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Chairman: Mr. Carlet R. AUGUSTE (Haiti).

AGENDA ITEM 23

**Question of an increase in the membership of the Security
Council and of the Economic and Social Council**

1. Mr. TETTAMANTI (Argentina) recalled the role played by Argentina and, in a general way, the countries of Latin America in expediting a solution of the problem under discussion. At the tenth session of the General Assembly, the Committee of Good Offices headed by Mr. Victor A. Belaúnde had successfully carried out negotiations which despite political obstacles had led to the admission of sixteen new States of Asia, Africa, eastern and western Europe to the Organization. At the eleventh session,^{1/} the countries of Latin America had proposed taking up the question of increasing the number of members of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to make the composition of those bodies correspond to that of the Organization itself. The countries of Latin America were well aware that the admission of so many new States and the expansion of the two Councils would lessen their own influence in the Organization. However, they had not hesitated to act unselfishly, because they attached great value to the universality of the United Nations and the effective representation of the Member States in its principal bodies.

2. At the current session seventeen new States had just entered the Organization. A final solution was thus more than ever necessary. There was general agreement that the two Councils must be expanded, yet without making them too unwieldy and with different criteria for each one. It should be easy to reach agreement on the precise number of seats to be added, particularly with respect to the Economic and Social Council, for the number of members of two organs of the Council—the Technical Assistance Committee and the Committee for Industrial Development—had already been raised to twenty-four. The consensus of opinion was that that figure seemed to be in keeping with present conditions. The distribution of seats should create no insurmountable difficulties either, since at its twelfth session, for the same reasons that today made an increase in the membership of the two Councils necessary, the General Assembly had reached agreement on increasing the number of Vice-Presidents of the As-

^{1/} *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, Plenary Meetings*, 620th meeting.

sembly and allotting them in accordance with the formula annexed to resolution 1192 (XII).

3. The obstacle to a partial revision of the Charter to increase the number of members of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council was, as the Committee was well aware, the Soviet Union's objection that, to modify the Charter, agreement was necessary among the five permanent members of the Security Council and that one of them was not represented by its rightful Government. From the legal point of view, that objection was unfounded. Article 108 of the Charter envisaged two steps in the process of amendment: first, the amendment must be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Members of the General Assembly, and it must then be ratified by two-thirds of the Members of the Organization, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. In the first stage, unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council was not required. Hence, there was nothing to prevent the General Assembly from surmounting that first obstacle, which would offer at least two advantages, for the Assembly had often been criticized as being ineffective because it postponed what might be called chronic problems from session to session without solving them. By extricating that question from the deadlock which had lasted since 1956, the Assembly would help to silence those criticisms. Furthermore, with regard to the Economic and Social Council, it could make a start with the amendment procedures and apply the measures provided in Article 69 of the Charter while waiting for the ratification to be completed.

4. On the political level, the objection raised by the Soviet Union called for even more important remarks. At the fourteenth session at the 129th meeting of the Special Political Committee, the representative of the USSR, Mr. Sobolev, had stated that the basis of understanding essential for a revision of the Charter unfortunately did not exist in the Assembly, mainly because of the absence of the legitimate representatives of the Chinese people. But at the present session, the President of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, Mr. N.S. Khrushchev, had made mention of that objection in putting forward his proposals concerning the post of Secretary-General (869th plenary meeting). The same had been true of the First Committee (1085th meeting), where the Soviet delegation had insisted that the structure of the Security Council should be modified. Such measures would also require a revision of the Charter. What did that contradiction mean?

5. Everyone was, of course, entitled to have his own opinion on the representation of China and to try to make it prevail, but it was unacceptable that the Soviet Union should employ a new kind of veto in order to postpone indefinitely the solution of the problem under discussion, thus preventing the new Members, the countries of Africa and Asia in particular, from being equitably represented in the principal organs of the

United Nations. At the 906th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, Mr. Krishna Menon, although opposed to the idea of modifying the Charter without the agreement of the great Powers, had said that the present composition of the Security Council and other bodies was unrelated to the realities of the modern world and amounted to creating a caste system.

6. Summarizing the conclusions of the first part of his speech, he said first, that it might possibly have been thought genuinely that the problem of China was an obstacle to amendment of the Charter, but by the proposals it had made recently the Soviet Union had itself shown that that was not so. Secondly, after the new increase in the number of Member States, it was no longer possible to perpetuate a situation which the Defence Minister of India had aptly described as a "political vacuum". Lastly, there was no legal obstacle to prevent the Assembly from deciding to amend Articles 23 and 27 of the Charter, which bore on the Security Council, as well as Article 61 which referred to the Economic and Social Council.

7. In the latter case the situation was particularly favourable during the present year. The expansion of the Economic and Social Council had been discussed even longer than that of the Security Council. As early as the second session of the General Assembly, the Argentine delegation had submitted a draft resolution^{2/} proposing to raise the number of members of the Economic and Social Council to twenty-four and providing for methods for electing them. In assigning precisely that number of Members to two of its Committees, the Economic and Social Council had acknowledged that that was a suitable number. By its resolution 690 B (XXVI) the Security Council had, in fact, itself requested the General Assembly to increase its membership. Furthermore, the Economic and Social Council could be requested, under Article 69 of the Charter, to invite six Member States to participate in its debates, without the right of voting.

8. The six States would be chosen in the light of the new distribution of Vice-Presidencies of the General Assembly, and could be elected by the Council in accordance with the procedure laid down for its functional commissions.

9. As to the precise number of seats by which the Security Council should be enlarged, the situation was less clear; but the problem, though difficult, was not insoluble. The Soviet Union had proposed that the composition of the Security Council should be modified so as to ensure parity of representation for what it had termed the group of western Powers, the group of socialist Powers and the group of neutralist States. Discussion of that proposal could lead to a dispute which would aggravate the cold war and thus prevent a satisfactory solution from being reached in respect of the Economic and Social Council at the present session. The Argentine delegation therefore considered that it would be preferable to postpone the part of the question which related to the Security Council to the next session. It wished to state, however, that in its view the Soviet proposal ran counter to the very principles of the Charter. As Mr. Macmillan, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (877th meeting), had pointed out, fear and suspicion were what had impelled some groups of nations to form defensive blocs outside

the United Nations. Apart from those blocs there was another group of nations which had been termed neutralist. In his delegation's view such groups were conceivable only in the context of an armed conflict or a threat of war. But the United Nations, as the preamble to its Charter showed, was based on diametrically opposite principles. The unfortunate fact that the world now lived in a climate midway between war and peace did not mean that such a situation could be permitted within the United Nations, for that would be tantamount to a final declaration of bankruptcy. On the contrary, it was to be hoped that once that dispute had been settled the United Nations could discharge the task of promoting harmony for which it had been established. Mr. Slim, the Tunisian representative, had spoken on the same lines at the General Assembly's 897th plenary meeting.

10. The problem could not be solved by redistributing the existing seats on the two Councils. That would deprive some geographical regions of the fair representation they had been granted at San Francisco. The right solution was to increase the membership of those organs so that the new States of Africa and Asia in particular could take the place in the Councils to which their population and the magnitude of their problems entitled them. It was the duty of those new States to take the initiative in the discussion at the current session. His own delegation assured them in advance of its support.

11. The Committee had on its agenda at the current session item 77 proposed by Czechoslovakia entitled "Appeal for maximum support to efforts of newly emerging States for strengthening their independence". As he saw it, there was no better way to support those States than by associating them fully with the work of the United Nations and enabling them to state their problems on their own account in all its organs.

12. Mr. DJERDJA (Yugoslavia) recalled that the General Assembly had already considered at several earlier sessions the question of an increase in the membership of certain United Nations organs. The problem became increasingly urgent as time passed. In his view it was not a mere technical question that could easily be resolved. Owing to the peculiar character of the problem, its solution was bound to have far-reaching effects. That view was based on both the practical and political nature of the problem and the circumstances in which it arose.

13. When the United Nations had been founded, the problem had not arisen because the world of independent States had been limited to Europe, the two Americas, China and a few countries in Asia. The countries of the rest of the world—more specifically, most parts of Africa and Asia—had been under colonial domination and, having no opportunity to establish themselves as active political factors, had been unable to take part directly or indirectly in the work of the United Nations. The United Nations had been created on that basis and reflected the incomplete picture of the world of that day.

14. Since then, particularly in Africa and Asia, an anti-colonial revolution had taken place which had altered the political structure of those continents and of the world as a whole. New States, representing almost half the total membership of the United Nations, had replaced the former colonial countries. That anti-colonial transformation of relations in Africa and Asia had profoundly altered the world and led to the

^{2/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Joint Committee of the Second and Third Committees*, 18th, 19th and 20th meetings.

formation of a series of new forces, material and political.

15. Confronted with that new world, which was no longer the world of 1945, the structure of the United Nations, and particularly of its principal organs, had remained unchanged. His delegation considered that since the principal organs of the United Nations reflected the world of 1945 and not that of 1960, the time was ripe to revise the Organization's structure. However, those historical and geographical factors were not the main reason why such revision was warranted; there were other even more important reasons.

16. The inadequately represented areas of the world coincided to a greater or lesser extent with the least developed regions, those with which the United Nations was constantly concerned. Numerous and grievous economic, social and political problems oppressed those regions, which because of the foreign domination they had suffered had been unable to keep pace with developments in other parts of the world. The countries concerned were making superhuman efforts to overcome their backwardness, but the gap which separated them from the more developed countries was tremendous. Some believed that that gap would only increase if the present rate of scientific, technical and financial development was maintained on both sides. There was no question that all the principal crises and disputes of the contemporary world were due directly or indirectly to the existence of that gulf between developed and under-developed countries and its effects on their economic, political, racial and other relations. Any further widening of that gap might thus have a considerable and increasing adverse effect on efforts to consolidate international relations and world peace.

17. For those reasons the United Nations had for years been endeavouring to bridge that gap and to eliminate its consequences. The efforts being made to end colonial relationships and to increase material, financial and technical assistance to the under-developed countries formed an integral part of those endeavours. The increase in the membership of the principal United Nations organs in such a way as to ensure adequate representation of the African-Asian countries came under the same heading. That step would eliminate a remnant of the colonial era and of discrimination against countries which through no fault of their own had been absent from San Francisco.

18. Most of the problems which the United Nations had examined, especially in recent years, had related to Africa and Asia; the questions of Korea, Indo-China, China, Iran, Suez and the Congo were examples. They were primary problems concerning the maintenance of peace, which was the principal concern of the United Nations. The various Committees of the General Assembly, for example, the Second and Fourth Committees, had on their agenda numerous problems concerning the under-developed regions, i.e., the regions which were inadequately represented. His delegation could only conclude that the United Nations and its principal organs were dealing with problems affecting under-developed regions whose active co-operation was not ensured, despite the fact that the principle of equality of Member States was the very cornerstone of the United Nations. That aspect of the matter had adversely affected the solution of some important problems.

19. Thus the problem of the Congo, which threatened the prestige of the United Nations and compromised

progress in Africa, particularly in the Congo itself, would not have arisen had the African and Asian countries been more adequately represented in the principal organs of the United Nations. Action undertaken by the United Nations at the initiative of the legal Congolese Government would have given better results. The same could be said of other problems with which the United Nations had had to deal. Viewed from that angle, the item under discussion appeared in an infinitely more serious light, and his delegation was convinced that many efforts aimed at solving African and Asian problems were paralysed or even doomed to failure by the lack of adequate representation for the African-Asian countries.

20. The problem should be solved in a manner which would increase the effectiveness of the United Nations and of its efforts on behalf of peace and progress. In the past some had claimed that the problem was not yet ripe for solution. He hoped that that was no longer the case; he was convinced that the solution of that problem would facilitate the solution of many other problems, particularly those affecting the African-Asian countries. His delegation had no suggestions to make with regard to the legal aspects of the matter, or proposals concerning the procedure to be adopted, but it would give its support to any initiative on the part of the countries concerned which would bring about the desired result.

21. Mr. MARTINEZ SOTOMAYOR (Chile) said that the Committee had been considering the question under discussion since 1956 and had not yet reached a settlement, although no delegation had objected to the increase in membership of the two Councils. During the debate at the fourteenth session of the General Assembly the great majority of the Member States, which at that time numbered eighty-two, had recognized that it was essential both to increase the membership of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council and to give proper representation to the new States admitted to membership in the United Nations since the signing of the Charter. Now that the number of Member States had grown to ninety-nine, it was still more necessary to amend the Charter in accordance with Article 108.

22. In resolution 1404 (XIV), the General Assembly had decided to place the question on the agenda of the fifteenth session and had declared that if progress was not made during that session, a committee should be set up to study the possibilities of arriving at an agreement. His delegation hoped that the matter would be settled in accordance with the Charter and would not be linked to another entirely different problem.

23. He reiterated his delegation's view that proper representation should be given to the new Member States in accordance with the principle of geographical distribution by increasing the membership of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. His delegation was opposed to a solution entailing a redistribution of the existing seats, not because it considered that the Latin American countries had more than their share of representatives in the Councils but because the distribution of seats had been fair at the time it was made and could not be changed without leading to injustices. It was an urgent problem and its solution could not be postponed without hampering the normal functioning of the Organization.

24. He hoped that the Committee would reach a settlement in the same spirit it had shown in solving item 68 of its agenda, and that it might even be unnecessary to set up the Committee contemplated in operative paragraph 2 of resolution 1404 (XIV).

25. Mr. SOLDATOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that it had never been possible to settle the question under discussion because of the absence of representatives of the People's Republic of China, which for ten years had been refused restoration of its legitimate rights through the opposition of the United States and its allies. Since China was a permanent member of the Security Council no solution could be juridically valid without its ratification. Only when a satisfactory solution was found to the problem of the representation of China would it be possible to amend the provisions of the Charter relating to the composition of the principal organs of the United Nations.

26. It had been rightly said that the membership of those organs should be increased because the number of Member States had substantially increased since 1945. In fact, membership of the Organization had practically doubled and it was bound to continue to increase. However, account should be taken not only of the quantitative changes but also of the qualitative changes which had taken place in the social, economic and political structure of the world. Mr. Khrushchev had had occasion to state that the United Nations structure was out of date. In 1945 it had correctly reflected the situation in the world, but it no longer did so today. In 1945 there had still been only two socialist States, the USSR and the Mongolian People's Republic. Today there were twelve, comprising more than a third of the world's population and exerting considerable economic potential and political influence. At the same time, the colonial empires in Africa and Asia had fallen apart or were about to collapse. In Asia, Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and other countries had freed themselves from the colonial yoke. The African peoples were gaining their freedom rapidly, and new States such as Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria had appeared on the world map. Whereas in 1945 there had been only three independent States in Africa, there were now twenty-six, and new countries would certainly be added to that number in the near future. Those new Asian and African States, together with certain States from other continents, constituted a group representing the largest population in the world—the neutralist countries which refused to join military pacts and were now playing an increasingly important part in international affairs. Thus the creation of the socialist group of countries and the collapse of colonialism had caused the capitalist countries to lose the military and economic lead they had had in the world in 1945 and had weakened their political influence accordingly.

27. It would therefore only be proper for the three groups of States into which the world was now divided to be equitably represented in all the organs of the United Nations. The unanimity rule among the permanent members of the Security Council on substantive questions had been devised in 1945 in order to compel the majority, namely the capitalist countries, to respect the opinions and rights of the minority, and to prevent decisions harmful to peace from being taken without the agreement of one of the permanent members. The capitalist countries, incidentally, had not respected the ideas and principles enunciated in the Charter, and when they were unable to attain their ends

in the Security Council had taken questions direct to the General Assembly and got decisions adopted which served their own interests only. The Organization must therefore be improved, and that meant going back to the ideas at the basis of the Charter. The principle of the equality of all States must be specifically recognized, particularly when dealing with problems essential to security. Account should also be taken of the balance of forces in the world today. In 1945, there had been five great Powers, but there were many more today. France and the United Kingdom could not be considered among the great Powers unless India and Indonesia were also included.

28. The structure of the Organization should therefore be brought into line with the balance of forces in the world today. That was particularly true of the Security Council, which should include, side by side with representatives of the socialist and imperialist States, representatives from neutralist States. In the same way, the structure of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions or sub-commissions must be changed. The capitalist States held a predominant position in those organs, in violation of the principle of equality which the two other groups of States should enjoy. The United States and its allies in military pacts held eighty-three out of one hundred and twenty-six seats in those organs and the situation was particularly serious in some of the commissions. Thus, the United States and its allies held ten seats out of fifteen in the Statistical Commission, twelve seats out of fifteen in the Population Commission, twelve seats out of eighteen in the Social Commission, eleven seats out of eighteen in the Commission on Human Rights, thirteen seats out of eighteen in the Commission on the Status of Women. That quite abnormal state of affairs prevented those organs from giving objective consideration and reaching proper decisions on the questions before them.

29. The same situation obtained in the Secretariat. As the Soviet delegation had already stated, the post of Secretary-General should be abolished and replaced by an executive body composed of three fully responsible persons belonging to the three above-mentioned groups. Such a change would create conditions for a better and more equitable implementation of the Organization's decisions. The composition of the Secretariat staff, particularly at the higher levels, should also be changed. At the present time, the majority of the senior officials of the Secretariat were nationals of States belonging to western military alliances. In the twenty-eight posts of Under-Secretary and equivalent rank, there was only one representative of the socialist countries as against seventeen nationals of the United States or its western allies. Twenty-eight of the thirty-four posts at the director level were held by nationals of western States. The nine principal divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs were headed by nationals of the imperialist States. In the Office of Legal Affairs, which was incidentally under the direction of the Secretary-General, 80 per cent of the staff in the professional category, according to the figures for 30 September 1960, were nationals of the United States or of its military allies; the socialist States and Africa were not represented at all, the neutralist countries of Asia and the Latin American countries were each represented by a single staff member. The situation was the same in other departments. In those circumstances it was impossible, without a change in the structure of the Organization, for the

Secretariat to carry out its task objectively and fairly. There was no question of weakening the Organization, as some suggested, but rather of seeking to improve it. Equitable representation for all States with different social and economic systems would encourage peaceful co-existence and also enhance the prestige of the United Nations. The aim therefore was to strengthen the United Nations so as to make it into a truly international organization, representing and serving the interests of all States, and not those of a single group bound up with the United States, which was using it for its own ends and contrary to the principles of the Charter.

30. Those who favoured an immediate increase in the membership of the principal organs of the United Nations maintained that it was a purely technical problem which did not affect the actual basis of the Organization and should be settled in accordance with the provisions of the Charter without regard to any other considerations. But the Charter was not an abstract principle unconnected with reality. It was a legal in-

strument which had validity only in so far as it reflected the aspirations of all Member States and their desire to ensure peace and security. An objective appraisal must therefore be made of the situation in the world today and it must be realized that any change in the composition of the organs in question was bound to entail a revision of the whole structure. Moreover, in order to solve that problem the question of the restoration of China to its legitimate rights must be settled. It must be emphasized once again that the USSR felt that the problem under discussion could not be examined or solved without the participation of the People's Republic of China. It was high time to stop chasing shadows and face reality if the United Nations was to be a truly international organization, safeguarding the interests of all States, irrespective of their social, economic or political system, and so justifying the hopes placed in it by all peace-loving countries.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.