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Chairman: Mr. Emilio ARENALES CATALAN
 (Guatemala).

AGENDA ITEM 26

**Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief
 and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the
 Near East (A/3686 and Corr.1, A/3735, A/SPC/20/
 Rev.1, A/SPC/21, A/SPC/23, A/SPC/L.21/Rev.1)
 (concluded)**

1. Mr. AZKOUL (Lebanon) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on the revised five-Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.21/Rev.1) adopted by the Special Political Committee at its previous meeting, for the reasons already explained by other delegations from Arab countries.

2. Mr. JAWAD (Iraq) said that he had abstained because the draft resolution did not meet the requirements of the situation described by the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). According to the draft resolution, the General Assembly, while deploring the inadequacy of the voluntary contributions which prevented the Agency from carrying out all of its relief and rehabilitation programmes, at the same time tacitly admitted the possibility of further cuts. That fact showed that the Assembly was unaware of the disastrous consequences of such a policy. The voluntary contributions system having proved inadequate, the Assembly should now adopt a new policy designed to enable the United Nations to meet its political and social responsibilities. Furthermore, the Assembly seemed to have forgotten some of its earlier decisions.

3. The Iraqi delegation had repeatedly stressed the dangers inherent in the refusal of any Member State to abide by the decisions of the United Nations. Such refusal was even more grave when it was a question of carrying into effect the resolutions on repatriation and compensation, as those resolutions were the key to the solution of the refugee problem. It was admittedly the duty of Member States to provide relief for the Palestine refugees but, it must be remembered, that was only a palliative action. The situation could be satisfactorily remedied only by the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and

that would depend on the way in which the United Nations faced up to its responsibilities. If a State was permitted to ignore the decisions of the United Nations while the latter was aware of the dangers inherent in such an attitude, and the problem was one which the Organization alone could solve, the only possible conclusion was that the rule of law was not the supreme factor in international relations.

4. Mr. DEJANY (Saudi Arabia) endorsed comments made by the representative of Syria at the previous meeting on the draft resolution and the statements made by other representatives of the host countries during the general discussion. The inadequacy of voluntary contributions, which was forcing the Agency to reduce its activities, was a source of deep concern to the Arab countries. The responsibility of the United Nations for the situation of the refugees could not be liquidated by statements of representatives of the sponsoring countries; that responsibility remained intact and in particular it rested with the countries which had voted for the partition of Palestine; it could not be shifted onto the Arab countries.

5. His delegation took issue with delegations which placed responsibility for the refugees primarily with the Arab States and Israel, and it regarded it as unfair to place on an equal footing Israel, which had wrongfully taken over and occupied the homes of the refugees, and the Arab States, which had afforded them temporary relief. The Saudi Arabian delegation regretted that the sponsors of the draft resolution had not thought of incorporating in the draft a paragraph to adjust that inequity, by calling on Israel to pay the refugees at least the annual income from their property, which was now held by Jewish immigrants while the refugees were languishing in the camps. Such a call would be most appropriate, since there was no assurance that international charity would meet the minimum needs of the refugees.

6. Saudi Arabia, which had recently increased its cash contribution to UNRWA by 150 per cent, bringing its total payments for the benefit of the refugees to more than 500,000 dollars, could not support any draft resolution which overlooked the very crux of the problem. For that reason, it had abstained from voting on the revised five-Power draft resolution.

7. Mr. SUAREZ (Chile) said that he had abstained because the draft resolution did not explicitly stress the voluntary nature of the contributions. The Chilean delegation nevertheless wished to place on record its appreciation of the work performed by the Director and staff of UNRWA and hoped that the refugee problem could be satisfactorily resolved.

8. Mr. EBAN (Israel) said that he had supported the draft resolution because it provided the means for the Agency to continue its activities. Nevertheless, the delegation of Israel shared the general feeling that

the Committee had not gone to the heart of the problem; the principal difficulty was to overcome resistance to the only reasonable and just solution, namely, the integration of the refugees into the economy of the host countries. All other refugee problems in modern history had been solved by that method, and the Israel delegation noted that the draft resolution adopted by the Committee did not pronounce on that question.

9. With reference to the question of compensation, he said that the Israel Government adhered to its undertaking of 1955.^{1/} That undertaking, the first of the type ever voluntarily given by the Government of a country which had been the victim of an aggression, was consistent with international law. In that connexion it was pertinent to note that no similar undertaking had ever been given regarding the refugees from Arab countries who had sought asylum in Israel. The Israel delegation wished to stress that its support of the draft resolution did not imply any departure by its Government from the previous understandings on which its compensation obligations had been based.

10. Mr. MUMTAZ ALI KHAN (Pakistan) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution although the text did not seem entirely satisfactory. Pakistan still believed that the problem of the Palestine refugees could not be solved by palliatives. The countries which had created Israel should take concerted action to ensure that the General Assembly resolutions on the repatriation of refugees were carried into effect.

11. Mr. ZULETA ANGEL (Colombia) said that he had voted in favour of the draft resolution although it dealt with only one aspect of the refugee problem. Admittedly the problem had one particularly urgent aspect, namely the assistance to be given to the refugees pending a final settlement of the basic issue, but that aspect was essentially of a temporary nature. The real problem was political and called for a political solution.

12. The Israel representative had rightly pointed out that the draft resolution adopted by the Committee did not really solve the refugee problem, which interested all Members of the United Nations as it was closely linked to the maintenance of peace in a certain region of the world. The Israel delegation and the delegations of the Arab countries had expressed conflicting views and proposed irreconcilable solutions. His delegation understood and respected the sentiments of the Arab States, but it should not be impossible to find a satisfactory formula which would ensure the integration of the refugees into the economy of the host countries.

13. The Israel representative had just said that his Government was prepared to pay compensation to those refugees who settled in the Arab countries. It would seem that co-operation between the parties directly concerned might yield profitable results. On the other hand, the United Nations should do everything in its power to solve the basic issue. The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had not been successful in its attempts to do so, but some other line of action might be open. In any event, it was essential and urgent that resolute efforts should be made to attack the heart of the problem. If that

were not done, the only result would be to prolong indefinitely a situation which constituted a serious threat to international peace.

14. Mr. Abubakr OSMAN (Sudan) said that he had abstained from voting on the draft resolution, not because his delegation was not interested in the problem of the Palestine refugees or because it had any reservations about the way in which the Agency was discharging its functions, but because it considered that the draft resolution was not likely to solve the refugee problem as his delegation saw it. The draft resolution did not put forward specific proposals for raising the very low standard of living of the refugees. Furthermore, operative paragraph 5 implied that the Governments of the host countries were not giving sufficient co-operation to the Director of UNRWA and that did not correspond with the statements made by the representatives of the countries concerned. His delegation had not voted against the draft resolution because it considered that the United Nations should shoulder responsibility for the refugees until they could be repatriated or compensated in accordance with the General Assembly resolutions.

15. Mr. DAOUDY (Syria), exercising his right of reply, emphasized that the Israel representative had just said that the commitment assumed by his Government with regard to compensation was voluntary; in other words it was for Israel to decide whether it would compensate the refugees or not. There was every indication that Israel had no intention of compensating the refugees. The Members of the United Nations, and especially the Great Powers responsible for the existing state of affairs, would do well to weigh the serious consequences of that attitude.

16. Mr. LALL (India) explained that he had voted in favour of the draft resolution, although it was not fully adequate, because it would enable the Agency to continue its work on behalf of the refugees.

17. Mr. EBAN (Israel), exercising his right of reply, pointed out that he had not mentioned the Syrian Government in explaining his delegation's vote. Hence there was nothing that would have entitled the Syrian representative to exercise the right of reply. In any event, the Syrian representative's interpretation of the Israel delegation's statement concerning the payment of compensation was inaccurate.

Mr. Labrousse, Director of the United Nations Relief and Works agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, withdrew.

AGENDA ITEM 68

Question of the composition of the General Committee of the General Assembly (A/3692 and Corr.1, A/SPC/L.22, A/SPC/L.23.) (continued)*

18. Mr. KAKITSUBO (Japan), speaking on a point of order, said that the members of the Committee had had time to study the thirteen-Power draft resolution on the composition of the General Committee (A/SPC/L.22), but that they had only just received the six-Power amendments to that draft (A/SPC/L.23). In his delegations's opinion, the amendments were contrary to the spirit of the rules of procedure and the members of the Committee needed more time

^{1/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee, 17th meeting.

*Resumed from 75th meeting.

to study them. As the Committee would not complete its work that week, he proposed that the debate should be postponed until the following Monday, 9 December.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that under rule 117 of the rules of procedure he could call on only two speakers in favour of the motion of adjournment and two against.

20. Mr. LALL (India) regretted that he failed to understand the Japanese representative's argumentation. The thirteen-Power draft resolution and the amendments had not yet been formally presented to the Committee. It was quite normal for draft resolutions to be considered only after a general debate. So as to facilitate the discussion and give the members of the Committee more time to study the proposals, certain delegations had had the foresight to submit texts before the beginning of the general debate. That was no reason for postponing the debate, which could have begun even if no draft resolution had been presented. He proposed that the Committee should begin the debate, on the understanding that no vote would be taken at that meeting; that procedure should satisfy those delegations which wished to consider the proposals more thoroughly.

21. Mr. PLAJA (Italy) supported the Japanese representative and considered that the Committee's work was sufficiently advanced for delegations which wished to consider the question to be given an interval of one or two days.

22. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) noted that the Chairman had consistently tried to expedite the Committee's work. He therefore believed that the Committee should follow the normal procedure outlined by the Indian representative. Generally speaking, any representative who had asked for the inclusion of an item in the agenda was entitled to explain his point of view. Then, if there was a draft resolution, a representative spoke for the sponsors of the proposal and the same procedure was followed in the case of amendments. Thus the explanations given by the sponsors of the draft resolution and the amendments would certainly facilitate consideration of the text.

23. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) suggested that the Committee might hear the sponsors of the two proposals and then adjourn the debate to another meeting, if the Japanese representative maintained his proposal.

24. Mr. KAKITSUBO (Japan) accepted the Uruguayan representative's suggestion and requested that the vote should be postponed until a later meeting.

25. The CHAIRMAN explained that in any event it would not be in order, under rule 121 of the rules of procedure, for him to put the draft resolution to the vote at the current meeting.

26. Mr. ULLRICH (Czechoslovakia) said that at the eleventh session of the General Assembly, and again at the beginning of the current session, the composition of the General Committee had been enlarged by the election of an additional Vice-President. The General Assembly's decision in 1956 had led to an amendment of the rules of procedure, whereas the action taken in 1957 was valid only for the twelfth session. That procedure might endanger the representative character of the General Committee. In view of the General Committee's functions, it was essential that its composition should reflect an equitable

geographical distribution, as otherwise the functioning of the General Assembly might be seriously affected.

27. It was essential that the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be strictly applied in all United Nations bodies; that would give them a representative character, enable them to examine all problems from a general view point, taking account of the interests of all Member States, and enhance their authority. Thus Article 23 (1) of the United Nations Charter provided that the General Assembly should specially pay due regard to that principle in electing the non-permanent members of the Security Council. Experience proved that the principle was equally important in other United Nations bodies.

28. The composition of the General Committee had been established at a period when the number of Member States had been smaller and the various areas of the world had not been represented in the same way as they were now; it no longer reflected the existing situation. It was thus essential to take steps to adjust the composition of the General Committee so as to give it a truly representative character in conformity with rule 38 of the rules of procedure. That was why his delegation had asked for the question to be included in the agenda of the current session. (A/3692 and Corr.1)

29. Twenty-two new Members had been admitted since 1955, most of them from Eastern Europe, Asia or Africa, and a one-sided change in the composition of the General Committee had occurred in favour of other areas. The countries of Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa should accordingly be given the representation due to those extensive areas and the large number of countries concerned.

30. To that end, his delegation deemed it necessary to proceed in accordance with the following principles: first, the existing system of geographical distribution and the procedure for election of the Chairmen of the seven Main Committees should be retained, while changes in the composition of the General Committee were effected by increasing the number of Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly. Second, in assigning the seats of Vice-Presidents, a division into four geographical regions should be made: Africa and Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe and other countries not included elsewhere. Third, the present practice of electing representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council as Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly should be continued.

31. Bearing in mind those principles, his delegation believed that an equitable geographical distribution could be ensured by electing four additional Vice-Presidents, so that the total membership of the General Committee would be increased to twenty-one. The General Committee would thus consist of the President of the General Assembly, the Chairmen of the seven Main Committees, the representatives of the five Great Powers elected as Vice-Presidents, and eight additional Vice-Presidents. The increase in the number of members of the General Committee by four was perfectly legitimate in view of the great increase in the membership of the United Nations since 1945. Such a step would ensure a proportional representation and contribute to the smooth working of the United Nations.

32. It was important that the new system should be enshrined in a written text; in the past, unwritten agreements on geographical distribution had not been respected, and that had weakened the authority of United Nations bodies and undermined the prestige of the Organization. In putting such an agreement into effect it was also necessary that the highest regard should be paid, in choosing the countries which were to represent the various regions, to the wishes expressed by the countries of the region concerned. Otherwise a dangerous practice, incompatible with the provisions of the Charter, would be established, whereby one group of States could prevent the election of candidates agreed upon by another group. The need for an equitable geographical distribution derived directly from the principle of the equality of Member States. The strict application of that principle to the composition of the General Committee would greatly increase co-operation among Member States in the General Assembly. The proposed measure would be even more valuable if it succeeded in stimulating a stricter observance of the same principle in other United Nations bodies.

33. His delegation believed that the thirteen-Power draft resolution represented a just solution to a problem which had been the subject of intensive discussions, and he hoped that it would be favourably received.

34. Mr. LALL (India) said that the composition of the General Committee was clearly no longer satisfactory; it had in fact been necessary to take ad hoc measures to remedy the situation.

35. During the early years of the United Nations the composition of the General Committee as originally established had perhaps been appropriate, but since that time a large number of new Members had been admitted. Moreover, all Member States, whatever their size, were learning to play a more effective role in the General Assembly. Such a development was not only inevitable, but should be welcomed, since it was not consistent with the Charter that the General Assembly should be dominated, either implicitly or explicitly, by certain States. It might be that certain countries had a special role in some United Nations bodies, but in the General Assembly all States were equal and sovereign and should be able to act as such.

36. The permanent members of the Security Council should certainly always be members of the General Committee, but the composition of that body should reflect more closely that of the General Assembly. His delegation therefore considered it necessary, in view of the conventional distribution of the chairmanships of the Main Committees, to review the composition of the General Committee and to distribute the offices of President and Vice-President so as to improve the geographical distribution. Representatives of all parts of the world should be able to express their views in the General Committee. Although it was true that representatives who were asking for the inclusion of a particular item in the agenda could come before the General Committee, there were often questions which interested a region or a group of countries, and it was important that the point of view of that group should be put forward clearly when the General Committee was discussing the agenda and other matters within its province. All Members

of the General Assembly had a right to the assurance that the General Committee reflected the views of the General Assembly as a whole.

37. Those arguments, which were not new, might seem convincing. Nevertheless, some members of the Special Political Committee might wonder perhaps whether it was wise to make the General Committee a large debating body. There was a conclusive reply: the General Committee did not deal with questions of substance. Since it dealt only with procedural matters, there was no risk whatever that it might become a smaller version of the General Assembly; any debate on substance would be out of order there.

38. For those reasons his delegation had co-sponsored the thirteen-Power draft resolution, in the hope of establishing a stable pattern which would ensure a faithful reflection of the opinions of the General Assembly within the General Committee.

39. Mr. KARUNATILLEKE (Ceylon), introducing the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.22) on behalf of the sponsors, said that it was essentially an expression of the aspirations of a number of countries which had recently been admitted to the United Nations. The question should be considered from that point of view; it was not political.

40. At present the General Committee consisted of seventeen members: the President and the nine Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, and the seven Chairmen of the Main Committees. The Committee chairmanships were distributed as follows: two for the African-Asian group, one for Eastern Europe, two for Latin America and two for Western Europe and the countries which did not fall within the other groups. In the case of the Vice-Presidencies, the African-Asian group had three, the Eastern European group had one, the Latin American group had two and the Western European group and the countries which did not fall within the other groups had four. Those figures showed that in its present composition the General Committee did not in fact represent the General Assembly.

41. To claim that an increase in the membership of the General Committee would make it unwieldy was tantamount to saying that the United Nations itself was becoming too big, when in fact the universality of the Organization was fundamental and should be reflected in all its organs. Moreover, the time the General Committee devoted to a question enabled the General Assembly itself to save time. Finally, considerations of that kind should not be regarded as a deterrent in attempting to remedy glaring inequalities. For example, the African-Asian group, which was composed of twenty-nine States, had only four representatives on the General Committee, while the Western European group and other States, which comprised twenty-two countries, had seven seats.

42. In submitting their draft resolution, the sponsors were merely stating as principles practices which were already accepted, namely that the five permanent members of the Security Council should be members of the General Committee and that the selection of officers should be made on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. The inclusion of those principles in a text would contribute to the efficient functioning of the United Nations and would increase mutual trust among its Members.

43. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) explained that the amendments (A/SPC/L.23) to the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.22) were designed to place the question of Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the question of Chairmen of the Main Committees on the same footing. Rule 38 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly made no distinction between the Vice-Presidents, the Chairmen of Committees and the President of the General Assembly in their capacity as members of the General Committee, and it provided that the General Committee should be so constituted as to ensure its representative character. While the question of Vice-Presidents was dealt with in the operative part of the draft resolution, the question of Chairmen appeared in the fifth paragraph of the preamble. Transposition of that paragraph of the preamble to the operative section would result in a more emphatic text. Accordingly, the amendments would delete the fifth paragraph of the preamble and add to the operative part a paragraph 3, reiterating the provisions of the fifth paragraph of the preamble in more formal terms.

44. Mr. DE VAUELLES (France), speaking on a point of order, said that when the Uruguayan representative had requested the representative of Japan to withdraw his motion for adjournment at the beginning of the meeting, it had been agreed that the sponsors of the draft resolution and the amendments would introduce their proposals at the current meeting, but that the general debate would be deferred to another meeting. Obviously, the various delegations had to hear the sponsors of the texts to have a definite idea of their purpose. Nevertheless, inasmuch as the Committee now seemed to be entering into the general debate, he wondered whether, in dealing with what was in fact a procedural question, the general debate could be separated from the consideration of the draft resolution and the amendments. It would seem more logical to have a single debate, beginning with the following meeting, so that delegations would have time to consider the problem.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that as the representative of Japan had agreed to withdraw his motion for adjournment, the Committee no longer had such a motion before it.

46. Mr. MALOLES (Philippines) said that the thirteen-Power draft resolution filled a compelling need. Rule 38 of the rules of procedure dated from a period when the United Nations had had only fifty-one Members; it now had eighty-two, and that increase should be reflected in the composition of the General Committee. On the one hand the principle of geographical distribution to ensure equitable representation to each area should be applied and on the other hand rule 38, stating that the General Committee should be so constituted as to ensure its representative character, should be faithfully observed. It was obvious that the African-Asian group had not as many seats as it should have in the General Committee. For those reasons, his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution.

47. Mr. DE GAIFFIER D'HESTROY (Belgium) said that the tendency to increase the number of members of the General Committee should not be encouraged. There was no reason to amend rule 31 of the rules

of procedure, according to which the General Assembly elected eight Vice-Presidents on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the General Committee. Inasmuch as the General Assembly had eighty-two Members, there was one Vice-President for every ten Members, which seemed a reasonable ratio. Moreover, eight Vice-Presidencies were enough to ensure the representative character of the General Committee. The example of the International Atomic Energy Agency could be cited in that connexion, as that body had divided the world into eight regions in order to achieve equitable geographical distribution on its Board of Governors. Finally, rule 31 must be read in conjunction with rule 38, which provided that the General Committee should comprise the President of the General Assembly, the eight Vice-Presidents and the Chairmen of the seven Main Committees. In invoking the need to ensure the representative character of the General Committee as an argument in favour of increasing the number of Vice-Presidents, it would seem wise to take into account the composition of the General Committee as a whole. To that end, when the Vice-Presidents were elected, due consideration might be given to the regions from which the President of the General Assembly and the seven Chairmen of Committees had already been selected, without there being any need for that rule to be embodied in a text.

48. Moreover, it was hardly logical to consider enlarging the membership of the General Committee when the Special Political Committee had just recommended to the General Assembly that it should defer to the thirteenth session consideration of the composition of certain principal organs of the United Nations, and specifically of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

49. For all those reasons, his delegation considered that rules 31 and 38 of the rules of procedure should be maintained as they stood unless and until the Charter was amended to increase the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council and the number of members of the Economic and Social Council.

50. Mr. RICHARDSON (Liberia) thought that eight Vice-Presidents was not necessarily the best possible number, and requested the Committee to adjourn the debate to the following meeting to enable the various delegations to study the text of the draft resolution.

51. The CHAIRMAN asked whether the Liberian representative was presenting a formal motion to that effect.

52. Mr. RICHARDSON (Liberia) replied that he had only made a suggestion.

53. Mr. HOLMBACK (Sweden) formally moved the adjournment of the meeting.

54. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the motion for adjournment presented by Sweden.

The motion was adopted by 26 votes to 8, with 22 abstentions.

The meeting rose at 5.5 p.m.