

# United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



SECOND COMMITTEE, 947th  
MEETING

Thursday, 5 December 1963,  
at 3.20 p.m.

NEW YORK

## CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Organization of the work of the Second Committee at future sessions of the General Assembly (continued)</i> . . . . .	407

*Chairman:* Mr. Ismael THAJEB (Indonesia).

### Organization of the work of the Second Committee at future sessions of the General Assembly (A/C.2/222, A/C.2/L.782) (continued)

1. Mr. CARRILLO (El Salvador) congratulated the Chairman of the Committee on his initiative in presenting the suggestions contained in his note (A/C.2/222). The General Assembly was also interested in those suggestions, as the letter from the President of the Assembly to the Chairman of the Second Committee bore witness.

2. Document A/C.2/222 referred to the reorganization of the practices and methods of work of the Committee at future sessions of the General Assembly. Two of the Chairman's suggestions were highly relevant and appropriate: the first was that the general debate in the Second Committee should be discontinued and statements of economic policy should be made in the general debate in plenary meeting; the second concerned the manner in which the various items on the agenda should be considered. His delegation hoped they would be adopted. It thought that the Chairman's suggestions should be transmitted to the Governments of Member States so that they could consider them and give their delegations the necessary instructions. Delegations would then be in a position to give their official views at the next session.

3. Mr. ILONIEMI (Finland) said that the comments set forth in document A/C.2/222 reflected the Chairman's vast experience of the working methods of the Second Committee. The general debate was, it must be agreed, the main subject of concern. Perhaps because there was no over-all picture of the main economic problems, the general debate had sometimes shown a tendency to stray to problems of minor interest. But that was no reason to suggest the discontinuance of the general debate, which, in view of the increase in economic activities and their considerable repercussions on economic development, provided an opportunity to take stock of the relevant changes which occurred from one year to the next and to form a general picture of the situation. But it would be a good idea to shorten the general debate by ensuring that it bore primarily on the general aspects of economic development. The most important thing was to organize the general debate, bearing in mind the amount of time available and the need to deal with the specific items on the agenda.

4. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly suggested in substance, in paragraphs 33 and 34 of its report (A/5423), that the Economic and Social Council might, in many cases, usefully consider beforehand questions within its competence, which would then be allocated to the Second Committee. Rules 10 and 75 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council provided that all States Members of the United Nations could propose items for inclusion on the provisional agenda of the Council and might, at the invitation of the Council, participate in its deliberations. Those procedures might constitute one way in which it would be possible to improve the Committee's working methods.

5. Mr. VIAUD (France) congratulated the Chairman on his proposals. The Chairman's initiative bore witness to his enlightened desire to improve the Committee's methods of work. Generally speaking, his delegation supported the suggestions contained in the Chairman's note. It found the first and the fifth suggestions particularly relevant.

6. The general debate on economic policy might be discontinued, or at least appreciably shortened, if heads of delegations were prepared to give a larger place to economic matters in their statements in plenary meeting and if the work of the Second Committee could, from the outset of the session, begin to consider the items on its agenda. But it should be noted that, although certain items, such as those concerning technical assistance and the operational programmes, were suitable for immediate consideration, there were others, such as those dealing with trade, which called for careful preparation. Moreover, the especially important part played by the annual statement of the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs must not be under-estimated, as it made a good starting-point for the debates.

7. With regard to the fifth suggestion, his delegation had been struck, at the current session, by the increasing tendency in the Committee to adopt draft resolutions concerning which some delegations had expressed reservations. He wondered whether the adoption of texts which had been interpreted differently could really be described as "compromises". That situation was probably due to the fact that the Committee did not have enough time to make a thorough study of the numerous draft resolutions dealing with very thorny technical subjects having far-reaching repercussions on international relations. Thus, rather than postponing certain draft resolutions until the end of the session, it would be more realistic to refer them to the Economic and Social Council which could make a preliminary study and, in extremely urgent cases, meet to give its opinion.

8. It would be useful if the suggestions made by the Chairman and the relevant opinions expressed could be

incorporated in a note which the Committee might examine at the next session of the General Assembly.

9. Mr. ARKADYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation appreciated the Chairman's efforts to improve the organization of the Committee's work. The comments set forth in the Chairman's note bore the stamp of their author's personality. His delegation wished, however, to point out that no one had authorized the Committee to take such decisions and that the suggestions placed no responsibility on any delegation. In any case, it was not the first time that such a step had been taken, because there was already an ad hoc committee dealing with the subject, and there were grounds for fearing, if the Second Committee took the matter up, that, as with the Ad Hoc Committee's report, no practical results would be achieved. His delegation was nevertheless prepared to accept the sixth suggestion, which concerned the distribution of items between the Second and Third Committees. It also endorsed the third suggestion, concerning the order in which items should appear in the agenda, because that was a matter strictly within the Committee's own competence. On the other hand, his delegation thought that it would be difficult to allocate provisionally a certain number of meetings to each item.

10. His delegation failed to understand the motives behind the Chairman's note. It saw no need for a reorganization of the practices and methods of work of the Second Committee, which, despite adverse circumstances and certain tragic events which had occurred in the course of the session, had successfully completed its consideration of all the items allocated to it. His delegation thought, inter alia, that the proposal for discontinuing the general debate and making statements of economic policy at plenary meetings was quite unrealistic. It was inconceivable that the Minister for Foreign Affairs or head of the delegation of any country could agree to devote a large part of his intervention in plenary meeting to a long statement on economic questions. The result would be a paradoxical situation: the Second Committee would be considering specific items, while the General Assembly was dealing with the same items in general terms.

11. The general debate in the Committee fulfilled an essential function, as it helped to form an over-all picture of the economic situation, rather along the lines of the annual world economic survey. It also facilitated the work of new members, who had to familiarize themselves with the main economic problems. It was the work of qualified economists and consequently its relationship to the general debate in plenary meeting was purely accidental. The main value of the general debate was that it provided an opportunity for Governments to explain their attitudes with regard to problems with which the Committee was chiefly concerned.

12. Some of the suggestions contained in the Chairman's note might be of practical value in so far as they involved no radical change in methods of work. But prudence should be exercised and a careful study made of those suggestions before any decision was taken.

13. Mr. TELL (Jordan) pointed out that the suggestions contained in the Chairman's note called for no immediate decision by the Committee and that the Governments of Member States would have to study them before the Committee could take a decision. His

delegation congratulated the Chairman on his initiative, because it had always thought that the general debate was often merely a repetition of previous debates. At the seventeenth session, it had tried to have the general debate discontinued, but it had been impossible at that time to submit an official proposal on the subject.

14. The suggestion made by the representative of France might well be accepted, as economic questions were part of the general policy of Governments. The adoption of such a procedure would facilitate the work of countries with small delegations, whose members had to attend meetings and do their own research work as well. The discontinuance of the general debate would also enable the Committee to concentrate on specific items. As the representative of the Philippines had pointed out, it was the substance of statements and not their length which mattered.

15. As the consideration of the suggestions contained in the Chairman's note was not destined to lead to any draft resolution or decision, his delegation proposed that the text proposed by nine delegations (A/C.2/L.782) should be included in the Committee's report.

16. Mr. SOUSSANE (Morocco) said his delegation deeply appreciated the efforts of the Chairman, thanks to whom the Committee had been able to conclude its work in time. He also congratulated the Chairman on his note, which his delegation had studied carefully.

17. The most important question raised in that note was the possible discontinuance of the general debate. As the note pointed out, the question was not whether the general debate was or was not useful but whether the Committee had time for it. Unfortunately, the general debate took up too much time and sometimes obliged the Committee to adopt hasty decisions and neglect certain items.

18. Some delegations had proposed that the general debate should be replaced by a statement to be made by the heads of delegations in plenary, but the statements made in the General Assembly were prepared in the capitals by top-level government authorities and indicated only the main aspects of each Government's position. It would be difficult for many delegations to speak in plenary on matters of concern to the Second Committee. Moreover, the members of the Committee would find themselves in the situation described by the representative of the Soviet Union.

19. If the general debate related to specific questions only, it would be duplicating the discussions on specific problems. It should also be noted that, in recent years, the discussions in the Committee had concentrated on clearly defined questions rather than general problems.

20. He thought that most delegations would like to continue the examination of the Secretary-General's reports on the activities of the Organization in the field of economic development, just as they also wished to continue hearing the statements by the heads of the various economic organs. It would also be advisable to continue the statements of the various delegations on the efforts and particular experiences of their countries in connexion with development, since those statements contributed much to the work of the Committee. Moreover, several leading figures had come, at the preceding session and at the current session, to make statements before the Committee.

All that was possible only within the context of a general discussion. Thus the problem was not to discontinue the general debate but to shorten it.

21. He thought that the Committee should take no decision at the current session and that Governments should be allowed to express their views on the matter. He thought it would be a good idea to retain the general debate but to change the procedure, so that the Committee could study draft resolutions without losing sight of the general economic trends which changed from year to year. He therefore proposed that every delegation wishing to submit comments or to make a general statement on policy or economic trends should be allowed ten minutes or so to present a text which would be published by the Secretariat as a Committee document and to which delegations might refer for more detailed information.

22. His delegation had no comments to make on the Chairman's other suggestions. It wished to congratulate the Chairman on taking the initiative to improve the methods of work of the Committee. It nevertheless emphasized that any decision the Committee might now take could only be provisional. He hoped that those suggestions would be noted in the report.

23. Mr. KANO (Nigeria) associated himself with the delegations which had congratulated the Chairman on the suggestions he had put forward with a view to improving the methods of work of the Committee.

24. His delegation was in favour of the Chairman's second, third and fifth suggestions. With regard to the controversial question of the possible discontinuance of the general debate, it thought that the latter was useful since it gave delegations time to prepare the draft resolutions they wished to submit and to carry out preliminary consultations which made it possible to shorten the discussions. It was for that reason that the Committee had adopted more draft resolutions unanimously at the current session than at any other.

25. His delegation did not think that the general debate should be discontinued but that steps should be taken to limit it. He thought that the fourth suggestion, namely, that the Committee should, at the beginning of the session, allocate provisionally a certain number of meetings to each item before it, might bring some order into the general debate and save it from degenerating into polemics.

26. With regard to the transfer of statements on general policy to the plenary meetings, he thought that the heads of delegations did not have time, in their interventions in the plenary meeting, to cover all the items on the agenda. That was why delegations asked to speak at greater length on specific items in the different committees. The general debate should not, therefore, be discontinued, since it was an old tradition, but it should be tidied up somewhat.

27. Another question which preoccupied him was that of the right of reply. The Committee's attention should be drawn to the meaning and limits of the right of reply. Otherwise, controversial questions like those which often opposed East and West might give rise to endless discussions.

28. His delegation also thought that committee chairmen should be more aware of the powers the rules of procedure gave them for calling a halt to controversies. In saying that he was not of course criticizing the present Chairman. Generally speaking, he thought that whoever was in the Chair should make more use

of the authority vested in him by the rules of procedure and that delegations would find it difficult to challenge his ruling.

29. Mr. ALTHAUS (Peru) considered document A/C.2/222 to be the culmination of the excellent work done by the Chairman. His delegation whole-heartedly supported the suggestions therein. He thought that the general debate might be replaced, at least partly, by adopting the Chairman's other suggestions, especially the second one which, by making the examination of the report of the Economic and Social Council mandatory, would ensure whatever flexibility might be required.

30. Mr. KAPLANSKY (Canada) congratulated the Chairman on the tactful and genial way in which he had conducted the Committee's discussions, intervening rarely and advisedly. The comments arising from the suggestions contained in the Chairman's note showed that the Chairman had shown courage in presenting them.

31. He thought that established practices should not be too rigidly adhered to and that the Committee should have the courage to try out new ideas and methods which would perhaps show that the old ones were not the best. He was convinced, for example, that no member really thought the discontinuance of the general debate would seriously jeopardize the work of the Committee. The question was essentially a practical one. There were 111 delegations on the Committee, yet it had the same time in which to do its work now as when there had been only fifty delegations. Some way must therefore be found to save time, and the problem was whether the general debate of the discussions on specific questions should be curtailed.

32. His delegation believed that the general debate was important and useful, but it also thought that no delegation came to the Committee uninformed. Many reports made it possible to have a fairly clear idea before the session of each country's position with regard to the main economic problems. The delegations which spoke at an advanced stage of the discussions could not be original. That was true, for example, of his own delegation, which had spoken after hearing eighty-six speakers.

33. He had listened with pleasure to the remarks of the various representatives, which had all been constructive. The Committee did not have to solve the problem at present, but it would have to make a choice, which would involve a sacrifice. He did not think that the Committee could have a partial or limited discussion. In fact, so many imponderables and human factors had to be taken into consideration that the nature of the general debate, if retained, would always be the same.

34. His delegation was inclined to favour the discontinuance of the general debate, mainly because the Committee was overworked. It should not be noted that its work was not confined to the meetings, for delegations had to do a great deal outside of meetings and had to keep abreast of voluminous documentation. Some representatives were assisted by advisers and alternates who greatly facilitated their task. Others, however, were seriously handicapped; they had to attend two meetings a day and their numerous occupations prevented them from doing their work thoroughly.

35. One matter that caused his delegation some concern was the large number of sponsors for some

draft resolutions. There was obviously no rule governing that matter, but participation by large numbers of representatives in the submission of draft resolutions led to a waste of time when the sponsors made changes in their texts, which caused a shift of the centre of gravity from the Committee to some other room. The Committee was sometimes obliged to vote on a draft resolution merely because its sponsors constituted a majority.

36. He hoped that the Chairman's suggestions would facilitate the work of his successor and of delegations at future sessions.

37. Mr. BEN SAOUD (Libya) congratulated the Chairman on the way in which he had conducted the Committee's work. He had been struck by the spirit of understanding which had prevailed during the discussions and by the number of draft resolutions adopted unanimously. It seemed that opinions differed only as to the action to be taken in connexion with subjects such as industrial development and training services in the developing countries. That was why more time should be devoted to examining draft resolutions and to the negotiations to which they gave rise.

38. If the spirit of co-operation which the Committee had shown was to be maintained, its members should adopt the suggestions made by the Chairman in his note, which his delegation was happy to support unreservedly.

39. He was pleased to note that about thirty African and Middle East delegations had agreed to appoint a representative who would speak on their behalf when the question of the conversion to peaceful needs of the resources released by disarmament was examined. That decision was in line with the suggestion to shorten the discussion on non-controversial questions.

40. Mr. SOWA (Ghana) thanked the Chairman on behalf of his delegation for presenting the suggestions contained in document A/C.2/222.

41. The Ghanaian delegation fully supported the suggestion that the general debate should be discontinued and that statements on economic policy should be made in plenary. His delegation also supported the other proposals contained in the Chairman's note, since they would considerably improve the organization of the Committee's work and would also speed up the debates on draft resolutions. He hoped that the Chairman's suggestions would receive the enthusiastic support of a great many delegations.

42. Mr. ROUANET (Brazil) regarded the Chairman's note as a document of exceptional importance, which would be very useful for the work of future sessions. The Brazilian delegation was happy to support the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth suggestions. It was not prepared, however, to take a definite stand with regard to the first suggestion, regarding the possible discontinuance of the general debate. That was a question entailing such serious consequences that it would be premature to take a decision on it at the present time.

43. His delegation was of the opinion that the general debate had proved very useful in the past few years and had provided a complete picture of the position of all the delegations and of general economic trends. The Brazilian delegation would therefore be somewhat reluctant to support a decision for dispensing with the general debate altogether. Moreover, the general

debate made it possible to inject into the Committee's discussions a political element which was clearly very necessary, particularly since many political decisions would be taken during the United Nations Development Decade. It would therefore be unfortunate to lose that element, which the Committee had been accustomed to introduce into its work.

44. It had been suggested that statements made in plenary could take the place of the general debate in committee. He was not sure that heads of delegations would be able to deal with economic questions in their statements in plenary.

45. He had listened with interest to the solution proposed by the representative of Yugoslavia that the general debate should be replaced by consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council. That suggestion should be studied, but he doubted whether it would result in any marked improvement.

46. The suggestion of the Indian representative that a time-limit should be set on interventions with a view to shortening the general debate was also constructive, although it appeared difficult to put into practice. The proposal of the Mexican representative that the general debate should deal with specific questions should also be studied. It should be pointed out, in that connexion, that the Committee had spontaneously adopted that procedure. Thus, at the seventeenth session, the discussion had centred around the question of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the discussions of the following session would probably be devoted to the results of that conference.

47. The suggestion made by the Moroccan delegation should also be borne in mind, but he felt that the submission of texts was no substitute for a general debate, the purpose of which was to present an overall picture of the positions of the various Governments.

48. Finally, he favoured the inclusion in the Committee's report of the text of document A/C.2/L.782, which emphasized that the matter should be referred to Governments for study.

49. Mr. BINGHAM (United States of America) associated himself with the previous speakers in thanking the Chairman for his note on the organization of the Committee's work at future sessions. That initiative was a very useful one.

50. He supported the Moroccan representative's suggestion that delegations might circulate written memoranda to supplement or replace the oral statements made in the general debate. He fully understood the objections raised by the representative of Brazil but, since a considerable number of delegations had already declared themselves in favour of dispensing with the general debate, the Moroccan suggestion might provide a happy compromise. On the other hand, he feared that the idea of transferring the general debate on economic questions to the plenary meetings of the General Assembly was not practical. General statements in plenary dealt primarily with important and urgent political problems and there was therefore a danger that economic questions would be relegated to the background.

51. The Committee should consider the advisability of suspending its work for a few days early in each session to permit consultation between members regarding draft resolutions. Such an arrangement, combined with the opportunity of presenting written

memoranda, would make it possible to speed up the work considerably.

52. With regard to the Chairman's second suggestion, the question was how the agenda would be drawn up. The Economic and Social Council might perhaps be asked to prepare a first draft agenda for the Second Committee.

53. The Chairman's fourth and fifth suggestions were acceptable to the United States delegation. The dates set should be quite early but could obviously be altered as the situation developed.

54. He agreed with the representatives of Canada and New Zealand on the desirability of holding down, as far as possible, the number of sponsors of draft resolutions. Twelve delegations would ordinarily be enough. That would facilitate informal consultations with delegations that had amendments to propose.

55. With regard to the Chairman's sixth suggestion, the United States delegation did not think that a strict rule could be adopted in that regard. When certain social questions had to be considered in relation to competing demands for economic development resources, they should be considered by the Second Committee. At the current session, the draft resolution on the world literacy campaign had been a case in point.

56. He wondered, in conclusion, whether it would not be desirable to make more frequent use of working groups to study particular problems. Such groups could be set up by the Chairman with due regard to various regional and political alignments. Moreover, any delegation desiring to take part in their work would be entitled to do so. That procedure had been applied successfully in other United Nations bodies, particularly during the last session of ECLA. It would certainly help to expedite the Committee's work.

57. Mr. PERERA (Ceylon) also wished to thank the Chairman for his initiative, which should permit improvement of the Committee's working methods at future sessions. He supported the first suggestion, for the discontinuance of the general debate on the economic situation. It was a fact that, in the general debate, delegations for the most part referred to matters which had already been dealt with in plenary meeting, as well as in the general debates at previous sessions. Frequently, too, representatives made the same statements twice over: once during the general debate, and again during the consideration of the various agenda items. In any event, the consideration of the economic chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council should provide an opportunity for members of the Committee to make a sufficiently thorough analysis of the economic situation to render the general debate unnecessary.

58. The delegation of Ceylon therefore supported the suggestions made by the Chairman in his note and hoped that they would meet with wide approval.

59. Mr. KHALIL (United Arab Republic) thanked the Chairman for his note and for the very interesting suggestions it contained.

60. The most important suggestion concerned the advisability of discontinuing the general debate. In his note, the Chairman had expressed doubt whether the general debate had any decisive influence on the wording of the draft resolutions and wondered whether delegations did not rather take advantage of the time afforded by the general debate to conduct informal

discussions. It could be said that both hypotheses were valid. The general debate helped delegations to draw up draft resolutions and, at the same time, made it possible for them to come to agreements of which the draft resolutions were the expression. Some drafts were drawn up long in advance, but their sponsors waited, before submitting them, for indications of the general trend of discussions and of the position of particular delegations. That was the essential value of the general debate. Even if it sometimes involved loss of time and repetition, its discontinuance would seriously affect the Committee's work. Repetition, in any case, was not always harmful; it served to emphasize matters of common concern and facilitated certain agreements between delegations.

61. To decide that the consideration of world economic problems should take place in plenary meetings would have a paradoxical effect: the Assembly would be dealing with general economic questions just when the Second Committee was dealing with specific economic problems. The organization of the Second Committee's work would be rendered singularly complicated, unless meetings of the Committee were suspended to enable its members to listen to statements made in plenary meetings. At all events, the decision was one which could not be taken without consulting those responsible for the organization of the work of the General Assembly.

62. Some suggestions put forward by members of the Committee also deserved careful study. He referred, in particular, to the Yugoslav suggestion that the general debate should be confined to the report of the Economic and Social Council, and to the Moroccan suggestion concerning the circulation of written memoranda accompanied by brief oral presentations by the authors.

63. Mr. HOLMES (Ireland) hoped that the very sensible suggestion made in the Chairman's note might lead to a substantial improvement in the Committee's working methods at future sessions.

64. All members of the Committee appeared to agree on the need to limit in future the amount of time devoted to general statements and analyses of the world economic situation, so that the Committee might proceed as soon as possible after the opening of the session to the study of specific measures to promote economic development. However, opinions differed as to the methods which should be employed to achieve that goal.

65. Actually, the question was not so much to decide whether the general debate should be discontinued as to develop effective working methods which would make it possible to limit debate on the items before the committee and to avoid repetition. Moreover, instead of restricting general statements to the first weeks of work, it would be desirable to give every delegation an opportunity to state its views at any time.

66. The suggestion made by the Chairman in paragraph 22 of his note (A/C.2/222) was very helpful. If the provisional text of draft resolutions could be circulated a fairly long time in advance, delegations would be able to submit their comments at the outset of the Committee's work. The importance of informal consultations among delegations should not be underestimated, as they often made it possible to reduce the amount of time spent on the consideration of draft resolutions. However, there was nothing to prevent



draft resolutions from being distributed, in so far as possible, before the opening of the session.

67. He was glad to note that there was no suggestion of eliminating the statements which the Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs and the other representatives of the Secretary-General customarily made at the beginning of the session. Such statements formed an essential part of the Committee's work. The possibility might also be considered of holding seminars for the benefit of delegations, before the opening of the session. Such seminars, if properly organized, would provide an opportunity for very useful exchanges of views. His delegation would also support the Moroccan proposal to permit delegations to circulate written memoranda on particular agenda items.

68. Mr. AYARI (Tunisia) recalled that the Chairman of the Tunisian delegation, Mr. Mongi Slim, had proposed, at the sixteenth session, that a study should be made of ways and means of improving the methods of work of the General Assembly. At its seventeenth session, the Assembly had decided to refer the matter to an *ad hoc* committee. That committee had submitted a preliminary report (A/5370), in regard to which the Assembly had adopted resolution 1845 (XVII). His delegation was therefore particularly appreciative of the happy initiative just taken by the Chairman of the Second Committee.

69. In view of the importance of the general debate to the Committee's work, the Chairman's suggestion that it should be discontinued should be studied with considerable care and should be the subject of consultations among delegations. He believed it should be possible to find a middle course. The expression "general debate" actually suggested an exchange of views among the members of the Committee and was not really a suitable one for describing the series of general statements to which it was now applied. The present general debate was more a succession of monologues than an exchange of views.

70. That method had proved useful, however, because it had made it possible, at the outset of the Committee's work, to define, as it were, a philosophy of international economic co-operation within the framework of the United Nations. Several important ideas, such as industrial planning and technical co-operation, had progressively emerged from the general debate over succeeding sessions. The Second Committee was the only body in which detailed consideration could be given to the international consequences of economic policies. A certain amount of repetition was unavoidable. Although it had certain obvious drawbacks, the general debate could not simply be abolished.

71. The Moroccan representative's proposal regarding the circulation of written texts was very sound. However, that procedure should apply only in the case of certain technical subjects which were of particular concern to certain delegations. Such a method could obviously not be adopted for the main items on the agenda.

72. The Canadian representative, in proposing to limit the number of sponsors of draft resolutions, appeared to be accusing the developing countries of seeking to impose certain decisions through a form of intimidation. That accusation was totally unjustified. However, it would be preferable if every draft resolution was introduced by a single delegation, which

would assume responsibility for explaining and defending the measures which the text proposed.

73. The suggestions made by the Chairman obviously raised many complex problems. He therefore wished to reserve his delegation's position; such matters could be more effectively considered at the beginning of the nineteenth session.

74. Mr. UNWIN (United Kingdom) said that delegations very often took advantage of the general debate to explain their views on the world economic situation and indicate their position with regard to certain agenda items. While recognizing the usefulness of that method, he had not been convinced by the arguments advanced by those delegations which wished to maintain it in its present form. His delegation would agree to the discontinuance of the general debate. It therefore supported the Chairman's first suggestion.

75. The Moroccan representative's proposal concerning the circulation of written texts was an interesting one which it would be well to consider. The Tunisian representative had also made suggestions that deserved study. The United Kingdom delegation supported the nine-Power text which the Jordanian representative had proposed for inclusion in the Committee's report (A/C.2/L.782). He doubted, however, whether the Governments of Member States would have any very precise ideas to put forward in regard to it.

76. He also supported the Chairman's second suggestion, with certain reservations. The report of the Economic and Social Council should be studied towards the end of the session and the debate should be limited to matters which had not been considered previously. That procedure would be more or less in line with the proposal made by the Yugoslav representative and would meet the objections raised by the Brazilian representative.

77. Furthermore, the procedure now followed prevented the Committee from knowing in advance the subjects on which draft resolutions would be submitted. It would therefore be desirable if the agenda items were phrased more specifically than they were at present. Similarly, the Committee should, as far as possible, consider the items in the order suggested by the Secretary-General in his provisional list.

78. The United Kingdom delegation supported the Chairman's fourth suggestion, with the reservation that the time-limits set for the submission of proposals should be strictly observed. In that connexion, in order to save time, the Committee should begin its work by considering the draft resolutions proposed by the Economic and Social Council and the other bodies which reported to it. That would impose a slight additional burden on the Secretariat, which would have to circulate the resolutions before the publication of the Council's report. However, he did not believe that that would present a major obstacle. It might also be desirable to circulate the agenda for the session sufficiently in advance to enable the Economic and Social Council to consider it before the end of its summer session. Such a preliminary consideration would facilitate the Second Committee's work.

79. His delegation would support the Chairman's fifth suggestion. As far as the sixth was concerned, it considered that it would be inappropriate for the Committee to take such a decision. The General Committee of the General Assembly was responsible

for the allocation of items to the Assembly's main committees. In so doing, it took account of the competence and the terms of reference of each Committee. The Committee could, however, without making any specific recommendation, request the General Committee to consider most carefully all the aspects of an item before referring it to any particular Committee.

80. Mr. CARDOSO (Congo, Leopoldville) said that he endorsed the underlying purpose of the Chairman's proposals but noted certain hesitations and inconsistencies in his note. For example, although it was suggested that the general debate should be discontinued, the possibility of such a debate was not ruled out, for in paragraph 19 there was a reference to general observations which members might make. Furthermore, if the Committee decided to concentrate on specific items and problems, that would seem to constitute a backward step; as could be seen from the brief historical survey in paragraph 4, that was the practice which the Committee had followed in its earlier phase. He wondered, therefore, whether the methods proposed would in fact represent any progress.

81. In any event, the main issue was the Committee's desire to plan its work. To that end, it would be desirable to establish a logical order for the various stages of economic development. That would meet the point raised by the representative of Mexico, who hoped that the Committee would concentrate its discussion on the main themes of its work.

82. He endorsed the proposal made by the representative of Jordan and other delegations that the text of document A/C.2/L.782 should be included in the report.

83. Mr. WOULBROUN (Belgium) commended the Chairman for the admirable initiative he had taken. He readily agreed that the general debate was losing its value as time went on, for repetition was inevitable from one year to the next. It seemed that the time had come to recognize that the more specific a discussion was the more constructive it would be. However, he wondered whether all the representatives of Member States in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly would be able to devote part of their intervention to statements of an economic character. He therefore proposed that, if it was decided to discontinue the general debate, delegations might bring up in the Second Committee items on which no resolution had been submitted, a procedure which would be facilitated if consideration of the Council's report was postponed until the end of the session, as the Chairman had proposed.

84. If the general debate was to be eliminated, the Committee could begin its session by considering operational programmes, as the French representative had suggested, or by considering formal proposals by other United Nations bodies, as had been advocated by the United Kingdom representative. If the general debate was retained, those questions might be taken immediately after the general debate.

85. Among the possible time-saving methods that had been mentioned, he approved the suggestion that each draft resolution should be submitted by one delegation only, which would be appointed to explain the point of view of the group it represented. The current practice of having resolutions sponsored by many delegations, with constant additions to their number, imposed a considerable amount of filing work and delayed the Committee's work to that extent. He also approved

the United States representative's suggestion that greater use should be made of working groups, a system which had proved satisfactory in the past.

86. For his part, he would propose that questions to which an immediate solution was not foreseen should be included in the agenda only every two years. If the general debate were to be retained, he would also propose that its direction should be limited; a maximum of thirty minutes might be allowed for each statement.

87. Miss SELLERS (Canada) wished to explain some of her delegation's comments concerning the mass co-sponsorship of draft resolutions, to which the Tunisian representative had referred. Those comments had related to two aspects of the question. First, there was a psychological aspect: when a draft resolution was submitted by the majority of delegations, the remaining delegations had the impression that they were faced with a fait accompli. Admittedly, however, there were resolutions whose importance warranted sponsorship by the largest possible number of delegations.

88. The question also raised a serious practical problem in that it was sometimes difficult to find a room large enough for a meeting of all the sponsors of a draft resolution or to contact those delegations, for instance to consult them on the subject of amendments.

89. In her opinion, the current practice weakened the impact of resolutions since, instead of being submitted by the countries directly and deeply concerned, a draft resolution was sponsored by all those that simply wished to give it their approval.

90. Mr. TELL (Jordan) said that the sponsors of the draft text (A/C.2/L.782) for inclusion in the Committee's report had decided to amend the beginning of paragraph 1 to read: "The Committee took note with appreciation of the initiative taken by its Chairman in his note on the organization of the Committee's work ...". The aim of paragraph 2 was not to compel the Secretary-General to alter the practice currently followed. It was merely a request. That also applied to the last paragraph of the draft text.

91. He would be glad if it were possible to limit the number of sponsors of draft resolutions. However, it was often necessary to resort to the force of numbers and the psychological effect thereby produced in order to carry decisions that were being opposed by some delegations for political reasons in disregard of the most elementary rules of logic. So long as political considerations prevailed, it was unlikely that the practice could be discontinued.

92. Mr. ARKADYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Moroccan representative's proposal concerning the submission of written texts involved nothing new, for that practice already existed. It would be unwise to make the submission of a memorandum on every item obligatory, for it might prove impossible to conclude consideration of them.

93. He was personally in favour of retaining the general debate. The practice of opening the general debate within the context of the report of the Council and then taking up the items on the agenda was entirely satisfactory.

94. With reference to the proposal contained in document A/C.2/L.782, it was somewhat illogical to request the Secretary-General to consider ideas that were so numerous and so imprecise the Committee itself was unable to define them. Moreover, it was not

for the Secretary-General but for the Committee itself to decide its agenda.

95. He believed it would be desirable to delete paragraphs 2 and 3 of document A/C.2/L.782. Even if that were done, however, he would be unable to vote on the text, and he considered that the Committee should postpone consideration of the matter until its nineteenth or twentieth session.

96. Mr. SOUSSANE (Morocco) wished to assure the representative of the Soviet Union that he had never meant to suggest that the submission of written texts should be compulsory. He had merely said that countries which, for example, had embarked on a specific programme might wish to prepare a paper on the subject, which could be introduced in ten minutes or so by the delegation concerned; that might have the effect of stimulating the interest of other delegations. Such papers, which would be considered as unofficial documents of the Second Committee, would doubtless not exceed thirty or forty in number, and they might help to avoid a prolonged general debate.

97. Mr. WOULBROUN (Belgium) felt that the USSR representative's objections to paragraph 2 of document A/C.2/L.782 were well-founded. In his view, they could be met by including in the Second Committee's report a note in the following terms:

"The Committee noted with appreciation the initiative taken by the Chairman in offering the suggestions contained in document A/C.2/222.

"It requested delegations to bear in mind, in their organization of future work, the suggestions made in the Chairman's note and during the Committee's discussion of the matter."

98. Mr. TELL (Jordan) believed that there were many points on which members were in agreement and it would be logical to request the Secretary-General to take them into consideration.

99. Mr. WOULBROUN (Belgium) proposed that the representatives of Jordan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics should consult one another and draft a text for inclusion in the Committee's report.

100. Mr. TELL (Jordan) suggested that the words "to give due consideration to" at the beginning of paragraph 2 of document A/C.2/L.782 should be replaced by the words "to bear in mind".

101. Mr. HIREMATH (India) did not see that the question presented any difficulty. It was normal that the Second Committee, having examined the Chairman's suggestions on the organization of future work, should wish the Secretary-General to bear them in mind when he was drawing up the provisional agenda for the Second Committee. There was, however, absolutely no question of compelling the Secretary-General to take any decision whatsoever, since paragraph 3 of document A/C.2/L.782 left it to the Second Committee to decide the order and manner of discussion of the agenda items.

102. Mr. TRUKHAN (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that he did not approve the Jordanian proposal even in its amended form. In any event, it was impossible for the Committee to take a decision at present because it lacked a quorum.

103. Mr. NATORF (Poland) proposed that a working group should be set up to study the question.

104. Mr. HIREMATH (India), supported by Mr. KHALIL (United Arab Republic), seconded that suggestion. He requested the Jordanian representative not to press his proposal.

105. Mr. TELL (Jordan) said that he would not press for a vote on his proposal at the current meeting.

The meeting rose at 7.40 p.m.