

Training for chairs - CRC Orientation workshop

Basic principles and practical tips for chairing contact groups in BRS meetings



Rome, 18 April 2018

Objectives of the training

- Enhance participants' skills and knowledge to enable them to efficiently and effectively chair contact/drafting group meetings
- Determine what preparations are needed for chairing meetings
- Strengthen communication techniques and skills of potential chairs



Training methodology



- Presentation of basic principles and practical tips for chairing BRS meetings (with focus on CRC meetings)
- Sharing of experience from former chairs
- Simulation exercise
- Feedback and wrap-up

Groups in the CRC setting

Interessionally

During CRC

**FRA
notifications**

Intersessional
task group:
preliminary
evaluation

Contact group:
(agree on criteria)
prepare rationale

Draft DGD

Intersessional
drafting group:
prepare draft

Contact group:
finalize draft

Basic principles of chairing

- Managing the negotiations, focusing on mandates
- Providing adequate leadership
- Being impartial
- Demonstrating patience
- Understanding of the issues
- Providing an opportunity for all to express point of view

Basic principles of chairing (cont.)

- Demonstrating respect for the views of others
- Keeping track of what has been said (main points)
- Summarizing when necessary
- Preventing discussions from wandering
- Avoiding antagonism
- Understanding of chair's role procedurally and substantially

Some techniques for facilitating the work of the meeting:



- Allow adequate time for debate and informal consultations
- Suspend the session if necessary for informal consultations
- Inviting a delegate to speak (in plenary the Secretariat maintains a speakers' list)
- Asking the Secretariat to provide additional information to delegates

Role of the chair in the discussions

- Proposing the convening of an informal discussion group and designation of the chair of such groups
- Acting as intermediary or facilitator in resolving disagreements among delegates
- Proposing a procedural step, such as laying an issue aside temporarily
- Identifying areas of common ground and proposing textual solutions to the room that accommodate all views
- Presenting formulations or whole draft texts to the meeting in his/her own name

Available resources for a chair

- Rules of Procedure, CRC handbook
- Positive and constructive atmosphere conducive for consensus making
- Time well managed (e.g., let discussion run or restrict)
- Control of opportunities to speak
- Awareness of members positions
- Common goals of all delegates
- Influence/authority vested in the chair
- Secretariat (be on the same team)
- Mediators among the members



Checklist for chairs

- Before the start of the contact group meeting
- At the beginning of the session
- Managing debates on the text
- Sub-groups of a contact group
- Difficult or unpredictable situations
- Moving toward conclusion
- Reporting



**See annex 2 of
chair's training manual**

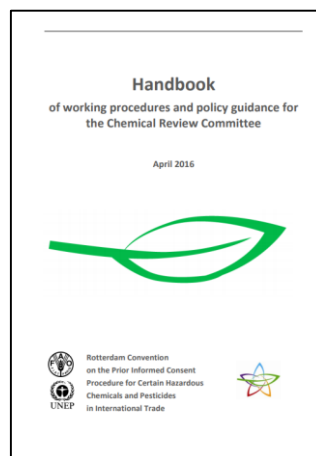
Before the start of the contact group meeting



VS.



Before the start of the contact group meeting (cont'd)



Before the start of the contact group meeting (cont'd)

Experts/Staff to be available



Before the start of the contact group meeting (cont'd)

THE OBSERVER



Contact Groups



Drafting Groups



Friends of the Chairs



Before the start of the contact group meeting (cont'd)



or



?

At the beginning of the session

- Welcome the group and introduce yourself and your co-chair
- Reiterate the mandate. If a mandate given to you as chair or co-chair is unclear, ask the Chair to clarify any questions you have in plenary
- If a Member suggests to have the work proceed on the basis of a new document, direct it to the document provided in the mandate
- Outline the immediate and long-term process for the group, including hours of work
- Outline how you plan organize the work of the contact group
- If the subject of the debate is technical or complex, you may first wish to ask the Secretariat to present the relevant documents and take questions from the group

Managing debates on the text (1)

Overall:

- Be impartial: do not debate a Party's position although it is fair to probe to better understand it
- The Secretariat will provide you with a list of speakers so you can focus on the debate

General comments:

- Consider the benefits of allowing time for general comments so that you gain a sense of areas of both agreement and disagreement (if the issues is mature this may not be necessary)

First reading

- Go paragraph by paragraph on screen through the to identify issues of disagreement

Managing debates on the text (2)

- Suggest that the operative text be considered first, rather than starting with any preamble text
- Go through each paragraph methodically, taking all proposals from Parties and asking the Secretariat to insert these on the screen at your direction only
- A text with all the proposals may be posted on the intranet site

Second reading (and any subsequent readings):

- Where the text touched in the first reading, you can state that there are no comments on the text and seek an agreement of the group on it
- For text with brackets, try to get closure on each paragraph as you go, but if it is clear that there is a blockage, move on to the next paragraph with an intention of revisiting it later

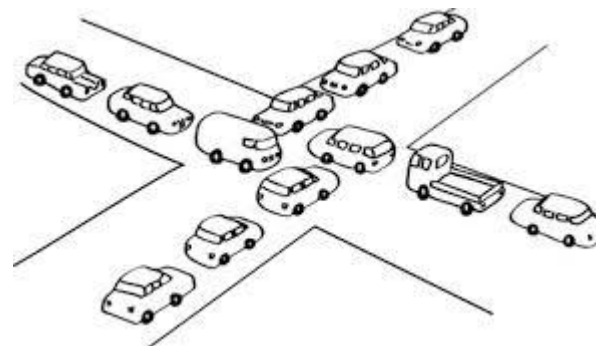
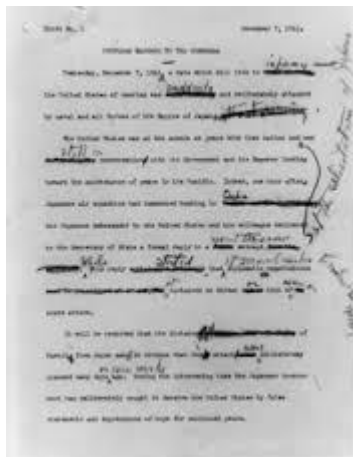
Managing debates on the text (3)

- Once the text is cleared of brackets, it should not be revisited unless revisiting helps resolve issues elsewhere in the text
- Keep returning to uncleared text until the issues are resolved
- When a delegate has proposed a change to a text, and when the next delegate takes the floor, you may wish to ask them to provide not just their proposal but also to comment on whether they can accept the proposal just made, as this will ensure that interventions are cumulative
- Where an intervention is to make a factual change, just confirm to the room that it is factual, and try to move on without debate

[Decides] to undertake a further review of the synergies arrangements, *[which should be based on an independent assessment of the implementation and impact of the joint activities and joint managerial functions, including joint services,]* at all levels, and presented as a report for consideration by the conferences of the parties at their meetings in 2017;



Sub-groups of a contact group



Difficult or unpredictable situations

Points of order happen infrequently and relate to questions about the immediate running of the meeting and have to be taken up first.

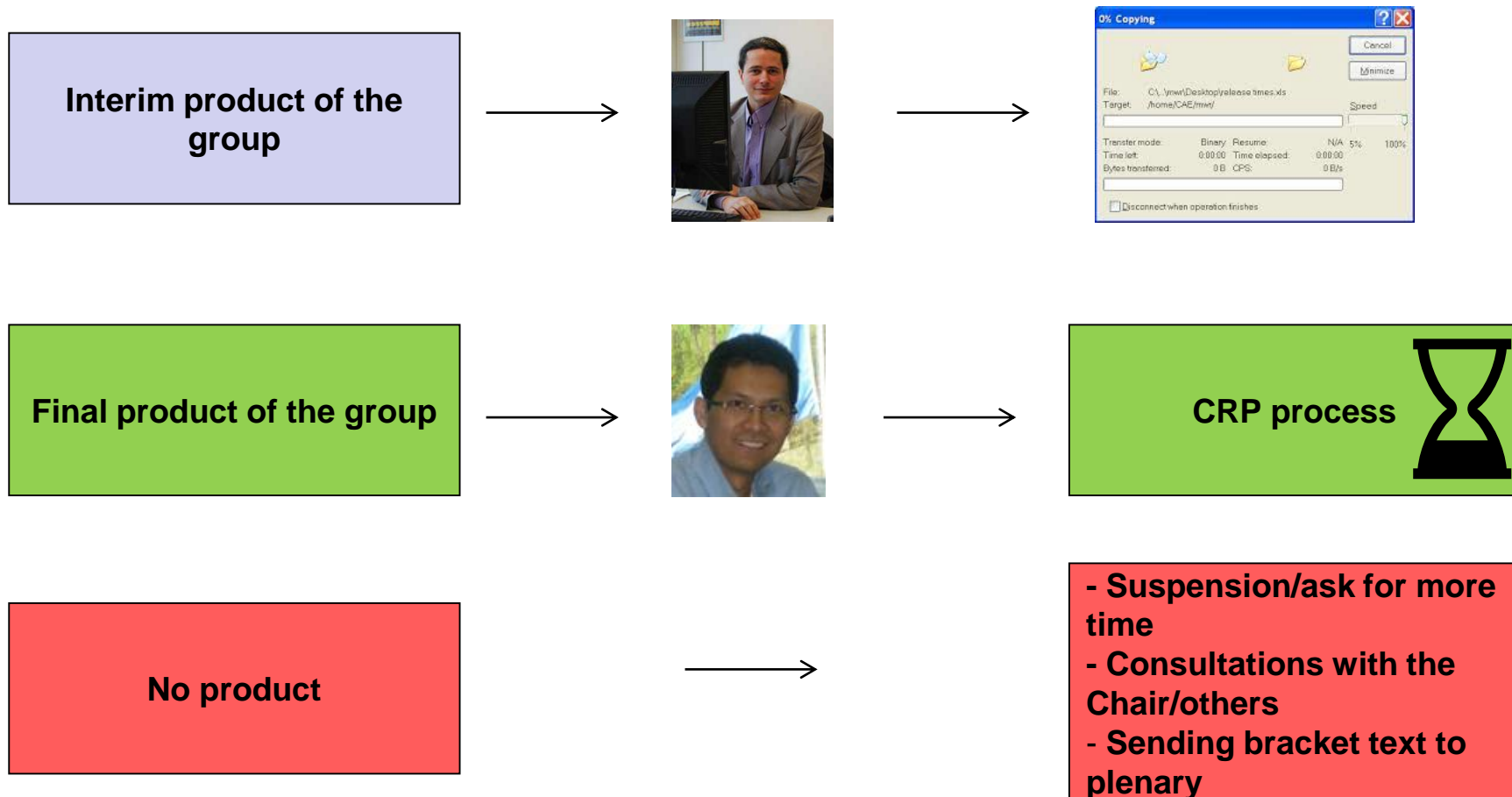


Difficult or unpredictable situations (cont.)

- You can offer to consult with delegations and bring the outcome back to the room
- On rules of procedure, the secretariat staff can advise, and if the staff doesn't readily have an answer, the legal officer of the Secretariat can be consulted
- On substantive matters, the secretariat staff may have the information
- When in doubt, pause and ask the secretariat for advice on the way forward.

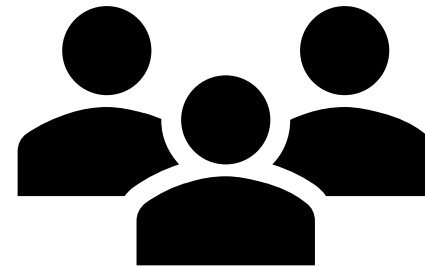


Moving toward a conclusion



Reporting to Bureau

- The Bureau usually meets in the morning and hears a report from the contact groups that met the day before
- Agree with your co-chair as to who will attend the Bureau meeting and report (either or both)
- Present briefly whether work is completed or more time is needed and what are the outstanding issues



Reporting to plenary

- If the draft product contains square brackets, warn the Chair of the Committee in advance and consult on possible ways to reach consensus during the plenary debate (or before)
- Agree with your co-chair as to who will report to plenary (either or both)
- Thank the group, emphasize the positive
- Present briefly the CRP(s) with the draft products prepared by the group
- Be prepared to respond to any questions or issues raised in plenary



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Chairing is the art of managing meetings!



For more information:

Training manual for chairs of meetings

OF THE BASEL, ROTTERDAM AND
STOCKHOLM CONVENTIONS



Accessible from:

<http://www.brsmeas.org/Implementation/Publications.aspx>

