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LIMITED

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GENERAL PROCEDURES OF THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PROCEDURES

A. Introductory

1. In pursuance of resolution 432 (V) of the General Assembly, the Council at its 347th meeting appointed a Committee consisting of the representatives of Iraq and the United States of America to draw up and present in the course of the ninth session a preliminary report on the methods of work, practices and procedures of the Council with a view to making recommendations for consideration by the Council at its tenth session.

2. The Committee held 3 meetings at which it reviewed in a preliminary manner the procedures of the Council and its practices and methods of work.

B. Measures already taken by the Council in pursuance of resolutions of the General Assembly

3. The Committee noted that the Council had already taken action in respect of the recommendations of the General Assembly concerning the Council's procedures in certain of its specific functions. It noted that in the light of resolution 433 (V) of the General Assembly the Council had decided to draw up its future reports to the General Assembly

in such a manner as to present in separate sections a comprehensive account of the political, economic, social and educational conditions in each Trust Territory, taking into consideration reports of Visiting Missions and petitions as well as the annual report on the Territory, and to include in each such section its current observations, conclusions and recommendations, those of its individual members, the previous recommendations of both the Council and the General Assembly and an account of the manner of their implementation. It noted also that in the case of the resolution 434 (V) of the General Assembly on the organization and methods of functioning of Visiting Missions the Council had decided that it would be guided by the principles therein set forth and would take into account the observations and suggestions contained in the report of the Committee established to study this question (doc.T/L.126/Rev.1). Further, the Committee noted that resolution 435 (V) of the General Assembly concerning the examination of petitions was under study by the Ad Hoc Committee on Petitions, which the Council had requested to make such recommendations as might seem advisable for the further improvement of the procedures in respect of petitions.

C. Other measures taken by the Council to modify its procedures

4. The Committee noted also that the Council has taken during the present and previous sessions certain decisions which have had the effect of further modifying its methods of work and of improving its procedures:

(a) The Council has suspended rule 72 of its rules of procedure and requested the Administering Authorities of African Trust

Territories to submit their annual reports for the year 1950 by 15 May 1951 and decided to consider at its summer session in 1951 (ninth session) the conditions prevailing in those territories, including the annual reports for both 1949 and 1950. Subsequently, the Council decided to examine at the eighth session the reports on all Pacific Trust Territories for the year 1949-50. The effect of these decisions has been that the most recent annual reports on the Trust Territories have been examined by the Council at sessions beginning only five or six months, instead of as previously eleven or twelve months, after the close of the period reviewed in the reports.

(b) The Council has adopted the normal practice of examining the report of a Visiting Mission on a given Trust Territory in conjunction with the examination of the current annual report on that Territory.

(c) The Council has tentatively adopted a procedure according to which petitions concerning a given Trust Territory would normally be examined in conjunction with the examination of the current annual report.

D. Proposals of the Committee on General Procedures

5. The Committee considered further steps which the Council might take to improve its methods of work and makes the following proposals which it recommends the Council to adopt:

(a) Proposals concerning the distribution of annual reports

The Committee recommends:

- (i) that each Administering Authority be requested to deliver to the Secretary-General, not later than 1 May in the case of annual reports to be examined at each summer session of the Council and not later than 15 December in the case of reports to be examined at each winter session, 75 copies of its annual report on the administration of the Territory concerned, of which a certain number of copies shall be transmitted immediately by the Secretary-General to the representative at United Nations Headquarters of each member of the Council in accordance with its request;
- (ii) that each Administering Authority be requested simultaneously to despatch directly to the representative at United Nations Headquarters of each member of the Council a number of additional copies of the annual report concerned;
- (iii) that each Administering Authority be requested to deliver to the Secretary-General, if not simultaneously with the 75 copies referred to in paragraph (i) above, not later than 1 August in the case of annual reports to be considered at each summer session and not later than 1 February in the case of reports to be examined at the winter session, the remaining 325 copies of each annual report concerned. In the opinion of the Committee it is essential that dates of delivery set above should be observed meticulously in order to facilitate the preparatory work necessary for the most effective examination of annual reports.

(2) Proposals concerning the improvement of the Council's procedure for the questioning of the Special Representatives

The Committee recommends:

- (i) that all members of the Council be urged to submit in writing questions on each annual report, especially such questions as may involve detailed factual or statistical information or those on which it may be necessary to procure further information from the Administering Authority or the administration in the field;
- (ii) that in preparing in advance of each session a timetable for the session, the Secretary-General be requested to include time-limits for the submission of written questions on each annual report concerned, such time-limits to be set preferably at least one week in advance of the Council's examination of the report. The Committee would like to emphasize the importance in its opinion of a strict adherence to such a timetable.
- (iii) that each Administering Authority concerned be requested to answer the written questions either in writing, prior to the examination of the report concerned, or orally at the beginning of the examination by the Council of each of the principal sections of the report;
- (iv) that the written questions and written answers be circulated as documents of the Council;
- (v) that in the case of oral questions, members of the Council be urged to restrict such questions to matters of policy or interpretation of facts, or of further clarification of written questions previously submitted;

(vi) that members of the Council be urged to restrict their comments or observations to their final statements on each annual report.

(c) Proposals concerning consequential revision of the rules of procedure

The Committee recommends:

- (i) that the Council request the Secretary-General to draft such revisions as may appear to him to be required in the rules of procedure of the Council in order to bring the rules into conformity with the practices and methods of work of the Council;
- (ii) that the Council request the Secretary-General to transmit such draft to each member of the Council in advance of the tenth session in order that each member may submit to the Council any observations thereon;
- (iii) that the Council suspend rule 72 pending final revision of the rules of procedure.