provisions, and announces his decision immediately following the point of order. This decision is not subject to a vote.

- 1.b. Suspension of a Sitting:

The session may be suspended or adjourned during a debate or during a vote if the Assembly so decides following a proposal by the Speaker at the request of a delegate. Voting on this motion takes place immediately.

- 1.c. Adjournment of Debate:
 - I. A group of six delegates may, upon the opening of the debate on an item in the agenda, present a motion for the debate to be postponed to a specific time. Voting on this motion takes place immediately.
 - II. If the motion is adopted, the Assembly moves on to the next item on the agenda. The adjourned debate will resume at the specified time.
 - III. If the motion is denied, it may not be presented again during the same session.

- 1.d. Closure Debate:
 - I. Motion subject to debate.
 - II. The Speaker will designate two delegates to speak in favor of and two delegates opposing the motion.
 - III. If the motion is adopted, the debate is closed and the Assembly proceeds to vote on the item being discussed unless the vote had previously been set for a specific time.
 - IV. If the motion is denied, it may not be presented for a second time during the same session.

- 1.e. Block Voting on Certain Amendments:
 - I. A delegate may request the Assembly to carry out block voting on a set of amendments, with the consent of the proposer of the amendment.
 - II. If one of the proposers opposes this motion, each amendment will then be examined individually.

Regulation 2: Draft Resolutions and Amendments to Draft Resolutions

- 2.a. Draft Resolution:

This is a draft legislative document presented by the Executive Committee, which is debated and amended at a commission prior to its adoption by the General Assembly.

- 2.b. Draft Resolution Report:

This is a final report presenting all the amendments adopted by the commission. The commission chairperson presents it before the General Assembly. To be adopted, the final report on the draft resolution must obtain the support of the majority of commission member delegates, as well as the support, if necessary, of at least one non-parliamentary

expert associated with the commission.

- 2.c. Amendment:
This is a proposed amendment to a draft resolution under examination by the members of a commission.
- 2.d. Recommendation:
This is a proposed amendment to a draft resolution made by delegates who are not members of the commissions. It must have the support of five delegates and one lobbyist (associated or not with the commission in question). A recommendation may be submitted in one of two ways:
- I. To the chairperson of one of the appropriate commissions, so that the members of that commission may debate it.
 - II. To the Secretary General during the General Assembly for presentation to the latter.
2. e. Debate on a current topic:
Upon a written request to the general secretariat, a debate may be held on a current topic or an urgent or important topic.
- I. Only topics not covered by political commissions may be addressed in such a manner.
 - II. Such requests must be accompanied by a draft resolution proposal, having received the support of at least 5 delegates, representing at least two countries.
 - III. The Executive Committee must statute on the admissibility of the request and must organize the retained resolution proposals according to their priority before transmitting them to the Speaker.
 - IV. The Speaker then submits the proposal to the General Assembly. A brief debate is held after the presentation of each resolution proposal, followed by a vote by the Assembly. This shall continue as long as the allocated time for the point at hand is not exhausted.

Regulation 3: Commission Procedures

3. a Discussions are held in a round-table format.
3. b The duration of the interventions are established at the discretion of the chairperson who must ensure that speaking time is apportioned fairly.

Regulation 4: Caucus Procedure

4. a. Discussions are held in a round-table format.
4. b. The duration of the interventions are established at the discretion of the chairperson who must ensure that speaking time is apportioned fairly.

Regulation 5: Procedure during General Assembly Debates

5. a Granting of Right to Speak and Content of Interventions
- I. No delegate may take the floor unless he has been invited to do so by the Speaker. The delegates are to address the Speaker from their assigned seat.
 - II. If a delegate strays from the topic, the Speaker calls him to order. If a delegate is called to order twice during the same discussion, then the Speaker may, if a third call is needed, withdraw the delegate's right to speak on the subject.
5. b Apportionment of Speaking Time

At the start of the session, the Speaker specifies how speaking time will be apportioned.

5. c Intervention for a Right of Reply

- I. Any delegate wishing to exercise a right of reply is heard at the end of the discussion of the item being examined.
- II. A delegate may not start a new point in the debate; he may only refute either the opinions expressed during the debate that concerns the State (federal or federated) he represents or opinions attributed to him, or rectify his own statements.

5.d Call to Order

- I. The Speaker calls to order any delegate who disrupts the session.
- II. In the event of a repeat breach, the Speaker may expel the delegate from the hall for the rest of the session. The general secretariat oversees the application of this disciplinary measure.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF STATES, PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES AND THEIR REPRESENTATION (number of delegates)

a. Federal States²:

Canada³: 9 delegates
 United States: 15 delegates
 Mexico: 11 delegates

b. Federated States:

1. Aguascalientes	28. Hawaii	54. New Hampshire	80. Sinaloa
2. Alabama	29. Hidalgo	55. New Jersey	81. Sonora
3. Alaska	30. Idaho	56. New Mexico	82. South Carolina
4. Alberta	31. Illinois (2 delegates)	57. New York (3 delegates)	83. South Dakota
5. American Samoa	32. Indiana	58. Newfoundland and Labrador	84. Tabasco
6. Arizona	33. Iowa	59. North Carolina	85. Tamaulipas
7. Arkansas	34. Jalisco	60. North Dakota	86. Tennessee
8. Baja California Norte	35. Kansas	61. North West Territory	87. Texas (3 delegates)
9. Baja California Sur	36. Kentucky	62. Nova Scotia	88. Tlaxcala
10. British Columbia	37. Louisiana	63. Nuevo León	89. Utah
11. California (4 delegates)	38. Maine	64. Nunavut	90. Veracruz
12. Campeche	39. Manitoba	65. Oaxaca	91. Vermont
13. Chiapas	40. Maryland	66. Ohio (2 delegates)	92. Virgin Islands
14. Chihuahua	41. Massachusetts	67. Oklahoma	93. Virginia
15. Coahuila de Zaragoza	42. Mexico (2 delegates)	68. Ontario (2 delegates)	94. Washington
16. Colima	43. Michigan (2 delegates)	69. Oregon	95. West Virginia
17. Colorado	44. Michoacán de Ocampo	70. Pennsylvania (2 del.)	96. Wisconsin
18. Connecticut	45. Minnesota	71. Prince Edwards Island	97. Wyoming
19. Delaware	46. Mississippi	72. Puebla	98. Yucatán
20. District of Columbia	47. Missouri	73. Puerto Rico	99. Yukon
21. Distrito federal de Mexico	48. Montana	74. Québec	100. Zacatecas
22. Durango	49. Morelos	75. Querétaro	
23. Florida (2 delegates)	50. Nayarit	76. Quintana Roo	
24. Georgia	51. Nebraska	77. Rhode Island	
25. Guanajuato	52. Nevada	78. San Luis Potosí	
26. Guam	53. New Brunswick / Nouveau-Brunswick	79. Saskatchewan	
27. Guerrero			

² Source: <http://www.populationdata.net>. Updated January 10, 2005 for Canada, January 26, 2005 for Mexico, and February 8, 2005 for the United States.

³ Source: <http://www.populationdata.net>. As of October 1, 2004.