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**GENERAL
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THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

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GENERAL COMMITTEE

4th meeting

held on

Wednesday, 24 October 1979

at 9.45 a.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SALIM (President of the General Assembly)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.55 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS:

(a) REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM SUBMITTED BY DEMOCRATIC YEMEN, IRAQ, JORDAN, KUWAIT, THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA, MAURITANIA, SOMALIA, THE SUDAN, THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND YEMEN (A/34/244)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the General Committee was invited to consider the request for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item entitled "Observer status for the Council of Arab Economic Unity in the General Assembly" (A/34/244), submitted by 11 Members of the United Nations.

2. Mr. NAIK (Pakistan) proposed that consideration of the matter should be deferred until members of the General Committee had obtained all the necessary additional information from the sponsors.

3. Mr. EL-CHOUFI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the authors of the letter in document A/34/244 had no objection to the request of the representative of Pakistan.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the General Committee decided to postpone consideration of the matter.

5. It was so decided.

(b) REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL SUBITEM FOR AGENDA ITEM 17: NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/34/607)

6. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the request for the inclusion of an additional subitem for agenda item 17 (Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs), said that in document A/34/607 the Secretary-General noted that, at the present session, item 17 did not include any subitem relating to the appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission, since no term of office was to expire at the end of the current year. However, as indicated in paragraph 4 of the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/34/30), the Chairman of the Commission had resigned. It had therefore become necessary to provide for the appointment of a member of the Commission and for the designation of its Chairman.

7. The General Committee might therefore wish to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion of an additional subitem under item 17, which would read:

"(j) International Civil Service Commission:

(i) Appointment of a member of the Commission;

(ii) Designation of the Chairman of the Commission",

and which would be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

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8. The General Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include an additional subitem under item 17 of the agenda, to be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK: NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/BUR/34/2)

9. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, on the recommendation of the General Committee, the General Assembly had adopted at its 4th plenary meeting, on 21 September 1979, several of the Secretary-General's proposals relating to the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. In document A/BUR/34/2, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the General Committee to the remaining proposals, contained in sections II to VI. He was pleased to announce that the Secretary-General had offered to comment on some of the proposals, especially those relating to documentation.

10. The SECRETARY-GENERAL said that, in his report on the subject (A/34/320), he had indicated that recent sessions of the General Assembly had demonstrated more clearly than ever that existing procedures needed to be altered if the work was to be concluded each year within the time limits originally envisaged. In the same document, he had made a number of recommendations involving various aspects of the problem most in need of remedial action. He was pleased that at its 4th plenary meeting the General Assembly had adopted several of his proposals relating to the organization of the session, the agenda and the allocation of items. A number of the remaining recommendations concerned proposed improvements in the organization and conduct of the proceedings of the Assembly and, if approved, they would not be difficult to implement.

11. However, one of the more difficult and critical of the issues raised was the relentless increase in the volume of documentation - a phenomenon which had considerable impact on the capacity of the appropriate services in the Secretariat to prepare the material and reproduce it in the working languages at the proper time. Complaints were constantly being received about delays in the preparation of translations. He fully shared the legitimate concern expressed by Member States; but only a joint effort could improve the present unsatisfactory situation.

12. On many occasions, the General Assembly had called for more restraint on the part of delegations in requesting reports, studies and meeting records, and had asked the Secretariat to draft documentation as concisely as possible. Despite minor achievements over the years, the over-all situation continued to deteriorate, and had reached a state of near crisis during the current year. Incredible though it might seem, during the previous year over 600 million pages of documents had been printed in the Headquarters building alone. The cost of documents in New York and Geneva now exceeded \$70 million a year.

13. For that reason, he welcomed the action recently taken by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1979/69 to control and limit documentation, as well as the draft resolution adopted the previous day by the Fifth Committee, under which the General Assembly would apply to its work and that of its subsidiary

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bodies rules for the control and limitation of documentation similar to those adopted by the Council. Those measures, if approved by the General Assembly, would largely meet the recommendations in paragraph 5 of document A/BUR/34/2 in respect of controlling the volume of General Assembly documentation and strictly limiting the length of reports prepared by the Secretariat. He welcomed the draft resolution of the Fifth Committee, and trusted that it would be endorsed by the General Assembly.

14. Closely related to those problems was the sharp increase in the number of subsidiary organs of the Assembly, which had created difficulties not only in respect of documentation, but also in the provision of conference services in general. In his report (A/34/320), he had recommended that at its present session the Assembly should review the usefulness of those subsidiary organs which had been unable to submit concrete recommendations, and also that a moratorium on the establishment of additional subsidiary organs should be declared for a period of one year. The servicing of those organs each year posed a real problem, because of the lack of staff and the large number of organs. The staff had not increased for several years, but there were far more meetings than in the past.

15. Even if it were possible to reduce the volume of documentation, there would still be serious problems unless progress was also made in achieving more timely submission of material for processing. In that regard also, the solution depended partly on the Secretariat and partly on the intergovernmental bodies. On numerous occasions, the General Assembly had encouraged its subsidiary bodies to complete their work well before the beginning of the Assembly, so that their reports could be made available in good time. Yet, as the present session got under way, a number of bodies were still, as on previous occasions, in the process of considering their draft reports, and the reports would probably not reach the Assembly more than a few days before the item was discussed. He did not mean to criticize those bodies, as their task was made more difficult by the fact that, because of the requirements of the Main Committees, it was impossible for them to meet as often as they might wish. On the other hand, as long as Member States themselves failed to insist that the reports of subsidiary bodies of the Assembly should be available a reasonable time before the session opened, he did not see any solution to the late submission of documentation in such cases. For that reason, he had suggested in his report that the General Assembly might wish to take a decision to that effect. If a six-week period seemed unreasonable, he would welcome any similar deadline, as long as it was mandatory.

16. He would continue to intensify his efforts to instil within the Secretariat a greater respect for the deadlines to be observed if documentation was to be ready in time. At the same time, it was for the Member States to take similar steps with regard to those aspects of documentation which were under their control. The recommendations he had made were based on his conviction that there must be a re-examination of traditional procedures which, while perhaps useful, were not essential, in order to avoid impairing the work of the Organization. He would therefore be grateful for any support which the General Committee might give to his proposals.

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17. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the proposals in document A/BUR/34/2 should be considered section by section, beginning with section II, "Documentation", in the light of the Secretary-General's statement.

Section II (Documentation)

18. The CHAIRMAN agreed that the subsidiary organs would have difficulty in complying with the six-week deadline for finishing their work and submitting their reports; he stressed, however, that a mandatory time period or deadline, possibly 15 August or 1 September, should be imposed and respected.

19. The problem of the proliferation of documents requested by Member States should be considered, and concrete recommendations should be made. In his view, the Secretary-General's pertinent recommendation in document A/BUR/34/2, paragraph 5 (f), should be clarified in order to avoid inexact interpretations. The recommendation could perhaps be more limited, and include a reference to "concrete proposals" calling for "concrete action" to be taken by the Assembly.

20. Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation shared the concern of the Secretary-General and the Chairman regarding the need to rationalize the procedures of the General Assembly and, specifically, the problem of the proliferation of documents. It was essential to take effective action to limit United Nations expenditure and the duplication of organs, and to rationalize the working procedures of the main organs and the Secretariat. His delegation approached the question from the standpoint that the improvement of the work of the General Assembly and other organs should be based on the strict application of existing norms.

21. It was not clear from the text of paragraph 5 (d) how, by whom and through what criteria it would be decided whether a report required "specific action". His delegation therefore wished to propose that a less categorical statement should be made in that subparagraph: the first line would then read "could merely" rather than "should merely", and in the third line, the phrase "in its opinion" should be added after the phrase "subsidiary organs which". The ambiguity of the passage as currently worded would thus be removed.

22. Turning to subparagraph 5 (f), he said that, in order to reduce expenditure definite limits should be set for the publication of miscellaneous communications as documents of the General Assembly. That passage, like the one discussed previously, did not explain clearly how and through what criteria a decision would be made as to whether communications called for action to be taken by the Assembly. It was possible that, if subparagraph (f) were to remain as it was, it would have the opposite effect from rationalizing the work, and would lead to pointless procedural discussions. Consequently, he felt that paragraph 5 (f) should be considered and be the subject of consultations, in which his delegation was prepared to participate, in order to arrive at an acceptable formulation.

23. Mr. BUFFUM (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs) said that paragraph 5 (d) should be considered in relation to paragraph 8. The most logical way of deciding whether the conclusions and recommendations of the subsidiary organs called for consideration by the General Assembly was for that decision to be taken by the subsidiary organs themselves. Otherwise, the General Assembly would have to examine the activities of each organ and take a decision in each case, which would lead to considerable waste of time and duplication of efforts. The wording proposed by the representative of the Soviet Union reflected more accurately the true situation: of course, the General Assembly currently had the right merely to note the reports of the subsidiary organs. The Secretariat's aim had been to require subsidiary organs to decide for themselves which questions could be considered entirely in the organs themselves, and which should be considered by the General Assembly.

24. Paragraph 5 (f) referred to an extremely delicate matter. The Secretary-General was currently required to comply with all requests made to him by Member States regarding the distribution of documents which they submitted. It was essential to establish clear rules in that regard. He hoped that the results of the proposed consultations on the subject would be considered by the General Committee during the current session.

25. Mr. ERALP (Turkey), supported by Mr. EL-CHOUFI (Syrian Arab Republic) and Mr. GUNA-KASSEM (Thailand), said that the wording proposed for paragraph 5 (f) was very restrictive. In cases of local conflict, it had long been established practice for the parties to make use of that channel to keep Members of the Assembly informed of developments in the conflict. The procedure helped Member States better to understand the situation and to take a stand on the matter. Consequently, he proposed that paragraph 5 (f) should be amended to read: "Communications from Member States should be circulated as documents of the General Assembly only if they assist the Assembly in deciding on future action."

26. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) requested the Secretariat to explain clearly the actual difficulties encountered with regard to documentation, the reasons why documents were issued so late and the action that Member States could take to assist the Secretariat in overcoming that problem.

27. Mr. LEWANDOWSKI (Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments) said that one of the main difficulties was the delay in the submission of documents that were to be processed by the Department of Conference Services. As for the proposed programme budget, which in the current year had been circulated very late, the representatives of the Secretariat to the Fifth Committee would naturally give a full explanation on that subject at the proper time. Some documents drawn up by the substantive departments of the Secretariat came from or were considered and approved in the subsidiary organs which were so numerous

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that the organization and co-ordination of the flow of documentation had become an immense task. There were also very specific problems, such as the difficulty of finding qualified staff, especially since another language had recently been added in the General Assembly.

28. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that for reasons beyond their control, it was virtually impossible for subsidiary organs to meet the deadlines set in paragraph 5 (a) for the submission of their reports to the General Assembly. The reports of the subsidiary bodies were usually ready on their final working day, or on the following day. The Secretariat should not delay their distribution, as had happened in the past. Moreover, the date for finalizing the work of the subsidiary organs depended on the calendar of conferences worked out by the Committee on Conferences. The dates set in the calendar and approved by the Fifth Committee for the sessions of some subsidiary organs made it impossible to meet the six-week deadline. Paragraph 5 (a) should accordingly reflect the role of the Committee on Conferences in ensuring that subsidiary organs were able to meet the deadlines for submitting their reports to the General Assembly. It was also important that documents drawn up entirely by the Secretariat should be submitted in good time. Document A/C.5/34/L.1/Add.1, dated 28 September 1979 (10 days after the opening of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly), showed that by that date only nine of the 26 reports that the Secretariat was to submit to the Fifth Committee had been issued. The proposed programme budget, which was issued every two years, had been circulated only after the session had begun; the revised estimates for some sections of the budget had not yet appeared and it was not known when they would be submitted. The Secretariat should set an example in the timely submission of documentation to all other organizations within the United Nations system, since it had the necessary human and financial resources. At the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee had not been able to finish its work within the appointed time, largely because of the delay in the submission of its documentation, which had caused much additional expense for Member States. During the same session, the Chairmen of all the Committees had stated at the closing meeting of the General Committee that the delay in the submission of documentation had been the main reason why the Committees had fallen behind in their work.

29. Mr. MURGESCU (Romania) said that his delegation shared the concern of others and had reservations regarding the drafting of paragraph 5 (f) of document A/BUR/34/2 concerning communications from Member States. It would be premature to take a decision at the current stage; he supported the Soviet proposal that consultations should be held on the drafting of the paragraph. His delegation would be happy to take part in such consultations.

30. Mr. SOBHY (Egypt), speaking as the Chairman of the Third Committee, said he wished to inform the General Committee of the situation with regard to the Third Committee's documentation, which differed from that of other Committees. The Secretariat had been able to provide the required documents within the set

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(Mr. Sobhy, Egypt)

time-limits, mainly because the bodies of the Economic and Social Council had been able to complete their reports in time, thus enabling the Secretariat to prepare the documents and submit them to the Third Committee in all the working languages by the dates scheduled.

31. There seemed to be a general trend in favour of holding consultations on the drafting of paragraph 5 (f) of the note by the Secretary-General. His delegation felt that such a procedure could lead to an agreement.

32. Mr. SINCLAIR (Guyana), referring to paragraph 5 (a), said that a deadline of 15 August would allow an appropriate and reasonable period of time for the submission of the documents required. With regard to paragraph 5 (f), he agreed with the delegation of Turkey that, in cases of bilateral conflicts, Member States should be informed of the developments in the dispute. Nevertheless, States could communicate with each other, individually and directly, inter alia, by means of notifications or press releases. The General Committee could do a great deal to reduce the volume of documentation substantially, but that would require consultation, as other delegations had mentioned. Guyana supported those delegations, particularly with regard to the wording of paragraph 5 (f).

33. Mr. PETROVSKIY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), referring to the statements made by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs with regard to paragraph 5 (d), said that, in the view of his delegation, what was important was the content of the text and not the wording. Bearing in mind the views expressed in the General Committee, he hoped that efforts to find a way of encouraging the General Assembly and the Main Committees to confine themselves to noting those reports of subsidiary organs which did not require specific action by the Assembly would be continued. The exchange of views on paragraph 5 (f) had persuaded his delegation of the need to study the matter in greater depth.

34. Mr. EL-CHOUFI (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to paragraph 5 (a), said he agreed with the Chairman that the time-limit of six weeks was not practical. Perhaps a limit of four weeks would be more suitable.

35. Referring to paragraph 5 (d), he said that the proposed recommendation, as worded, meant that the General Assembly would in effect ask the subsidiary organs not to submit reports to it unless specific action by the General Assembly was required, since there would not seem to be any point in submitting a draft resolution or a report if the Assembly would only be taking note of it. It would therefore be worthwhile to ask the subsidiary organs to submit only reports or resolutions on which the General Assembly had to adopt decisions. His delegation agreed with those that felt paragraph 5 (d) should be reworded.

36. Mr. GUNA-KASEM (Thailand) said that, in general, his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General on the need to set definite time-limits for the submission of reports by subsidiary organs. The time-limit of one month or the date of 20 August would be suitable, provided that, should any significant developments occur after that time, they could be reflected in an addendum to the relevant report. That would apply particularly to the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, whose report was often held back for updating.

37. Mr. PARSONS (United Kingdom) said he fully supported the efforts of the Chairman and the Secretary-General to rationalize working procedures and reduce the flow of documentation. The Secretariat should not be criticized for what had happened in the past; considering that the annual output of documents by the Secretariat was 600 million pages, the efficiency of its services was miraculous. With regard to paragraph 5 (a), he supported the idea of setting a time-limit for the submission of reports by subsidiary organs. Further consultations would be required on paragraphs 5 (d) and 5 (f); his delegation was prepared to participate in such consultations. The Secretariat should reword paragraph 5 (f) and submit a brief report listing the types of document whose distribution should not be requested by delegations. It was redundant to distribute as documents of the General Assembly articles from The New York Times and other well-known organs of the world press and it was not right to request the distribution of long statements on subjects of a strictly national, internal character.

38. The CHAIRMAN announced that the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany had requested permission to participate in the debate. If there were no objections, he would invite him to take a place at the Committee table.

39. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. von Wechmar (Federal Republic of Germany) took a place at the Committee table.

40. Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany) said he agreed with the Chairman about the necessity of setting a mandatory time-limit for the submission of reports by subsidiary organs. With regard to paragraph 5 (b), he asked to be informed of the cost per page of documents. He also asked whether it was true that, when the practice of submitting to the General Assembly the annual report of the Secretary-General in its previous form had been discontinued, no delegations had shown any interest in it. If that had been the case had it been because no one had noted its disappearance or because no one had needed it? Might not the same thing happen with regard to other documents? He also inquired whether the United Nations library did in fact have all the documents that a delegation might need.

41. With regard to paragraph 5 (d), he said that the problem might be solved by replacing the word "require" by the word "request". Paragraph 5 (f) should be reworded. Although he sympathized with the representative of Turkey, he supported the views of the representatives of Guyana and the United Kingdom. Member States should not use the United Nations as a postal service.

42. Mr. LEWANDOWSKI (Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services), replying to the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, said first that the cost of processing and translating one page of a document was approximately \$600. Secondly, the United Nations library, in both New York and Geneva, and soon also in Vienna, was able to provide delegations with all the United Nations documents they might need. It also had a microfiche service that would be very helpful to delegations if it was more widely used. Lastly, he wished to make a clarification regarding the possible impression that the Secretariat had ample personnel resources. The language services, particularly the translation services, were operating at the same staff level as in 1958. The additions to the staffing table

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of the translation services had been due to the addition of Arabic and, since 1972, to the generalized use of Chinese, as well as to the adoption of other working languages. The main burden on the translation services was created by summary records and special conferences. In that regard, the General Assembly often disregarded its own rulings. For example, there was a resolution providing that no more than one special conference should be held each year, but recently six special conferences had been held in a single year, with the resulting problems for the conference services. Those questions would no doubt be considered in greater detail by the Fifth Committee.

43. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said she supported those delegations that had praised the Secretary-General and his staff for their efforts to rationalize the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. With regard to the section on documentation in document A/BUR/34/2, she agreed with the comments made by the representatives of Guyana and the United Kingdom concerning paragraphs 5 (d) and 5 (f).

44. The SECRETARY-GENERAL expressed his appreciation to the Chairman and members of the General Committee for their important contributions to the debate. The exchange of views had been very helpful and had shown clearly the concern of all members regarding the current situation and their conviction that specific measures must be taken to change it and to solve the problems, particularly in the area of documentation. He also expressed his appreciation for the understanding representatives had shown with regard to the difficulties and problems faced by the Secretariat.

45. As was clear from his introductory remarks and the statements of the Under-Secretaries-General, the Secretariat was passing through a critical time since it did not have the necessary staff to handle the millions of pages of documentation submitted to it. It was to be hoped that, as a result of the discussion, delegations would help to introduce new procedures with a view to reducing the huge volume of work involved in translating and producing documents.

46. In regard to paragraph 5 (a) of document A/BUR/34/2, he agreed with the Chairman that the time-limit for the submission of reports should be 1 September. Although a little more time would perhaps have been preferable for the Secretariat, for instance, six weeks before the opening of the session, the date proposed seemed realistic.

47. Referring to paragraphs 5 (d) and 5 (f), he said that he agreed with those delegations which felt that further consultations were needed in order to arrive at generally acceptable wording. It would be advisable for those consultations to start as soon as possible. So far as paragraph 5 (f) was concerned, the Secretariat appreciated, notwithstanding the obvious need to curtail document production, that Governments which were engaged in conflict or passing through a crisis wished to keep the General Assembly and Member States informed. He trusted, however, that the relevant documents could be so formulated as to justify their distribution. That, of course, was a highly sensitive political issue, but it should be borne in mind that the Secretariat was in an extremely difficult position. Every day it

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(The Secretary-General)

received a large quantity of documents that not only reproduced articles from the New York and world press but also contained lengthy statements of a somewhat controversial nature which provoked responses from the other side that the Secretariat likewise had to handle. It was necessary to insist on those documents being short and concise: they should reflect faithfully the views of the respective Governments but should not be so drawn out as to overload the Secretariat with translation and other kinds of work. It was above all a question of the content of the documents. All had the right to express their points of view but they should do so concisely. He looked forward with interest to an exchange of views on the questions outstanding in his report, and trusted that agreed forms of wording could be approved at the next meeting of the General Committee.

48. The CHAIRMAN, replying to a question from Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica), explained that the "previous documents" referred to in paragraph 5 (b) were only those which had been distributed earlier as United Nations documents.

49. With regard to paragraph 5 (a), he wished to suggest the following wording, which might be acceptable to all Members: "Subsidiary organs should be required to complete their work at the latest by 1 September, so that their reports may be available in all the working languages in time for consideration by the opening of session of the General Assembly."

50. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said he had no objection to the Chairman's suggestion but would like the wording of paragraph 5 (a) to reflect his delegation's proposal regarding the role which the Committee on Conferences should play in the proper programming of the sessions.

51. The CHAIRMAN said he agreed with the comment made by the previous speaker. If there were no objections, he would take it that the General Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it should approve paragraph 5 (a) as amended, and paragraphs 5 (b), 5 (c) and 5 (e), and to leave aside paragraphs 5 (d) and 5 (f) pending consultation.

52. It was so decided.

Section III (Organization of work)

53. The CHAIRMAN said that the section could be approved without the need for lengthy discussion. He suggested that the General Committee should accept paragraphs 6 (c) and 6 (d) and the first part of paragraph 6 (a) up to the words "the following session". Paragraph 7 could also be approved since, in his view, when the session was drawing to a close, the last thing delegations wanted was a surfeit of concluding statements. It would undoubtedly be necessary to hold other consultations on the rest of paragraph 6 (a) and on paragraph 6 (b).

54. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), referring to paragraph 7, said he too agreed that time could be saved by dispensing with concluding statements, but it should be a general measure: it should not be confined solely to the Chairmen of the regional groups but should apply to all

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(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

delegations. He therefore proposed that, at the end of the paragraph, the words "by Chairman of the regional groups" should be deleted. The paragraph did not, of course, mean dispensing with concluding statements by the President of the General Assmbly.

55. Mr. SOBHY (Egypt) said that, as he understood it, paragraph 7 also referred to the closing meetings of the Main Committees and not only to the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

56. The CHAIRMAN said that the Egyptian representative's observation should be reflected in the wording of the paragraph.

57. Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said his delegation had some reservations about the Chairman's suggestion in regard to paragraph 6 (a). Candidates for the chairmanship of the various Committees had to be elected at the beginning of each session of the General Assembly and until they had been elected they had no mandate, just as they had no mandate between sessions. Turning to paragraph 6 (c), he said it would be preferable to amend the wording slightly to give it a conditional tone making it optional rather than mandatory.

58. The CHAIRMAN explained that the wording of the paragraph 6 (c) accorded with normal practice. Furthermore, the conditional tone was conveyed by the words "whenever appropriate". Consequently, if the Soviet representative did not insist, he would suggest that the proposed wording be retained.

59. Mr. MUBAREZ (Yemen) said his delegation considered it would be preferable to hold consultations on paragraph 6 (a). In regard to paragraph 6 (d), his impression was that its approval would allow the Chairmen of the Main Committees to take initiatives which might cause offence and create a feeling of discrimination among some delegations. The General Assembly had recently taken a decision regarding the right of reply and the time allocated to speakers. It might be advisable also to decide the number of times a representative could speak so as not to place the Chairman in a difficult position. He was not, however, making any specific proposal.

60. His delegation endorsed the remarks of the Byelorussian SSR regarding paragraph 7, namely, that the practice of concluding statements should be dispensed with in all cases.

61. The CHAIRMAN, replying to the representative of Yemen, said that paragraph 6 (d) simply recommended that the Chairmen should comply with the provisions of rule 106 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure. With regard to paragraph 7, he suggested that the words "by Chairmen of the regional groups" should be deleted, as proposed by the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, and that the words "except by the presiding officers" should be added. In that way, it would be understood that only the President of the Assembly plenary and the Chairmen of the Main Committees would make concluding statements.

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62. Mr. RIOS (Panama) supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 7. A formula should be found to explain that, in some cases, it was not a good practice to submit unnecessary draft resolutions, which only repeated the concepts and words of previous resolutions. Moreover, consideration should be given to the need to avoid the duplication of items. Admittedly, it was sometimes difficult to avoid such duplication when political factors were involved, but a committee should examine that question thoroughly with a view to facilitating the work of the General Assembly.

63. Mr. EL-CHOUFI (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to paragraph 6 (a), said that he did not think that candidates for Chairmen of the Main Committees should be nominated during the preceding session, since that would increase the already heavy workload of delegations. Perhaps such nominations should be made before the beginning of the session concerned.

64. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) explained that, as he understood it, the recommendation contained in paragraph 6 (d) applied to the number of statements made on one particular agenda item, but that there would be no limit to the number of statements made on different items.

65. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the suggestions in paragraphs 6 (c) and (d) and in paragraph 7, as amended, and should postpone its decision on paragraphs 6 (a) and (b), pending the outcome of consultations.

66. It was so decided.

Section IV (Resolutions)

67. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that he did not understand the purpose of the recommendation in paragraph 8, which could be interpreted in different ways. He asked why reference had been made only to subsidiary organs reporting to the General Assembly. In some cases, that practice facilitated the consideration of items, for example, when draft resolutions reflected the general opinion. However, that was not true of the recommendations of subsidiary organs having a limited number of members; the submission of draft resolutions by those organs caused delays, resulted in the adoption of conflicting decisions and entailed additional expenditures. He questioned the need to establish a binding rule whereby subsidiary organs must submit draft resolutions to the General Assembly, for example, if, in so doing, they made the Assembly's task more difficult.

68. He also had difficulty with the explanation given by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs that the Assembly should merely take note of the reports of subsidiary organs that did not contain draft resolutions. He was concerned that subsidiary organs might interpret that as an invitation to submit draft resolutions so that their reports would be considered, when in fact such resolutions might not be necessary.

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(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

69. Furthermore, he did not understand how co-sponsorship could be eliminated for draft resolutions submitted by subsidiary organs. That practice did not affect the speed with which drafts were submitted, nor did it help to make the debate more specific or to reduce the number of delegations that had to make statements. In that connexion, he drew attention to rules 88 and 128 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

70. The recommendations in paragraph 8 should therefore be drafted more carefully, since, in their current form, they were not convincing in suggesting possible ways of saving time or facilitating the consideration of agenda items. Obviously, it would be better to postpone a decision and to examine the consequences of the recommendations.

71. Mr. SOBHY (Egypt) pointed out that, in general, draft resolutions were too long, thus aggravating the problem of documentation. Accordingly, the proliferation of resolutions must be avoided, and the Committee should recommend that such resolutions should be as brief and concise as possible and should not repeat previous resolutions or even specific paragraphs of previous resolutions.

72. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that her delegation accepted paragraph 9 only on the understanding that it would be applied whenever possible. Delegations should have the right to request the inclusion of a matter on the agenda as a separate item, when they deemed it necessary. She supported the remarks of the representatives of Panama and Egypt with regard to the repetition of draft resolutions.

73. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee wished to postpone further consideration of paragraphs 8 and 9.

74. It was so decided.

Section V (Planning of meetings)

75. The CHAIRMAN said that paragraphs 10 and 11 did not seem to raise any problems. If he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the suggestions contained in those paragraphs.

76. It was so decided.

Section VI (Subsidiary organs of the General Assembly)

77. Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in principle, he supported the idea of reviewing the usefulness of subsidiary bodies, a practice that had already been adopted by other United Nations organs, as had some of the other proposals contained in the note by the Secretary-General. Nevertheless, the criterion suggested for determining such usefulness was too superficial and rigid, and it radically altered the sense of what had just been agreed. Paragraph 13 (a) was not acceptable to his delegation in its current form, and he suggested that it should be amended by eliminating the words "... which have been unable to submit concrete recommendations".

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78. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 109 of the conclusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly, which stated: "The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should review, either periodically or when considering their reports, the usefulness of its various subsidiary organs."

79. Mr. STEPHANIDES (Cyprus) said that he shared the general feeling about the Secretary-General's proposals, but he would have preferred paragraph 13 (b) to be more flexible. Although a moratorium was needed, there should still be the possibility of setting up a subsidiary body, if it became absolutely necessary.

80. Mr. YUSUF (Somalia) proposed that paragraph 13 (a) should be eliminated and that paragraph 13 (b) should be amended by adding the words "... while the General Assembly reviews the usefulness of existing subsidiary organs".

81. The CHAIRMAN said that additional consultations on paragraph 13 were obviously necessary. Criteria should be established to determine the usefulness of subsidiary organs, but they should not be established either by the organs themselves or by the Secretary-General, but rather by the General Assembly. It was also necessary to declare a moratorium on the establishment of new subsidiary organs. The proposal of the representative of Somalia had merits and could offer a solution to the problem. He asked members of the Committee to consider all the points in the note by the Secretary-General on which no agreement had been reached, and to hold informal negotiations in that connexion. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and he himself would be available to discuss with delegations any formulations that might help to achieve agreement. The next meeting of the Committee on that matter would be held in two or three weeks.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.