

US Fed Up With Drunk UN Diplomats

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Some diplomats consider a few stiff drinks to be essential before United Nations budget negotiations. But the US ambassador for management and reform is sick of dealing with intoxicated counterparts—and he'd like them banned from budget negotiations, *Foreign Policy* reports. "There has always been a good and responsible tradition of a bit of alcohol improving a negotiation, but we're not talking about a delegate having a nip at the bar," Joseph Torsella complained at a budget committee meeting yesterday. His "modest" proposal? That the negotiating room "should in future be an inebriation-free zone." That's inebriation-free, not booze-free: US officials say alcohol is OK, but what one diplomat describes as "falling-down drunk" envoys are not, reports [AFP](#).

Insiders say it's common for obviously drunk delegates to turn up at budget meetings, though the imbibers tend to be those who are required to attend but aren't involved in much negotiating. One Western diplomat says African delegations tend to be the tipsiest, but other insiders say diplomats from around the world hit the bottle before—and during—meetings, especially toward the end of marathon budget sessions. "It's not just Africans. The Russians do it," a Security Council diplomat says. "There's nothing new or surprising about this. Canada used to bring whisky. The French used to bring bottles of wine."