



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAKARI (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The CHAIRMAN thanked members of the Committee for electing him and thereby paying tribute to Qatar, and invited them to elect the two Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur in accordance with rule 103 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.
2. Mr. IRTEMCELIK (Turkey) nominated Mr. Freudenschuss (Austria) for the post of First Vice-Chairman.
3. Mr. LEWIS (Antigua and Barbuda) nominated Mr. González (Chile) for the post of Second Vice-Chairman.
4. Mr. Freudenschuss (Austria) and Mr. González (Chile) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.
5. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) nominated Mr. Hlophe (Swaziland) for the post of Rapporteur.
6. Mr. Hlophe (Swaziland) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.
7. Mr. KOUASSI (Togo) congratulated the officers on their election and said he was sure that, under the Chairman's enlightened leadership, the Committee would conduct its work successfully.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/42/1; A/SPC/42/L.1)

8. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the recommendations concerning the organization and rationalization of work contained in the report of the General Committee (A/42/250 and Corr.1). In view of the financial problems still faced by the United Nations and in the context of the process of renewal and reform under way, the General Assembly had decided that no closing date for the forty-second session should be decided upon at the present time and that every effort should be made to curtail the duration of the session. In accordance with recommendation 3 (c) of the General Committee, the practice of not holding concurrent meetings of the Special Political Committee and the Fourth Committee would be maintained wherever possible.

9. The General Assembly had stressed the utmost importance of punctuality. According to information provided by the Secretariat, at the previous session the Special Political Committee had lost more than 26 hours, the equivalent of nine meetings, through late starting and early adjournment of meetings. It was therefore important that all delegates, particularly those scheduled to speak, be punctual so that the Committee could start on time. As a cost-saving measure, the General Assembly had decided that morning meetings of the plenary and the Main Committees should start promptly at 10 a.m. In that regard, he drew attention to

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the decision taken by the General Assembly to waive the quorum required under rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure at the current session, on the understanding that such a waiver would not imply any permanent change in the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure and that, in accordance with those rules, the presence of a majority of the members would be required for any decision to be taken. Since the extension of meetings beyond the normal closing hour placed an especially heavy burden on interpreters, speakers should make their statements promptly so that the Committee did not lose time when it began its substantive work.

10. In accordance with the recommendation in annex V of the Rules of Procedure, he intended to close the list of speakers on each item when one third of the meetings allocated to the item had been held. Members wishing to make statements should put their names on the list kept by the Secretariat and would be called on to speak in the order listed. Furthermore, once the list of speakers had been closed, any changes in the order of statements could be made only by mutual consent between two delegations agreeing to exchange places on the list. Otherwise, any representative who was not prepared to speak when his turn came would be placed at the end of the list.

11. In accordance with earlier practice and with the recommendation approved by the General Assembly, representatives wishing to exercise their right of reply should inform the Secretariat, which would keep a list of the replies to be heard at the end of the list of speakers for a particular meeting. If the same item was discussed at two meetings on the same day, rights of reply would be exercised at the end of the second meeting. The General Assembly had decided to limit to two the number of interventions by any delegation in exercise of the right of reply, the first to be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes.

12. Explanations of vote should be limited to 10 minutes, in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly. When the same draft resolution was considered in a Main Committee and in a plenary meeting, delegations should as far as possible explain their vote only once, either in the Committee or in the plenary meeting, unless their vote in the plenary meeting was different from their vote in the Committee.

13. The mandatory deadline for the submission of draft resolutions with financial implications to the Fifth Committee had been set at 20 November and Committees had been asked to complete their work by 25 November. The General Assembly had also drawn attention to regulation 4.9 of the Regulations Governing Programme Planning and had noted that a minimum period of 48 hours should be allowed between the submission and voting of any proposal involving expenditures, in order to allow the Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications. Delegations intending to submit draft resolutions on items towards the end of the Committee's agenda were urged to keep those decisions in mind and to submit their draft resolutions promptly to allow time for their consideration by the Budget Division.

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14. Turning to documentation, a very expensive element, he appealed to delegations to limit as far as possible their requests for additional documentation as well as for duplicate copies of material already distributed, in the light of the General Assembly's decisions. Similarly, delegations submitting draft resolutions should bear in mind that, owing to financial constraints, the overnight processing of documents would not be possible.

15. In accordance with General Assembly decision 40/72 of 9 May 1986, the Special Political Committee was no longer entitled to verbatim records for hearings and would henceforth receive summary records only. However, the General Assembly had approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Special Political Committee be authorized to receive, on specific request, transcripts of the debates of some of its meetings or portions thereof. Such transcripts did not entail any extrabudgetary expenses as they were prepared by verbatim reporters and typists from the tapes when the staff concerned were not otherwise occupied in servicing meetings. Consequently, they appeared at a later stage than the summary records. In past years, there had been delays in the distribution of summary records, which were drafted in either English, French or Spanish and then translated into the other official languages, owing to the requirement of simultaneous distribution in all languages. At the current session, the delays might be even longer because of the financial crisis. He therefore proposed that the records be made available in the language in which they were originally prepared as soon as they were ready, on the understanding that the summary records in the other languages would be distributed as soon as they were translated.

16. Delegations were invited to transmit the names of their representatives for the purposes of the publication of the list of the members of the Committee and to take account of the decision adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session to prohibit smoking in small conference rooms (rooms 5 to 10 and A to E) and to discourage smoking in large conference rooms (rooms 1 to 4).

17. Turning to the organization of work, he drew the Committee's attention to document A/SPC/41/1 listing the agenda items which the General Assembly had decided to allocate to the Special Political Committee and recalled his note of 25 September 1987 setting out a tentative timetable for the work of the Committee (A/SPC/42/L.1). That timetable would have to be interpreted with the necessary degree of flexibility in order to co-ordinate the work of the Committee with that of the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and other bodies.

18. In drawing up the programme of work, it had been necessary to take account of the documentation available and the date envisaged for the publication of other basic documents. It would be noted that there was no basic documentation for items 77, 80 and 81. With regard to item 79 (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), the report of the Commissioner-General would be issued shortly as document A/42/13. The report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East would be available before the Committee commenced its consideration of that item. With regard to item 78 (Questions

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relating to information), the report of the Committee on Information would be issued shortly as document A/42/21, and the report of the Director-General of UNESCO (A/42/571) would be available before the Committee took up consideration of that item. With regard to item 75, the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories would be reproduced as soon as it was received from Geneva. The other basic documents mentioned in the Chairman's note (A/SPC/42/L.1) had already appeared.

19. With regard to items 81 (Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations) and 80 (Question of the Malagasy Islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europe and Bassas da India), he recalled that no delegation had asked to speak on those items at recent sessions. He therefore suggested that the Committee should defer consideration of those items and recommend their inclusion in the provisional agenda of the next session of the General Assembly, unless delegations gave notice, by 19 October, of their wish to express their views on either of the items. Since there were no speakers for the meetings scheduled for 21 and 22 October, those two items would be dealt with at the beginning of the meeting on 26 October.

20. He asked the members of the Committee whether they had any comments to make on the programme of work as suggested.

21. Mr. FARTAG (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that he wished, as at the two preceding sessions, to draw attention once again to the problem of the late issuance, out of chronological order, of Arabic-language summary records, which made it difficult to follow the debates.

22. The CHAIRMAN assured the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya that his observation would be transmitted to the competent services.

23. He suggested that the Committee should approve the programme of work, as adjusted by him, on the understanding that it would be implemented with all necessary flexibility.

24. It was so decided.

Apartheid hearings

25. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the General Assembly had decided, with regard to item 33 (Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa), which would be considered directly in plenary, that Organizations and individuals having a special interest in the question would be permitted to be heard by the Special Political Committee. Two meetings would be devoted to such hearings, on 11 and 12 November. Organizations or individuals wishing to be heard by the Committee should submit their requests in writing to the Chairman no later than Monday, 2 November. Communications containing requests for hearings would be circulated as Committee documents and considered by the Committee at a subsequent meeting prior to the

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hearings. Organizations and individuals approved by the Committee would be informed by the Secretariat of the date of the meeting.

26. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that procedure.

27. It was so decided.

Question of Cyprus

28. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Assembly had decided that, at the time of the consideration of item 46 (Question of Cyprus), it would invite the Special Political Committee to meet for the purpose of affording representatives of the Cypriot communities an opportunity to take the floor in the Committee in order to express their views. When the time came, the Committee would adjust its schedule accordingly.

Working group on questions relating to information

29. The CHAIRMAN suggested, as at previous sessions, the constitution of an open-ended working group chaired by the Chilean delegation and entrusted with the task of preparing the draft resolution on item 78 (Questions relating to information).

30. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to his recommendation.

31. It was so decided.

Working group on international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space

32. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should, as at previous sessions, establish an open-ended working group chaired once again by the Austrian delegation and entrusted with the task of preparing the draft resolution on item 76 (International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space).

33. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to his recommendation.

34. It was so decided.

35. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would meet on Wednesday, 14 October, to begin its consideration of agenda item 74 (Effects of atomic radiation). He drew attention to the letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the representative of Samoa transmitting the text of the Final Communiqué of the eighteenth South Pacific Forum (A/42/417).

36. Mr. RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA (Colombia) suggested that the list of speakers for each day's meetings should be published in the Journal, as was already done to advantage in the case of the Second and Third Committees.

37. The CHAIRMAN took careful note of the suggestion of the representative of Colombia.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.