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**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

*Official Records\**



GENERAL COMMITTEE  
9th meeting  
held on  
Friday, 28 December 1979  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

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

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, as members were aware, in conducting its 139th ballot the previous day, the General Assembly had failed to elect the remaining non-permanent member of the Security Council. Ever since the Assembly had held its first ballot on 26 October, and throughout the subsequent days and weeks, it had been his deep concern that the Assembly should fulfil its Charter responsibility, as well as conform to its own rules of procedure, by successfully completing that process. That a record of so many ballots had been set was in itself evidence of an unprecedented attempt to discharge that responsibility within the existing rules and on the basis of past practice and tradition. As President, he had repeatedly drawn the attention of Member States to their grave responsibility.

2. During the course of the past several weeks, he had also undertaken extensive consultations with a broad cross-section of delegations encompassing a wide spectrum of opinion. In addition, he had held frequent consultations with the principal parties, the delegations of Colombia and Cuba. The purpose of those consultations, which had been as extensive as they could possibly have been, had been to find a way in which the Assembly's task could be facilitated and its obligations discharged.

3. Members who had been involved in the consultations with him were fully aware of his role. But for those who had not, he thought it useful to make it clear that his efforts had been in large measure devoted to emphasizing that the responsibility for electing members of the Security Council was shared by all. For his part, he had consistently conveyed the various suggestions which had emerged during the consultations to the two candidates, since the history of previous efforts to resolve deadlocks had shown that in every instance the matter was settled on the basis of the agreement of the competing candidates.

4. He wished at the same time to emphasize that he had regarded his role in the consultations as that of helping the Assembly to reach a decision. Quite clearly, the role of the President was not, and could never be, to impose a decision. He had therefore endeavoured to abide scrupulously by the practice and tradition of presiding officers in analogous circumstances.

5. Regrettably, however, despite the comprehensive consultations and the record number of ballots held thus far, the Assembly had not been able to arrive at a solution enabling it to fulfil its responsibility. Furthermore, his expectation that the Christmas recess would provide an opportunity for reflection and consequently for necessary action had thus far remained unrealized.

6. As members of the General Committee were aware, on 31 December 1979, which was three days away, five non-permanent members of the Security Council would be completing their terms of membership in the Council. If the Assembly did not succeed in discharging its obligation by 31 December, it was evident that the membership of the Council would be one short of the 15 members prescribed in Article 23 of the Charter.

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7. It was equally clear that, without discharging that responsibility, the Assembly would not be in a position to conclude its thirty-fourth session. Under the circumstances, he considered it his duty to bring the entire matter to the attention of the General Committee with a view to soliciting the opinion of its members as to how best to proceed. He asked them to offer any suggestions they might have in that regard. He none the less wished to underscore a point which had in fact been most emphatically stressed by a number of Member States during their consultations with him: it was extremely important that the General Assembly should discharge its responsibility as expected, and indeed as prescribed, in the Charter.

8. He had just been informed that Austria intended to submit a draft resolution on the question at the meeting of the plenary Assembly scheduled to be held later that same day. There was, further, a question concerning consultations within regional groups, to which the General Assembly also had every right to address itself.

9. He intended to bring to the attention of the plenary Assembly the situation as he had just outlined it. The General Assembly would then be seized of the Austrian draft resolution, and would also consider any suggestion concerning regional groups.

10. Mr. PETREE (United States of America) said that his delegation felt very strongly that the President's conception of his role under the Charter and rules of procedure was entirely proper. Moreover, it admired his fairness and evenhandedness throughout the consultations and the proceedings relating to the unprecedented problem that was before the General Assembly. He had a question, however, concerning the President's proposal to open debate on the problem in the plenary Assembly. There was only one item on its agenda: the election of one non-permanent member of the Security Council. Since rule 88 of the rules of procedure specified that voting, once begun, could only be interrupted on a point of order, what would be the rationale for evading that rule in the present instance?

11. The CHAIRMAN said that he intended, when the meeting of the plenary Assembly was called to order, to defer the resumption of the election process until the Assembly had considered the proposals mentioned. In his view, that should not be construed as a violation of rule 88: before voting was resumed at any given meeting, it could be considered that the voting had not yet begun. The situation with which the General Assembly was faced was felt by members of all shades of opinion to be critical and unprecedented. He therefore hoped that, in order to enable the General Assembly to call upon the collective ingenuity of all its members, everything humanly possible would be done to facilitate the decision-making process, and he appealed to all not to exclude any conceivable way out of the deadlock.

12. Mr. PETREE (United States of America) said that he could understand the President's rationalization of the procedural question. He was still troubled,

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(Mr. Petree, United States)

however, by institutional considerations: the General Committee should not defer debate on a proposal to be put before the plenary Assembly; such a proposal should first be aired in the General Committee, which should analyse the problem and make recommendations to the plenary Assembly. He therefore proposed that there should be an initial debate on the Austrian proposal in the General Committee.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that it was, in the final analysis, up to Austria to submit its draft resolution where it chose, either in the General Committee or on a point of order in the plenary Assembly, which in any case must take the final decision. The responsibility for breaking the deadlock in the election of a non-permanent member to the Security Council went beyond the President or the General Committee to the General Assembly as a whole. All Member States had a vested interest in the Organization. His own role was simply to stress that fact.

14. The responsibility of the General Committee was to do everything possible to ensure that the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly would be concluded as planned, and it was unanimously agreed that that would not be the case if one more member was not elected to the Security Council. It was therefore the collective responsibility of the members of the General Committee to support every initiative to that end.

15. Mr. PIZA ESCALANTE (Costa Rica) said that, with regard to the role of the General Committee in the matter, no solution nor any compromise was possible within the context of the General Assembly. The only possible and acceptable forum was the Latin American Group, which had not exhausted every possibility because it felt that it had not been given a specific mandate to do so. The Group had originally informed the General Assembly, however, that there were three candidates for the Security Council vacancy. If the General Committee gave the Latin American Group the mandate to solve the problem, it could be settled. The Latin American Group would welcome such a normal and natural decision. There was no guarantee of success, yet that was the only hope for success.

16. Mr. LEPRETTE (France) thanked the President for his exceptional efforts in directing the members of the General Committee towards a solution to the problem. He concurred with the President's view of the role of the General Committee. With regard to the Austrian draft resolution, he wondered if, in the light of rule 42 of the rules of procedure, the General Committee should not study in greater depth the approach to be adopted, before the draft resolution was taken up in the plenary Assembly? A brief debate in the General Committee would put the plenary Assembly in a more favourable position to settle the problem. He asked the President to give the Committee some idea of the general orientation and specific recommendations of the Austrian resolution.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Austria had asked to participate in the discussion of the item. If there was no objection, he would invite him to take a place at the Committee table.

18. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Klestil (Austria) took a place at the Committee table.

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19. Mr. KLESTIL (Austria) said that, although Austria was not a member of the General Committee, it was ready to support any solution to the stalemate that the General Committee might propose. For its part, it intended to submit a draft resolution in the plenary Assembly, where it could be debated after the text had been distributed and read.

20. The CHAIRMAN read out the two operative paragraphs of the Austrian draft resolution, which called upon the Member States concerned, namely Colombia and Cuba, to enter immediately into consultations with a view to arriving at an appropriate solution which would enable the General Assembly to fulfil in time its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations concerning the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council, and urged those Member States to inform the President of the General Assembly of the outcome of those consultations no later than 31 December 1979.

21. Mr. BOYA (Benin) said that he did not think a debate in the General Committee would solve the problem and that the President's suggestion to transfer the debate to the plenary Assembly in order to secure the opinion of the full membership was wise.

22. Mr. ANDERSON (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had always supported the President's unswerving adherence to the Charter and the rules of procedure. It had therefore welcomed the meeting of the General Committee, which played an important role in steering the work of the plenary Assembly. The General Committee had before it a substantive proposal by Costa Rica and an outline of an Austrian proposal, and it had been apprised of a possible problem regarding rule 88 if proposals were raised in the plenary Assembly. The United Kingdom joined France in urging discussion in the General Committee.

23. Mr. PIRSON (Belgium) observed that the General Committee's first step in facing the difficult problem before it and the General Assembly should not be to abdicate its functions under the rules of procedure, particularly rule 42, which enjoined it to review the progress of the General Assembly and make further recommendations for such further progress.

24. The General Committee should consider the proposal by Costa Rica and make a last appeal to the Latin American Group to devise a solution that could be submitted to the General Assembly.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that he would leave it to the members of the General Committee to decide whether it should now consider the proposals by Costa Rica and Austria intended to break the deadlock.

26. Mr. KLESTIL (Austria) said that he had no intention of interfering with the work of the General Committee, but suggested that it would be reversing the logical order to discuss the Austrian proposal before it had been formally introduced.

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27. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he wished to associate himself with the tributes to the enormous and constructive efforts the President had made as part of his mandate. The Soviet Union agreed with the President's view that the situation deserved to be considered in the plenary Assembly. It did not see how the General Committee, which, strictly speaking, dealt only with procedural matters, could properly deal with questions of substance.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Algeria had asked to participate in the discussion of the item. If there was no objection, he would invite him to take a place at the Committee table.

29. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Bouayad-Agha (Algeria) took a place at the Committee table.

30. Mr. BOUAYAD-AGHA (Algeria) said that in his opinion it would be perfectly normal for the plenary Assembly to take up the Austrian proposal when it was submitted to it.

31. The CHAIRMAN observed that one sure way of not resolving the problem was to raise a new issue within the General Committee. Austria had specifically said that it would submit its draft resolution to the plenary Assembly. The most constructive procedure would be not to start a debate on whether Austria had the right to do so. He appealed to the General Committee to allow the matter to come before the plenary Assembly. Two courses of action would then be open: either the plenary Assembly could hear that proposal and any other that might be made, or it could refer them to the General Committee. If he heard no objection then, he would adjourn the meeting.

The meeting rose at noon.