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Sixty-sixth session

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Summary record of the 2nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 8 November 2011, at 9.30 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Al-Nasser (President of the General Assembly) (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

Organization of the sixty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items *(continued)*

Request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by Togo (A/66/232)

1. **The Chair** drew attention to the request submitted by Togo for the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item entitled “Observer status for the West African Economic and Monetary Union in the General Assembly” (A/66/232). The representative of Togo had asked to address the Committee in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

2. *At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Menan (Togo) took a place at the Committee table.*

3. **Mr. Menan** (Togo) said that the request submitted by his delegation on behalf of the eight States members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) reflected their wish for that body to become an outward-looking regional economic organization that cooperated closely with other international organizations. A decision to grant observer status for WAEMU in the General Assembly would support its member countries in their subregional integration efforts as well as in the process of promoting sustainable peace and development in West Africa.

4. WAEMU had been established in 1994 with the aim of developing broad economic cooperation, achieving prosperity in the region, and promoting friendly relations with all countries in the subregion. Its establishment had also been associated with the relaunch of the regional integration process in West Africa, based on the idea that such integration was the only way to secure the balanced economic development of the member States and protect their economic independence, with a view to improving the standard of living of their populations as rapidly as possible. Beyond the general objectives sought in any regional integration process, the WAEMU member States were pursuing the specific objectives set out in the Dakar Treaty, in which they had also reaffirmed their commitment to the objectives of the African Economic Community and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

5. The States members of WAEMU sought to participate in mechanisms to strengthen international cooperation as a means of accelerating their economic, monetary and social development. To that end, they had always intended for WAEMU to cooperate with the various United Nations agencies and bodies, especially the General Assembly. The organization already had observer status with the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Trade Organization, and had signed cooperation agreements with bodies including the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa and the World Organization for Animal Health.

6. At an extraordinary meeting of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of WAEMU held in Lomé on 30 May 2011, the member States had decided to broaden the scope of the organization to cover political affairs, namely the maintenance of regional peace, security and stability, in order to facilitate the implementation of its initiatives and projects. Togo, which currently held the presidency of WAEMU, had also been charged with identifying specific ways to cooperate with other bodies, in particular the African Union and ECOWAS, with a view to establishing the necessary synergies for concerted action in its new areas of activity.

7. He trusted that the Committee would not only decide to include the requested item in the agenda of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly but would also ensure that it was allocated to the Sixth Committee. In that connection, the Sixth Committee should be afforded additional time, if necessary, in order to enable its consideration of the additional item.

8. **Mr. Salinas Burgos** (Chile), speaking as the Chair of the Sixth Committee for the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, recalled the large number of agenda items relating to requests for observer status that had already been allocated to that Committee at the current session. During the Committee’s discussions, various delegations had stressed that more time was needed for the legal analysis of each request, taking into account the criteria for obtaining observer status, including those set out in General Assembly decision 49/426 of 9 December 1994. Consequently, although such requests had been the subject of intense discussion during the session, in both formal meetings and informal consultations, delegations had in many cases

indicated that they were not ready to take action on them during the current session. Furthermore, the request submitted by Togo had been received very late in the session, when the Sixth Committee had only one more formal meeting scheduled and might therefore have insufficient time to give the request due consideration, both procedurally and in substantive terms. It would therefore be advisable to include the new item in the agenda of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

9. **Mr. Körösi** (Hungary) said that his delegation fully supported the request submitted by Togo and suggested that the additional item should be included in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly. While regional integration organizations certainly made a positive contribution to security and prosperity in their respective regions, the Committee's role was not to discuss the merits of any such organization but rather to decide whether the additional item should be included in the agenda of the General Assembly for consideration. His delegation saw no reason to refuse that request. If the necessary will existed, an appropriate time could be found to consider positively the request for observer status.

10. **Mr Zinsou** (Benin), stressing the importance of WAEMU for the French-speaking countries of West Africa, said that the organization's decision to broaden its mandate to include political affairs should be of particular interest to the General Assembly. It would not be hard to examine the merits of the request, bearing in mind that WAEMU was an intergovernmental organization that, *prima facie*, fulfilled all the necessary conditions for observer status. In any event, the Committee simply had to decide whether to recommend granting inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the current session, a course of action that his delegation fully supported.

11. With regard to the suggestion that consideration of the item in question should be deferred until the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, he wished to stress that scheduling issues should not be allowed to prevent the Assembly from giving due consideration to the concerns of Member States. Bearing in mind that the United Nations institutions existed to fulfil the mandates entrusted to them, and that the Sixth Committee had been mandated to consider such requests for observer status, the item in question must be addressed and decided at the appropriate level without delay.

12. **Mr. Khazaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation supported the proposal submitted by Togo. Since the Committee was simply required to decide whether to recommend the inclusion of the item in question in the agenda of the current session, he saw no reason to delay that decision. Furthermore, he considered that granting the request would be a way for the international community to help promote the development and economic integration of the African region, and especially the States members of WAEMU.

13. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-sixth session, under heading I, of an additional item entitled "Observer status for the West African Economic and Monetary Union in the General Assembly".*

14. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the additional item should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.*

15. *Mr. Menan (Togo) withdrew.*

Request for the inclusion of an additional sub-item submitted by the Secretary-General (A/66/233)

16. **The Chair** drew attention to the request submitted by the Secretary-General for the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional sub item entitled "Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission" under agenda item 115, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments" (A/66/233).

17. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of an additional sub-item entitled "Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission" under agenda item 115, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments".*

18. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the additional sub-item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee.*

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.