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2nd meeting
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at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. O'DONOVAN (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN welcomed the delegation of Vanuatu to the Committee and said that it was a great honour for him to have been proposed by the Group of Western European and Other States for the office of Chairman. In that connexion, he thanked the delegation of Bulgaria for nominating him and said that he would do his utmost to emulate the abilities of the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Garvalov of Bulgaria.

2. The rules of procedure of the General Assembly rested essentially on an understanding by the Committee with regard to how its business should be conducted, and especially how disputes should be clarified and resolved. The important word was not "rules", but rather "understanding". He hoped to cultivate and strengthen that understanding within the Committee, with a view to minimizing procedural disputes and to using the limited time as productively as possible.

3. He belonged to the post-war generation, which had no memory of the horrific events of the Second World War or of the events that had preceded that War: the heightening of tensions, the collapse of economies, the arms race, the imperialistic aggression and the decline and fall of the League of Nations. The Secretary-General had stated in his report on the work of the Organization (A/36/1) that as the world moved further away from the Second World War, more and more people seemed unaware that devastating storms could suddenly darken the more or less tranquil skies of peacetime. Those words applied especially to members of his, the Chairman's, generation. It was that generation which did not have sufficient appreciation of the horrors of war, which did not realize how quickly and suddenly war might erupt again, and which might take the unique value of the United Nations for granted. Yet that generation should be even more conscious of such matters than its predecessors because modern weapons were of a character entirely different from those employed for almost all of the Second World War. It was tempting for the post-war generation to imagine that world peace existed simply because there was no world war. That was far from the truth. There had been constant wars in various regions of the world since 1945, some of which had clearly threatened global peace. As the interdependence of all societies developed, no war could be seen as an isolated war. What was needed was a better kind of peace, a peace based on harmonious relations within States and between States. Such a peace was not possible if countries were making preparations for war, preparations which inevitably weakened the will for international co-operation, struck at the basis of harmonious relations and so diminished the prospects of peace.

4. Today, efforts to promote disarmament were not enough to secure peace and perhaps not even enough to bring the hope of it. The implementation of human rights and the ending of social injustice and discrimination also required a great commitment. It was no longer possible to quarantine questions of human rights or social issues. Violations of human rights or disregard for social injustices could threaten the peace, nationally and internationally. It had long been recognized

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(The Chairman)

that civil war or instability or disturbances within a State could have serious repercussions for a neighbouring State or region. The case of apartheid in South Africa sprang to mind in that connexion. The only option therefore was not preparation for war but the painstaking building of peace, closer international co-operation and controlled and balanced disarmament. That required world-wide respect for human rights and greater efforts to secure economic and social development, especially in the least developed countries. The presence of starvation, disease and abject poverty in a huge portion of the world's population could not be ignored, for human misery, degradation and desperation would not permit an enduring peace.

5. The United Nations, both the Member States and the Secretariat, had been much criticized for failing to achieve disarmament, to prevent the outbreak of wars and to end wars already begun, to rectify abuses of human rights, to restructure the world economy and to realize social justice everywhere. The critics seemed to have forgotten that the United Nations was only one generation old. Some glibly contemplated an end to the United Nations, ignoring what havoc the vacuum could release and forgetting the lessons which had followed the demise of the League of Nations in the 1930s. Most did not give the United Nations full credit for the world political changes it had already wrought, or even for the peace-keeping work to which Ireland had been a contributor. If that was a sort of cyclical depression of the human spirit, then it was a dangerous depression from which the international community should free itself. International co-operation was advancing at the United Nations more quickly than was believed but too slowly to be easily seen. The international community was a long way from any kind of enforceable world authority. For the present, the conventions and declarations, resolutions, studies and reports of the United Nations were the only means available, and the international community must use them to educate, inform and persuade the peoples of the world. The Organization's task of achieving international co-operation and securing peace was an arduous, slow and frustrating responsibility, and it was an easy target for cynicism. It was, however, a task which was essential to the future of mankind.

6. He wished to address a few words to the delegates of the non-aligned countries, whose movement was now celebrating its twentieth anniversary. Ireland was a small, militarily neutral nation which had been one of the first in the twentieth century to win its fight for independence and which had had its share of difficulties in developing its economy and society. It therefore was naturally sympathetic towards the non-aligned movement. Ireland admired the passion and commitment which the movement had brought to the United Nations. The non-aligned countries had played a large role in persuading the United Nations to accept and promote the right to self-determination and to take up vital questions such as apartheid. Moreover, it was the non-aligned countries that had been instrumental in the conclusion of the various human rights covenants and conventions since 1966. It was also the non-aligned countries that had first sponsored, in 1962, a resolution requesting the Commission on Human Rights to draw up a draft declaration and a draft convention on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance (General Assembly resolution 1781 (XVII)). That draft declaration had now been

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submitted by the Commission on Human Rights, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its current session, and it was his strong personal hope that the Third Committee would conclude consideration of the draft declaration at the current session and recommend its solemn proclamation to the General Assembly. The non-aligned movement was now the dominant group in the General Assembly and, as such, had a major responsibility for the future of the United Nations. He hoped that that movement would remain a progressive force within the Organization, while having also the wisdom to guide it towards the solution of problems by peaceful means.

7. The Third Committee was not celebrated for its coolness, its logic or, perhaps, its discipline. It might be reasonably said, however, that it was the most human committee in that it dealt with issues closest to the human heart. The issues considered in the Third Committee were those concerned with the dignity of the human being, equality, the end of discrimination and intolerance, and the development of the human person in all its aspects. It was perhaps in the Third Committee that representatives should be most concerned with the deepest human instincts and most attached to the importance of the United Nations. He hoped that those qualities would be conspicuously displayed at the thirty-sixth session.

8. Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria) said that it was his duty and pleasure, as the outgoing Chairman, to extend his sincere congratulations to the Chairman on his election and to pledge his full co-operation throughout the current session.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

9. Mr. NORDENFELT (Sweden) nominated Mrs. Dordana Masmoudi (Tunisia) for the office of Vice-Chairman.

10. Mrs. Masmoudi (Tunisia) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

11. Mrs. de ARANA (Peru) nominated Mr. Mario A. Esquivel (Costa Rica) for the office of Vice-Chairman.

12. Mr. Esquivel (Costa Rica) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

13. Miss OBAFEMI (Nigeria) nominated Mr. Naoharu Fujii (Japan) for the office of Rapporteur.

14. Mr. Fujii (Japan) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/36/250; A/C.3/36/L.1)

15. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the Note by the Chairman on the agenda of the Committee (A/C.3/36/L.1) and to section II of the first report of the General Committee (A/36/250). He then read out paragraph 2 of document A/C.3/36/L.1, which contained a statement by the President of the General Assembly, and paragraph 11 of

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that document, which suggested that the Committee complete its work by 4 December 1981. It should be borne in mind that draft resolutions with financial implications would have to be submitted to the Fifth Committee no later than 1 December. He suggested that, as in previous years, the Committee might wish to consider related items in groups, since that had proved to be the most practical move. In that connexion, he pointed out that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had indicated that he would attend meetings of the Committee on 16 November 1981, and delegations might wish to take that into account when discussing the organization of work. Secondly, item 30 on the International Year of Disabled Persons would, during the current session, be considered in plenary meeting. In making their suggestions regarding the organization of work, delegations might wish to take into consideration the availability of documentation, a situation which, as in recent years, was not entirely satisfactory, since only a few items were ready to be taken up. The Committee had been mandated by the General Assembly to establish two working groups, one on migrant workers and the other on the rights of non-citizens, and delegations might wish to bear that fact in mind with respect to the organization of work. Lastly, at the preceding session the Committee had held 80 meetings, and delegations could readily see that between the present date and 4 December, it would not be able to hold so many meetings without recourse to night meetings. He therefore requested the Committee to use its time productively, with a view to limiting those night meetings.

16. Mrs. DOWNING (Secretary of the Committee) said that with respect to items 73, 86 and 129, no advance documentation was needed, and those items were therefore ready to be taken up, along with items 77, 78 and 80, for which all documents were available. Not all documents were available for items 12, 74, 76, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89, 90 and 91. She drew attention to document A/C.3/36/L.1, paragraph 9, which listed the basic documents for items referred to the Third Committee.

17. Mr. KHALITA (Sudan) said that at previous sessions the Committee had agreed to discuss the items on its agenda in groups according to subject. It would therefore be appropriate to take up all the issues relating to the problem of refugees, i.e. items 12 and 73, in one series of meetings. It was important to ensure that delegations would have the opportunity to express their views on those items by the time the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees made his report to the Committee.

18. Mrs. MASMOUDI (Tunisia) said that it would be helpful to group together all the items relating to human rights, i.e. items 12, 73, 79, 85, 86, 87 and 91. Similarly, items 76 and 77 on youth and items 80 and 84 on the elderly and the aged could usefully be considered as a group. A third group would embrace the items on racial discrimination, religious intolerance and discrimination against women, i.e. items 74, 75, 81, 82, 88 and 89.

19. Mr. SCHLEGEL (German Democratic Republic) said that the programme of work followed at the preceding session had been satisfactory but that the order of discussion proposed by Tunisia was acceptable, provided that there was a separate debate on item 12.

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20. Mr. VOICU (Romania) said that items 76, and 77 should be examined jointly. The relevant documentation was available, and it might be useful to discuss those items early in the session. It was established practice to deal with items relating to youth towards the end of October, and he hoped that the same time table for consideration of those items would be adopted at the current session.

21. Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil) agreed with the order of discussion put forward by the representatives of Tunisia but noted that the availability of documentation was a factor which must be taken into account. He suggested that the Chairman and the Bureau should discuss the matter and submit a draft programme of work which the Committee could consider at one of its coming meetings.

22. Mr. VELLA (Malta), Miss WELLS (Australia), Mr. DYRLUND (Denmark), Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas) and Ms. RAZALI (Malaysia) supported the proposal made by the representative of Brazil.

23. Mr. KOMISSAROV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the Committee should begin its programme of work with a consideration of the items concerning racism and the right to self-determination. It could then go on to discuss the items on the United Nations Decade for Women and International Youth Year, followed by questions relating to human rights and social developments, item 79 and, lastly, item 12.

24. He hoped that every effort would be made to ensure that the relevant documentation was available before items came up for discussion.

25. Miss WELLS (Australia) said that, in view of the Committee's crowded agenda, it might be worth while to consider establishing a time-limit of 15 minutes for each statement.

26. Mr. WADATKIN (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) supported the order of discussion proposed by the representative of the Byelorussian SSR, and agreed with the suggestion made by the representative of Romania that questions relating to youth (items 76 and 77) should be grouped together. Similarly, items 90 and 129 were closely linked.

27. With regard to the suggestion that statements should be limited to 15 minutes, he said that a flexible approach was required and that an arbitrary time-limit would be counter-productive.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that he would consult with the Bureau in order to review the question of documentation and to prepare a draft programme of work. He would bear in mind the need to place items on racial discrimination near the beginning of the agenda. Pointing out that the situation with regard to the availability of documentation presented serious difficulties for the Committee and the Bureau, he said that he would endeavour to adhere to established practice in drawing up an order of discussion for the various items. It might be necessary to adjust the programme of work or to begin discussion on certain items before all the relevant documents were available. He hoped to present an informal programme of work at the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 23 September.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.