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**Chairman: Mr. Emilio ARENALES CATALAN**  
(Guatemala).

**AGENDA ITEM 68**

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

1. Mr. HOLMBACK (Sweden) noted that under the revised thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.22/Rev.1) the General Assembly would decide upon a certain distribution of Vice-Presidencies which would not, however, be incorporated in its rules of procedure. He would like to know whether, when the Assembly next proceeded to the election of its Vice-Presidents, there would be a separate ballot for each geographical region specified in the revised draft resolution, or whether all thirteen Vice-Presidents would be elected in a single ballot. If there was only one ballot for all, would ballot papers not conforming to the pattern prescribed in the draft resolution be regarded as invalid? He would also like to know the juridical value of the decision proposed in operative paragraph 2 of the revised draft resolution. Was it legally binding upon the Members of the Assembly, or was it rather a moral appeal to individuals, a gentlemen's agreement to respect the terms of the draft resolution?

2. He would also like to be enlightened regarding the juridical value of the confirmation in operative paragraph 3. Would it make the current geographical distribution of the chairmanship of the Main Committees legally binding or not? If the intention was that operative paragraphs 2 and 3 would be legally binding, were there to be special rules along the lines of those contained in annex III of the rules of procedure? The Swedish delegation felt that those matters should be clarified before the Special Political Committee was asked to take a decision.

3. Mr. DAOUDY (Syria) said that his delegation shared the views put forward by the Czechoslovak delegation in its explanatory memorandum (A/3692 and Corr.1) in support of the inclusion of the item relating to the composition of the General Committee in the agenda of the twelfth session as a matter of urgency. It had accordingly become one of the sponsors of the original draft resolution introduced on that item (A/SPC/L.22). The amendments introduced by six Latin American countries (A/SPC/L.23) had been accepted by the representative of Ceylon on

behalf of the sponsors of the original draft resolution, which had now emerged in a revised and strengthened form (A/SPC/L.22/Rev.1).

4. There had always been a certain amount of discrimination against some geographical areas, more specifically Asia and Africa, in regard to the distribution of seats in the executive organs of the United Nations. It had been hoped that when more Asian and African countries were admitted the inferior position of Asia and Africa would be remedied. However the Powers which enjoyed a privileged position in the General Committee under the existing procedure opposed any change in that direction. It was difficult to justify the existing system under which Western Europe, consisting of only sixteen countries, held five of the seventeen seats on the General Committee. The Latin American group, comprising twenty countries, had only three seats instead of six, their due proportion; and the twenty-nine countries of Asia and Africa occupied only the same number of seats as the sixteen countries of Western Europe. At the previous meeting, the Indian representative had rightly stressed that representatives of specific geographical areas should be given an opportunity to speak on the inclusion in the agenda of items which affected them closely; yet the eleven Arab delegations had only one seat on the General Committee, despite the large number of Arab questions which had been brought before the United Nations in its twelve years of existence.

5. Some attempts had been made to justify the allocation of five seats to Western Europe on the grounds that France and the United Kingdom were also great Powers. The Syrian delegation was not opposed to the election of representatives of those countries, but it was opposed to a system of geographical distribution whereby some regions were not fairly represented. It had raised the same objection in the Fifth Committee in regard to equitable geographical representation in the Secretariat. <sup>1/</sup> It had no desire to deprive other delegations of their rights but it insisted that all regions should be given equal consideration.

6. Mr. RICHARDSON (Liberia) said that his delegation was one of the sponsors of the revised thirteen-Power draft resolution. It felt that the composition of the General Committee as provided for in rules 31 and 38 of the rules of procedure should be amended as suggested in the draft resolution in order to meet the need for balanced geographical distribution.

7. Mr. TABIBI (Afghanistan) said that the arguments in favour of the revised draft resolution were based on two simple principles; the principle of universality, which made the equitable geographical distribution of seats in the General Committee eminently desirable;

<sup>1/</sup>See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twelfth Session, Fifth Committee, 632nd meeting.

and the necessity for reflecting the recent increase in the membership of the United Nations, which was now nearly twice as large as it had been at the San Francisco Conference in 1945. If the General Committee were dominated by particular regional groups, difficulties would be created in regard to the work of the Assembly, which ought to reflect the views of all the Members of the United Nations.

8. During the past twelve years the nations of Asia and Africa had been under-represented in the work of the principal organs of the United Nations. The General Committee was in a sense the door to the General Assembly, and it was essential that all geographical regions should have an opportunity to express their views when the agenda of the General Assembly was adopted. The importance of proper representation in all the organs of the United Nations was recognized in the Charter of the United Nations. At the eleventh session of the General Assembly, the Sixth Committee had discussed in detail the question of revising the Statute of the International Law Commission in order to provide for a more equitable distribution of seats.<sup>2/</sup> He hoped that the Special Political Committee would take similar action in regard to the General Committee. In the circumstances, the revised draft resolution offered a very fair and proper solution, and the Afghan delegation would vote in favour of it.

9. Mr. BOGDAN (Romania) said that the basic requirement in regard to the composition of the General Committee was that it should be representative in character. The criteria to be applied in order to determine whether that condition was met should be objective and acceptable to all Member States. According to the Charter, the United Nations should be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations, and United Nations bodies in which not all Member States were represented should nevertheless serve the interests of all. In the case of the General Committee, balanced representation should, according to the Charter and the rules of procedure, be secured by equitable geographical distribution.

10. It was the practice of the United Nations to determine the major regions of the world on the basis not only of geographical proximity, but also of common interests and a common stand on the fundamental questions of international life. Thus, Eastern Europe meant those countries situated in the East of Europe which had adopted socialist régimes after the Second World War and had thus become an important factor in the promotion of international co-operation. Peace and security in Europe could not be ensured without the active participation of the socialist countries. It was only right, therefore, that the socialist countries of Eastern Europe should be adequately represented in United Nations organs, including the General Committee.

11. The numerical composition of the General Committee had not kept pace with the increase in the membership of the United Nations, which largely reflected the increased influence of the Eastern European States and the countries of Asia and Africa. The real point at issue, however, was not the size of the General Committee but the way in which the seats were allocated. There was no good reason to believe

that an increase of four or five in its membership would affect the General Committee's efficiency, but to give it a more representative character would increase its efficiency and that of the General Assembly as well. The exact number and allocation of the seats on the General Committee would, of course, have to be agreed upon by negotiation. If there was an agreement on the general principle governing the allocation, the number could easily be adjusted to the requirements of principle and practical efficiency.

12. The Romanian delegation would accordingly support the revised draft resolution, the result of extensive negotiations in which all viewpoints and interests had been taken into account, so that it enjoyed wide support in the Committee. In the circumstances, the suggestion that any change in the composition of the General Committee should be conditional upon the solution of the question of the Security Council's membership and should therefore be postponed was totally unwarranted.

13. Mr. SHAHA (Nepal) said that some delegations were opposed to enlarging the General Committee to a point at which it would become unwieldy, and others were opposed to any specific reference to geographical regions; nevertheless, all delegations were agreed that the General Committee should retain its representative character on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution of seats. His delegation did not believe that increasing the number of Vice-Presidencies of the Assembly to thirteen would make the General Committee too large.

14. In regard to the second point, he noted that other international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency had made specific reference in their statutes to geographical areas. The United Nations had grown considerably in recent years, and rules 31 and 38 of the rules of procedure ought to be amended in order to meet the changed situation.

15. The revised draft resolution took a fair and reasonable view of the claims of various geographical areas to representation on the General Committee, and the delegation of Nepal would support it.

16. Mr. ZARUBIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the question of the composition of the General Committee raised by the Czechoslovak delegation was very important. A number of decisions had been taken previously to increase the membership of the General Committee either permanently or temporarily. However, the principle of equitable geographical distribution had not been properly observed. Both the Charter and the rules of procedure provided that the executive organs of the General Assembly should be properly representative in character. The principle of equitable geographical distribution was one of the most important to be observed in organizing the work of United Nations bodies, including the General Committee.

17. In deciding the number of Vice-Presidencies of the Assembly, therefore, account should be taken of the just demands of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America to be fairly represented. The interests of the Eastern European countries in that respect should also be taken into account. Operative paragraph 2 of the revised draft resolution met that requirement. It was also appropriate to confirm, as

<sup>2/</sup>Ibid., Eleventh Session, Annexes, agenda item 59.

in operative paragraph 3, the established practice of electing the Chairmen of the Main Committees on the basis of geographical distribution. The Soviet delegation would support the revised draft resolution.

18. Mr. DE GAIFFIER D'HESTROY (Belgium) said that the revised draft resolution proposed that the membership of the General Committee should be increased to twenty-one. To increase it thus would be to alter profoundly, consciously or unconsciously, the structure of the General Assembly. In recent times there had been a strong tendency to approach the General Assembly rather than the Security Council with matters which were properly the concern of the latter. If the nature of the General Committee were changed as suggested in the draft resolution it would encourage that trend.

19. In view of the fact that the Special Political Committee had recently recommended the postponement of the question of enlarging the membership of the Security Council, there would not appear to be any need to act hastily in that regard. It was true that the Charter stressed the representative character of the principal organs of the United Nations from the geographical point of view. However, it did not define specific geographical areas or provide for a numerical balance. It could have done so, as did the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, but that agency was a technical body. The authors of the Charter had wished to retain the flexibility and the response to change which was desirable for a political organization. The adoption of the revised draft resolution could open the way to new interpretations of other important points in the Charter, and it would be most unwise to act without the most careful consideration. The General Assembly had twice supplemented the membership of the General Committee by *ad hoc* measures, which it was able to do in the absence of rigid provisions. The question was therefore not urgent, and the Belgian delegation strongly advised its postponement until after a decision had been taken in regard to the composition of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

20. Mr. VAN HOUTEN (Netherlands) recalled that the Committee had recently recommended (75th meeting) the postponement to the thirteenth session of the General Assembly of the three items of its agenda dealing with possible changes in the composition of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice. It was a wise decision; such items had to be thoroughly studied and their possible implications carefully weighed.

21. The current item, while relating to a less important organ of the United Nations, was nevertheless of considerable importance because its discussion might lead to the establishment of a precedent which might influence the future consideration of the composition of some of the principal organs of the United Nations, and that would be most undesirable. It would therefore be unwise to attempt to take a decision on so important a question in the short time remaining at the current session, especially as there were no compelling reasons for doing so. It would be better if such a decision were taken in connexion with the future settlement of the question of the composition of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

22. There were a number of considerations which

would have to be carefully examined. First, it was not certain that an increase in the membership of the General Committee would have a favourable effect on its work. Generally speaking, the smaller a group was, the more effectively it worked. While it had been argued that there should be an increase in the membership of the General Committee in proportion to the recent increase in the membership of the General Assembly, the real question was whether the existing ratio was inadequate. On that score, he agreed with the representative of Belgium that one representative in the General Committee for approximately ten Member States was a fairly reasonable ratio. The practice was already established of taking into account a certain geographical distribution in the election of the Chairmen of the Main Committees.

23. Secondly, while his delegation agreed that there was every reason for seeking adequate geographical distribution in the United Nations bodies, it would not support too rigid an application of that principle. There was quite a difference between a strict written rule and a rather flexible established practice.

24. In view of his delegation's position, he would not discuss at the present stage the various possibilities of changing the composition of the General Committee. If in the course of the debate it became clear that an increase was desirable, he reserved the right of his delegation to present its views on the extent of the increase.

25. Mrs. VON LOWZOW (Denmark) said that while her delegation was not opposed to the idea underlying the revised draft resolution it considered that thorough study would have to be given to the possible effects of an increase in membership on the work of the General Committee, which by its nature had to be carried out with the utmost expediency. Again, since any future change in the composition of the Security Council might be reflected in the distribution of the Vice-Presidencies of the General Assembly, she doubted the wisdom of dealing separately with the composition of the General Committee. Finally, it would be a mistake to take a vote on the question without first making a determined effort to secure the broadest possible agreement.

26. For those reasons her delegation urgently appealed to the members of the Special Political Committee to consider a postponement to allow time for further study and consultation. She reserved the right of her delegation to speak on the revised draft resolution, if necessary, at a later stage of the debate.

27. The CHAIRMAN observed that at the previous meeting it had been agreed that owing to pressure of time the general debate on the current item would be combined with the discussion of the draft resolution.

28. Mr. PLAJA (Italy) said that his delegation had recently voted (719th plenary meeting) for an increase in the membership of the Disarmament Commission, and had thus shown that it was not opposed in principle to enlarging the various organs of the United Nations. Although it had been rightly pointed out that no provision of the Charter, the rules of procedure or any pertinent resolution explicitly provided for the automatic enlargement of certain bodies in keeping with the increase in the number of Member States, his delegation felt that in certain cases enlargement might be desirable in order to facilitate wider participation by Member States in carrying out responsibilities pre-

scribed by the Charter and in order to ensure the representative character of the organs concerned. Moreover, there were other factors which had to be considered in each case. For example, in the case of the General Committee it was important to bear in mind the necessity of arriving at speedy decisions.

29. Before deciding in favour of a change, the Special Political Committee should be quite sure that the change would be for the better and not for the worse. The General Committee, as presently constituted, had adequately fulfilled its functions. In so delicate a matter, in which any change might have very serious political and functional consequences, prudence and careful study should take precedence over enthusiasm for innovations, although his delegation fully appreciated the underlying motives.

30. Furthermore, he failed to see the logic of hasty action on a question such as that of enlarging United Nations bodies. A few days earlier, the Committee had recommended deferring decisions on the enlargement of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice. It was true that there was a fundamental legal difference between the question of the enlargement of those bodies and that of the enlargement of the General Committee, since the former procedure would entail amendment of the Charter while the latter would not. From a logical and political point of view, however, all such questions were closely interrelated. Either there was a real need for enlarging United Nations bodies in order to make them more representative—in which case the Councils, as principal organs of the United Nations, should be the first to be enlarged—or there was no such need, in which case the argument for changing the composition of the General Committee fell to the ground.

31. The Italian delegation shared the view of those delegations which had suggested the postponement of any decision on the question under consideration. It therefore hoped that it would not be necessary to vote on the revised draft resolution. If the matter was nevertheless pressed to a vote, he reserved the right of his delegation to discuss the draft resolution in detail. At the present stage, he would limit himself to drawing attention to one flaw which would prevent his delegation from voting for the draft resolution in any case: it comprised a division of the world into regions which was full of implications. As the representative of a European country he could not but resent seeing Europe divided into two regions. In general, moreover, he felt that there was a great danger in any division of that kind. The purpose of the United Nations was to reconcile differences and not to crystallize, and even codify, the divisions which existed in the world, even though in practice they often had to be taken into account. Those divisions had not been catalogued in the past, and with good reason. To do so now would be to act contrary to the spirit of the United Nations.

32. Mr. MALILE (Albania) said that an improvement in the composition of the General Committee which allowed for a better geographical distribution and a more complete representation of the various political tendencies could in many cases facilitate the work of the General Assembly and reduce the need for prolonged discussion. With the admission of a large number of new Members, it was time to improve the representative character of the General Committee in

line with the relevant provision in rules 31 and 38 of the rules of procedure. That could most conveniently be done by increasing the number of Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly. The need for such a solution had already been indicated by the fact that at the eleventh session and at the current session an additional Vice-President had been elected on an *ad hoc* basis. The Committee should therefore recommend a definitive increase in the number of Vice-Presidents which would allow particularly for the principle of equitable geographical distribution. It was also necessary that the membership of the General Committee should reflect the various political tendencies of the membership of the General Assembly so as to ensure the necessary balance in the General Committee.

33. His delegation would vote for the revised draft resolution because it provided for a solution along the lines he had indicated.

34. Mr. AL-ASKARI (Iraq) said that his delegation fully supported the revised draft resolution because it would to some extent, although not entirely, meet the complaints of some Members on the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. It had been suggested that the matter should not be rushed. To his knowledge, the sponsors had arrived at their formula only after considerable deliberation and after consulting many of their colleagues. That formula did not tamper with the special position of the permanent members of the Security Council or with the existing practice in the election of the Chairmen of the Main Committees.

35. As to the grouping by various geographical regions in operative paragraph 2, all States Members knew in which of those regions they belonged, and the delegations from different regions which had prepared the revised draft resolution had raised no objections to the classification, which was purely geographical and not political. He therefore failed to see what valid objections there could be to the proposal.

36. Mr. HILL (Australia) said that the head of his delegation was engaged in consultations on the question under discussion, and his delegation found it rather awkward to have to discuss the revised draft resolution within the framework of the general debate. He might have to ask for the opportunity to present certain views at a later stage, because the draft dealt with some very important matters which would require mature consideration by Governments.

37. The proposed text was not very precise in its drafting. The second paragraph of the preamble implied that rule 38 of the rules of procedure provided for balanced geographical distribution in the membership of the General Committee, but the words "balanced geographical distribution" did not appear in rule 38. He also had some doubts about the wisdom of referring in operative paragraph 2 (a) to the "practice" of electing the five permanent members of the Security Council to the General Committee. There was a secret ballot and those members were usually elected, but he was not sure that that could be called a "practice". He could not agree with the Iraqi representative that the regions mentioned in operative paragraph 2 were purely geographical. He was most unclear as to the meaning of the fourth group, "Western Europe and other countries".

38. Mr. DE VAUCELLES (France) hoped that the revised draft resolution would not be put to the vote. His delegation would not be able to accept it for a number of reasons. He agreed with the view that enlargement of the General Committee would tend to slow down its work. If the principle were adopted that the size of that body had to keep pace with the increase in the membership of the United Nations, further enlargement would be necessary when additional Members were admitted.

39. Equitable geographical distribution was not so important in the General Committee as in the Security Council or the Economic and Social Council. The General Committee was only a procedural body and did not decide matters of substance. The more members in that Committee, the longer would be the time required for the inscription of items in the agenda and the greater the tendency to debate the substance of proposed items in the General Committee.

40. The representative of Australia had just mentioned the fact that rule 38 of the rules of procedure did not mention a balanced geographical distribution. In that respect the rule differed in terminology from Article 23 of the Charter, which dealt with the composition of the Security Council. It seemed to him that the authors of the rule, in referring only to the "representative character" of the General Committee, had had in view the necessity of ensuring representation from practically every group of countries without requiring that such representation should be commensurate with the number of countries in each group. Moreover, since any country which had a direct interest in the inscription of an item was invited to participate in the deliberations of the General Committee, he failed to see how the interests of any Member State could be prejudiced by not enlarging the General Committee.

41. His delegation was particularly opposed to the regional divisions enumerated in operative paragraph 2 of the revised draft resolution. In the first place, they would make for a rigidity which would prevent the correction of certain injustices, such as that which had occurred at the beginning of the current session when one of the new Member States which had received the required majority of votes in the Assembly had failed to be elected to the General Committee (679th plenary meeting). That situation had been corrected by the election of an additional Vice-President on an *ad hoc* basis (704th plenary meeting), a procedure which would be excluded by the proposal under consideration. If the purely regional approach were followed, situations would arise in which that approach would conflict with the wishes of the majority of the Assembly. On the other hand, if Members were allowed to vote as they pleased, the regional plan would be inoperable.

42. He was very puzzled by the term "Western Europe and other countries". It was obviously not a geographical term since it apparently included such countries as his own and Canada, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa. Nor, in view of the political differences among the countries concerned, could it be considered a political group. On the other hand, as Europe was a geographical entity, there was a case for considering it as a single region irrespective of ideological differences. Such a formula would be neither more nor less arbitrary than that currently proposed.

43. In that connexion he observed that the present division of Europe was deeply regretted by all Europeans. Although the division persisted, no European could agree that it should be ratified and as it were approved, in a resolution of the General Assembly. He urged his colleagues from Eastern Europe to request the deletion of the offending passage, which was an insult to the continent of Europe.

44. The Czechoslovak representative had said at the previous meeting that the proposal was necessary because some Members had in the past failed to abide by certain unwritten agreements. The adoption of the revised draft resolution would not, however, provide any additional safeguards. If adopted, it would be effective only so long as it represented the will of the majority of the Assembly and that majority could, if it chose, also ensure that an unwritten agreement was respected. From that point of view, there was no difference between an unwritten agreement and a resolution of the General Assembly.

45. Mr. LACHS (Poland) said that he interpreted the Charter references to the principle of equitable geographical distribution as placing on the Assembly the responsibility for ensuring that the composition of all organs of the United Nations, whether principal or subsidiary, was such as to reflect the relationships between States as they actually existed in the United Nations. That view was confirmed by rule 38 of the rules of procedure, which stipulated that the General Committee should be so constituted as to ensure its representative character.

46. Some representatives had suggested that the question of the composition of the General Committee should be linked with the question of amendments to the Charter, consideration of which had been postponed to the thirteenth session. He did not share their view; there was an essential difference between the structure and character of the subsidiary and principal organs of the United Nations and, in consequence, between the instruments which guided them.

47. Nor could he agree with the view that no decision should be taken on the composition of the General Committee at the current session, on the grounds that it must of necessity be hasty and might well be regretted later. The item had been on the agenda throughout the session, and no decision would be taken to which due consideration had not been given.

48. He had not been convinced by the argument that the proposed increase in membership would make for an unwieldy body, whose deliberations would be unnecessarily lengthy. The efficiency of any organ depended far more on the quality of its membership than on the number of its members. Moreover, the size of a body like the General Committee could not be considered *in vacuo*; it had to be envisaged in relation to the organs which it was designed to serve. The fact that the General Assembly had decided to enlarge the General Committee on *ad hoc* basis was proof that it considered the existing membership too small. If there was agreement that the General Committee was not large enough, it was a far sounder policy to recognize the fact by amending the rules of procedure than by taking a series of *ad hoc* decisions.

49. He did not feel that any special significance should be attached to the somewhat different wording used in Article 23 and Article 101 of the Charter and rule 38

of the rules of procedure to refer to what were in fact identical notions. The same idea was expressed in Article 9 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, which dealt with the composition of the Court, and in that instance the wording was very close to that of rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

50. He was personally convinced that the procedure hitherto followed in the election of the officers of the General Committee would not be affected if the revised draft resolution were adopted. A vote cast in contravention of the letter and spirit of such a resolution would not be invalid, but it would be a violation of a General Assembly resolution. Operative paragraph 2, which referred to the question of geographical distribution, would not, he believed, become part of the rules of procedure. It was rather in the nature of a directive by which Member States should be guided in taking decisions affecting the composition of the General Committee.

51. He was not prepared to discuss the division of Europe, to which the representative of France had alluded. Both the representative of France and the representative of Italy were well aware of the reasons for that division and the tendency to perpetuate it. It had been agreed on various occasions in the past that representatives of certain areas, not necessarily regional in the strict sense of the term, should have special consideration in the organs of the United Nations in respect of certain issues. The present case fell within that category.

52. Mr. KEATING (Ireland) felt that the debate had developed into a consideration of the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the creation of regional groups to implement that principle.

53. Ireland, both because of its geographical location and because of its history and traditions, had a great regard for the individuality of States. It did not feel that it belonged to any particular group, and found it hard to envisage any rational grounds for assigning States to particular groups. At the same time it realized that the idea of a notional region had been evolved in the United Nations for practical reasons connected with elections, and that it had proved generally acceptable.

54. His delegation equally sympathized with the contention that the admission of new Members to the United Nations called for a change in the composition of certain organs of the United Nations and the General Assembly, and appreciated that a failure to deal with the problem would engender illwill. Nonetheless his delegation, while appreciating the motives of the sponsors, had considerable doubts about the wisdom of the revised draft resolution, and feared that it contained the seeds of future misunderstanding.

55. The reasons the sponsors of the revised draft resolution had advanced to justify an enlargement of the General Committee did not appear in themselves to warrant the proposed increase in its size. What they appeared to call for was an alteration in its present rigid composition. His delegation was not convinced that greater efficiency would result from an enlarged membership; in fact, it felt that a committee of twenty-one would be too cumbersome and complicated for the work it had to do. It feared, too, that if the membership of the General Committee were enlarged States might seek office purely for

reasons of prestige; that, however, was less serious than the danger that General Committee, whose work was essentially practical and procedural, would be influenced by political considerations. Finally, if the membership of the General Committee were enlarged, it might appropriate some of the functions of the General Assembly. The position was entirely different in the case of the principal organs of the United Nations, where it was essential to have a wide representation, because of their great political and social importance.

56. If, on the other hand, the real objection to the current composition of the General Committee was the preponderant influence of the five Great Powers, it would surely be unwise to state in a resolution that they had a prescriptive right to re-election. That was a custom which the General Assembly need not follow unless it chose so to do, and it was surely simpler to alter that custom than to increase the membership of the General Committee to unwieldy proportions in order to counterbalance their influence.

57. He was at a loss to understand what criteria the sponsors of the revised draft resolution had adopted in their arbitrary division of the world into the four major regions which were listed in operative paragraph 2. While in some instances the grouping appeared to be based on geographical considerations, in others ideological considerations appeared to predominate. There also appeared to be a complete disregard of the interests of States which did not share the ideological views of the majority of States in the region in which they had been placed. The groupings also appeared to have been influenced by the exigencies of the immediate world situation, which might well have the effect of exacerbating tensions.

58. Group (iv) was certainly unrealistic, as it did not have any fundamental unity. Ireland itself had as many ties with peoples outside that group as with the peoples who were arbitrarily grouped together in it. To take another example, the peoples of Asia and Africa had been grouped together, although their geographical backgrounds were different. It might well be that in the future they would find that they had fewer common interests than at present. Those examples were sufficient to illustrate his doubts about the desirability of seeking to give concrete shape to the concept of an equitable geographical distribution in a draft resolution. His delegation objected in principle to any arrangement, including that of the unwritten agreement, which tended to give a prescriptive right to any country to election to office on grounds other than those of the needs of the Organization and the merits of the candidate. He hoped that the Special Political Committee would be able to find a solution which would prove more suitable as a secular norm than the present draft resolution.

59. Mr. AL-ASKARI (Iraq) said that both the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the International Court of Justice left Member States free to work out for themselves the geographical regions into which they divided themselves. They had in fact been doing so for a number of years, but that division did not necessarily mean that the members of a region, bound together by certain common ties, always voted in the same way on every issue. There was no compulsion for them to do so. The sponsors of the revised draft resolution were in no way responsible for the

groupings which appeared in operative paragraph 2, which had evolved naturally.

60. Mr. DE GAIFFIER D'HESTROY (Belgium) wished to know whether the Committee felt it would be necessary, if the revised draft resolution were adopted, to draft new rules of procedure to ensure its implementation. That would present insuperable difficulties, as was shown by the experience of the Preparatory Commission of the International Atomic Energy Agency in attempting to deal with the same question. He felt it might be more satisfactory, as the representative of Poland had suggested, to regard the proposal in operative paragraph 2 of the revised draft resolution as a directive by which Member States should be guided in taking decisions as to the composition of the General Committee, and to forward it to the General Assembly

as a report from the Special Political Committee. Such a procedure might prove acceptable to those members of the Committee who felt unable to accept the revised draft resolution as it stood.

61. Mr. DE VAUELLES (France) pointed out that the group "Western Europe and other countries" in operative paragraph 2 of the revised draft resolution bore no relation to the facts. The European group, which did exist, had never held caucuses with the Commonwealth countries, the United States or any other countries. The expression "Western Europe and other countries" was an invention of the sponsors of the revised draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 6.5 p.m.