

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

SIXTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**THIRD COMMITTEE, 1060th
MEETING**

Monday, 2 October 1961,
at 11.30 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Tribute to the memory of Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and of members of the staff of the Organization</i>	3
<i>Statement by the Chairman</i>	3
<i>Organization of work</i>	3

Chairman: Mr. Salvador P. LOPEZ (Philippines).

Tribute to the memory of Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and of members of the staff of the Organization

1. The CHAIRMAN associated the Committee with the tribute paid by the General Assembly to the late Secretary-General and to all the staff members who had died with him.

Statement by the Chairman

2. The CHAIRMAN thanked delegations on his own behalf and on behalf of the Philippine Government for electing him Chairman of the Third Committee, whose social, cultural and humanitarian activities would eventually, transcending all ideological divergencies, lead to an improvement in the lot of mankind. He assured delegations that he would devote all his energies to his duties and sincerely wished to co-operate fully with the Committee.

3. He felt that the best procedure would be to elect the Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur at the next meeting and to take up the question of the organization of work immediately.

It was so decided.

Organization of work (A/C.3/590, A/C.3/L.902 and Add.1)

4. Mrs. SIVOMEY (Togo) stressed the very great importance attached by her delegation, as by all delegations from African countries, to two of the items on the Third Committee's agenda: first, the draft Convention and draft Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages (item 85 of the agenda of the General Assembly) and second, African educational development (item 22 (c)). Unless the family was protected, and unless an effort was made to provide adequate education for all its members, the International Covenants on Human Rights (item 35) would serve little purpose. The Togolese delegation therefore considered that those two items should be placed first and second, respectively, on the Committee's agenda. The third place should go to the equally grave problem of the situation of Angolan refugees in the Congo (item 82).

5. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that all the questions on the Committee's agenda were of equal importance and must be considered with as much care as possible. If the Committee found itself unable to complete its work in the time at its disposal, it might perhaps consider extending or resuming its session, if other Committees did likewise, as had happened last year. Despite the difficulties that would arise, the Secretariat should be able to find a means of meeting the wishes of the Committee in that respect and helping it to carry out its responsibilities.

6. The first of those responsibilities was undoubtedly to complete the drawing up of the substantive articles of the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That task ought to be concluded at the present session; that would be possible if the Committee devoted twenty-seven or twenty-eight meetings to it. Once it had achieved that goal, the Committee would be able at the seventeenth session to draw up the general provisions, the measures of implementation and the final clauses of the two draft International Covenants on Human Rights, thus bringing to its conclusion a task of fundamental importance which had been occupying it for a very long time.

7. In a world in which the Press played such a major role and in which propaganda, growing daily more virulent and destructive, commanded the attention of the people at the expense of genuine information, it was essential to lose no time in drafting a Convention on Freedom of Information (item 36) that would permit the abolition of abuses which might well set off an international conflict. At least eleven meetings should be allotted to the highly important draft Convention on Freedom of Information. On the other hand, the draft Declaration on Freedom of Information (item 37) could well be considered at a later stage for not more than three meetings.

8. His delegation considered that thirteen or fourteen meetings should be allocated to the consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council (item 12), which had traditionally, for perfectly valid reasons, been given first place on the Committee's agenda. The report of the High Commissioner for Refugees (item 34) could be discussed for four meetings, held at whatever time was most convenient to the High Commissioner.

9. While the draft Declaration on the Right of Asylum (item 38) was undeniably important, it was less so than the draft Covenants on Human Rights, and its adoption was less urgent. It was the established practice in all countries to give asylum to political refugees, and there had been no case in which such a refugee, having become *persona non grata* in a country of asylum, had been forced to return to the country from which he had fled for want of asylum elsewhere. The Committee should not therefore give more than three meetings to the Declaration on the Right of Asylum at the present session.

10. The draft Convention and Recommendation relating to marriage concerned a problem similar to that dealt with in the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (General Assembly resolution 1040 (IX)) but was controversial because of the fact that the minimum age of marriage varied in different countries. It ought not to occupy the attention of the Committee for more than four meetings.

11. It would unquestionably be useful to draw up a resolution or a declaration regarding the manifestations of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance (item 86) which had been discussed by various United Nations bodies for a number of years. However, the International Covenants on Human Rights, once they were completed, would be an infinitely more valuable safeguard against such manifestations. The Saudi Arabian delegation therefore felt that only four meetings should be allotted to that agenda item, so that as much time as possible could be left for the draft Covenants.

12. He did not consider that the discussion of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should be linked with the consideration of the problem of Angolan Refugees in the Congo. The High Commissioner was primarily responsible for European refugees. It would be useful to the Committee to obtain fuller information on the situation of Angolan refugees from the representatives of the countries which were in the best position to know it. Four meetings could perhaps be allotted to the problem, the consideration of which would doubtless be facilitated by the fact that there existed instruments relating to the legal protection of refugees.

13. The appearance of the African countries on the international scene was one of the most striking and encouraging events of contemporary history. The countries of Africa were making a valuable contribution to the world and that contribution could constantly increase if they were assisted in developing education in their territories. Nevertheless, such assistance was the responsibility of UNESCO. The Third Committee was not qualified to make a detailed study of what needed to be done in that field. Its role should therefore be limited to recommending UNESCO to give priority to the question, which was a highly important one for world peace. A resolution on the subject could perhaps be drawn up in the space of three meetings.

14. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of delegations to paragraph 10 of the Committee's agenda (A/C.3/L.902). UNESCO would doubtless be able to provide the Committee with any documentation needed for its study of the item on African educational development.

15. Mr. KASLIWAL (India) agreed with the representative of Saudi Arabia that the draft International Covenants on Human Rights should be given high priority; he hoped that the Committee would be able to complete the consideration of the remaining substantive articles of the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights at the current session. In that connexion, he drew attention to the recommendation addressed to the Third Committee by the General Assembly at its thirteenth session (788th plenary meeting) and to General Assembly resolution 1458 (XIV). It was true that the Third Committee usually began by examining the report of the Economic and Social Council; but the English text of that document had only just been given to delegations. Moreover, the activities of the Social Commission and of the Population Commission, for example, were of the

highest interest, and some members might like to study them in detail in order to be able to submit appropriate draft resolutions. That being so, it would be better to examine the draft Covenants first and the report of the Economic and Social Council next.

16. He likewise shared the views of the Saudi Arabian representative regarding the draft Convention on Freedom of Information. The question of assistance to Africa was admittedly of great importance but the Committee did not yet have sufficient documentation on the subject to decide what priority to give it. As to the all-important problem of the Angolan refugees in the Congo, he hoped that the representative of the Congo (Leopoldville), who had recommended the inclusion of the item on the Committee's agenda, would indicate whether he wished the question to be studied during the visit to New York of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

17. Finally, he pointed out that the Committee would not be able to decide how many meetings to devote to the draft Convention and draft Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages (to which the Togolese delegation apparently attached great importance) and the draft Declaration on the Right of Asylum (which had been before the Committee for some time already) until it knew exactly how many meetings in all it would be able to hold during the current session.

18. The CHAIRMAN informed the Indian representative that the Committee would be able to hold a maximum of seventy-seven meetings.

19. Mrs. MARTIN (Guinea) said that in her view the question of the Angolan refugees in the Congo was of such importance that it should be given second place and be studied immediately after the report of the Economic and Social Council.

20. Mr. SITA (Congo, Leopoldville) thanked the delegations which had preceded him, and particularly the delegation of Guinea, for the interest they had shown in the question of the Angolan refugees in the Congo. It was indeed an urgent problem and should be examined immediately after the report of the Economic and Social Council. The Committee should give priority to the human element and should concern itself without delay with the fate of the many starving and sick families in need of help.

21. Mrs. TILLET (United States of America) supported the Togolese delegation's request that the draft Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages should be given high priority. Representatives of African countries attending the 1960 Seminar on Participation of Women in Public Life, held at Addis Ababa, had emphasized the importance which they attached to that matter.^{1/} The draft Recommendation had been very carefully drafted by the Commission on the Status of Women and ought not to require many meetings. The item should be examined in association with that on assistance to Africa, since women would not be able to benefit from progress achieved in education if they married too young.

22. Mrs. DEMBINSKA (Poland) agreed with the United States delegation in supporting the proposal of the representative of Togo. Both as representative of Poland and as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women she hoped that the draft Convention

^{1/} See ST/TAO/HR/9, p. 21.

on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages, which had occupied the attention of the Commission on the Status of Women for many years, would be given higher priority; otherwise there was a danger that it would be neither adopted nor even studied. It would be a useful addition to the various conventions for the advancement of women already adopted by the United Nations (in the case of political rights and the nationality of married women) or the ILO; moreover, it would put into effect the recommendation sent to the Economic and Social Council in 1956 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on a Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (Economic and Social Council resolution 640 (XXIII)).

23. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that, before deciding on what priority should be given to the draft Convention on Marriage, he would like the representative of Togo to say how many meetings she considered should be devoted to the examination of that item. If it was to be one of the first items studied, the discussion should in any case be limited strictly to the number of meetings fixed, and should not be extended at the expense of the debate on the draft Covenants. For his part, he supported the Indian representative's suggestion that the Committee should begin its work by studying the Covenants.

24. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) said that the items on the agenda could be divided into two categories: those which appeared on the Committee's agenda regularly, and those which appeared on it intermittently or were there for the first time. Despite the importance of the former, it could not be denied that the latter, by the very fact that they had been included in the agenda, were also entitled to a certain degree of priority. He agreed with the Saudi Arabian representative that the Committee should decide how many meetings to devote to each of the items; but he did not think that that was a decisive factor in the order of priorities. Although the Uruguayan delegation still attached very great importance to the adoption of the draft Covenants on Human Rights, he was inclined to agree with the proposals made by the delegations of Togo and Guinea on the order of discussion.

25. Miss HAMPTON (New Zealand) said that her delegation had no preference as to the order of discussion of the items. In case the Committee should decide to begin its work with the draft Convention on Marriage, she wished to know whether any draft final clauses had been prepared.

26. Mr. SCHWELB (Secretary of the Committee) drew the attention of members of the Committee to the memorandum by the Secretary-General on the draft Convention and draft Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Regis-

tration of Marriages (A/4844) and in particular to the final draft clauses (*ibid.*, annex III).

27. Mrs. SIVOMEY (Togo) said that if twenty-seven or twenty-eight meetings were to be devoted to the examination of the draft Covenants, then ten should be allotted to the draft Convention on Marriage. The item was of particular interest to the African countries, since the progress of Africa itself was closely linked with that of African women.

28. Mr. MATE (Ghana) considered that the various items should be divided into related groups. He suggested that the Committee should begin with the report of the Economic and Social Council and then examine the item relating to African educational development, to which six meetings should be devoted and not three as had been suggested. It would then go on to the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the question of the Angolan refugees, two items which were too closely connected to be dealt with separately. Then the draft Covenants and the draft Convention on Marriage, which were closely linked with each other, would be examined. In that connexion he wished, like the representative of Togo, to emphasize how essential a need women's education was, in view of the vital role they played in the family. The Committee would then examine the draft Convention on Freedom of Information and the draft Declaration on the same subject, and would end with the draft Declaration on the Right of Asylum.

29. Mrs. MOORE (Nigeria) supported the proposal of the representative of Togo regarding the order of discussion of the agenda items. Without minimizing the general importance of the draft Covenants on Human Rights, she considered that certain special problems—those relating to marriage, for example—merited separate study. Moreover, education was a vitally important problem for Africa since, to be able to win respect for their rights, individuals had first to become conscious of them. The items relating to the draft Convention on Marriage and to African educational development should therefore be given the first and second places on the agenda, or failing that the third and fourth places.

30. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that it was a practical impossibility to examine the draft Convention on Marriage at the same time as the draft Covenants. He saw no reason why ten meetings should not be devoted to examination of the draft Convention, but was opposed to any reduction in the number of meetings allocated to the examination of the draft Covenants and the draft Convention on Freedom of Information. In any event, he felt that, if the Committee scrupulously adhered to the time-limit fixed for the examination of each item on the agenda, the order in which the items were taken would be of little importance.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.