



(Closing Meeting)

Wednesday, 11 December 1957,  
at 10.40 a.m.

**NEW YORK**

**CONTENTS**

	Page
Agenda item 68:	
Question of the composition of the General Committee of the General Assembly (concluded) . . . .	187
Completion of the Committee's work . . . . .	189

**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.2) (concluded)**

1. Mr. URQUIA (El Salvador) recalled that at the previous meeting his delegation had stated that it was prepared to agree to reasonable amendments to the first revision of the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.22/Rev.1). The second revision (A/SPC/L.22/Rev.2), which was subsequently distributed to the members of the Special Political Committee, had included some changes, but it retained the main features of the first revision intact, and the Salvadorian delegation had therefore voted for it.

2. It was gratifying that the Committee had adopted the draft resolution by a significant majority. Some delegations which had voted against the draft might change their minds before it was submitted to the General Assembly for approval, which would enable an even more substantial majority to be obtained.

3. He would like to draw attention to an oversight in paragraph 1 of the annex to the second revision (A/SPC/L.22/Rev.2), which concerned the distribution of Vice-Presidencies. Previously that matter had been dealt with in operative paragraph 2 (b) of the first revision (A/SPC/L.22/Rev.1) which had read: "The remaining Vice-Presidents to be selected from four major regions of the world...". The annex to the second revision referred to four "representatives" from Asian and African States, of one "representative" from an Eastern European State, and so on. The election of Vice-Presidents was of course an election of States, not of individuals. The United Nations had always followed that very sound practice, and he did not think it had been the intention of the sponsors of the draft resolution to make any change in that respect. He would therefore ask the Chairman to consult with representatives to see whether the report of the Special Political Committee could refer to that point and the draft resolution be amended accordingly.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that the question would be cleared up in the report of the Committee.

5. Mr. KURA (Turkey) observed that several representatives had emphasized the importance of the func-

tions of the General Committee of the General Assembly; its composition could have a direct bearing on the work of the General Assembly, which played an important part in the maintenance of international peace and security. The composition of the General Committee called for the most careful examination, and any solution reached in haste might do harm. Moreover, there could not be unanimous agreement on the draft resolution submitted, since the criteria chosen to ensure an equitable geographical representation were inadequate and took no account of the position of countries which did not entirely fit into one or other of the regional categories mentioned. The draft resolution was therefore not satisfactory to all countries and that was one of the reasons why the Turkish delegation had abstained during the vote.

6. There was almost unanimous agreement on the increase in the number of Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly. The Turkish delegation had always favoured the principle of a proportional and equitable geographical representation in the various organs of the United Nations. It had therefore not voted against the draft resolution, which to some extent satisfied that requirement. It would support any proposal to increase the number of members of the General Committee and thus help to provide an equitable geographical distribution without drawing excessively arbitrary distinctions between the regions. Given time and due reflection, the Committee could have worked out a suitable formula.

7. Mr. KAKITSUBO (Japan) explained that in the absence of any other solution his delegation had voted for the draft resolution on practical grounds. The draft, if adopted by the General Assembly, would serve to obviate the confusion experienced at the beginning of each session because of the rivalry between the various regional groups over the election of the members of the General Committee.

8. It was questionable, however, whether it was a good idea to follow a rigid pattern in the matter of geographical distribution. According to rule 105 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, account should be taken, when Chairmen of Committees were elected, not only of equitable geographical distribution but also of the experience and personal competence of the officers. If the geographical distribution proved inequitable, the Vice-Presidents were then chosen on the basis of countries rather than of persons. To establish rigid criteria for the distribution of seats in the General Committee would be to curtail the flexibility allowed under the rules of procedure.

9. Furthermore, the method of election envisaged for Chairmen of Main Committees did not correspond to the present composition of the General Assembly. Thus a country of the Asian-African region would have less chance than another country to have one of its

representatives elected to the chairmanship of a Main Committee. Nevertheless, the Japanese delegation did not propose an alteration of those arrangements, which were in line with current United Nations practice. Besides, it had to be remembered that even if the result of an election for Chairmen and Vice-Presidents failed to conform to the geographical criteria established, the elections would not therefore be regarded as null and void.

10. The Japanese delegation wished to emphasize that it had voted for the draft resolution with the foregoing considerations in mind and on the assumption that the increase in the membership of the General Committee would not interfere with its work.

11. Mr. PLAJA (Italy) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution, not because it was opposed to any widening of the composition of the General Committee but because it considered that the question should have been more thoroughly examined with a view to finding a solution acceptable to all.

12. There were several points in the draft resolution which the Italian delegation, for its part, could not accept. In the first place, there was the distinction between Eastern and Western Europe. In point of fact, such a distinction did not correspond to any geographical reality. Moreover, according to the recommendations of the General Assembly contained in resolution 684 (VII) and which figured in annex II of the rules of procedure, whenever any Committee contemplated making a recommendation for the adoption by the General Assembly of any amendment to the rules of procedure, the matter should be referred to the Sixth Committee for advice. In the case in point, the Special Political Committee had not followed the recommendations of the General Assembly. Finally, as the Salvadorian representative's pertinent observation showed, if the question had been studied more carefully, the Committee would have been able to prepare a draft resolution with a more satisfactory wording.

13. Mr. FRAGOSO (Portugal) said that he had voted against the draft resolution, not because his delegation was opposed to the membership of the General Committee being enlarged but because he considered the text of the draft to be unsatisfactory.

14. Mr. VOGT (Norway) said that the composition of the General Committee deserved more time for consideration and called for consultation between delegations, which had not been possible. The sponsors of the draft resolution had undoubtedly done their best to submit a text which would be acceptable to the majority, but slips such as those mentioned by the representative of El Salvador showed how hastily the draft resolution had been discussed and adopted. In dealing with so important a question as the composition of the General Committee, such haste was particularly regrettable. Consequently, the Norwegian delegation had felt itself obliged to vote against the draft resolution.

15. Mr. MACKAY (Canada) said that in the general debate his delegation had stated that it was not in favour of election to the General Committee on the basis of a rigid classification by geographical areas. He regretted that owing to the haste with which the draft resolution had been put to the vote and adopted his delegation had had no opportunity for considera-

tion and consultation with other delegations. His delegation believed that the proposed system would make the United Nations less workable and tended to defeat the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. In addition, Canada objected to being classified in the group of Western European and other States. Canada belonged to the British Commonwealth of Nations, a group of independent countries and not a bloc, and it had a right to expect the sponsors of the draft resolution to take that fact into account. They had not done so, and Canada had found itself incorporated against its will in the Western European group. For that reason, the Canadian delegation had voted against the draft resolution.

16. Mr. HILL (Australia) said that he had voted against the draft resolution because it gave no consideration to the group of States making up the Commonwealth, although the importance of that group was universally recognized.

17. Mr. MALOLES (Philippines) said that his delegation was in agreement with the principle of increasing the membership of the General Committee, but considered that the question should have been studied more thoroughly in view of the consequences any decision might involve. The Philippine delegation hoped that, before the question was submitted to the General Assembly in plenary, those delegations which had voted in favour of the draft resolution would reflect on the importance and consequences of the decision they had taken.

18. There was one legal point to which the Philippine delegation wished to draw the Committee's attention. Provisions regarding the election of the thirteen Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly were contained in an annex to the draft resolution adopted by the Committee. The annex would not be incorporated in the amendment which it was proposed to make to the rules of procedure, so that it would not constitute a provision of those rules; yet it would have the effect of determining the application of two provisions of the rules. The draft resolution adopted by the Committee had legal implications which should be carefully studied. The question might be asked whether the application of the resolution could be controlled by an annex, and also whether an annex which did not appear in the rules of procedure but which amended certain provisions of those rules had any validity. Moreover, the adoption by the Assembly of such a resolution might establish a dangerous precedent.

19. Since the Committee was proposing to recommend to the Assembly the adoption of an amendment to the rules of procedure, under annex II of those rules it should refer the question to the Sixth Committee, and likewise under annex II it should consult the Sixth Committee on the other main legal aspects already mentioned. He therefore proposed that the question should be referred to the Sixth Committee before being submitted to the General Assembly in plenary.

20. The CHAIRMAN said that the Sixth Committee had concluded its work a week previously, and consequently could not be consulted on the point in question.

21. Mr. CAVALIERATO (Greece) said that his delegation recognized the need to increase the number of Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly in order to ensure a more equitable representation in the General

Committee. However, the increase in the number of members of the General Committee as proposed in the draft resolution adopted seemed excessive. Furthermore Greece believed that the geographical distribution of the membership of the General Committee should continue as an agreed practice rather than as a rigid rule. Accordingly the Greek delegation had abstained from voting on the draft resolution.

22. Mr. DAOUDY (Syria) said that he wished to make a few remarks regarding the report of the Special Political Committee on the item entitled "Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East", although the discussions on that subject were closed. He recalled a precedent of that nature in the Fifth Committee.

23. The CHAIRMAN said that such practice would be contrary to established usage in the Political Committees in accordance with which Rapporteurs' reports were not discussed during Committee meetings, although observations could be submitted regarding them in plenary meetings. However, if the representative of Syria insisted, he was prepared to give him the floor.

24. Mr. DAOUDY (Syria) said that the joint draft resolution on the question of the Palestine refugees in the Near East (A/SPC/L.21) had been revised in the light of objections raised by the Arab States. Paragraph 7 of the report of the Special Political Committee (A/3776) simply mentioned that a joint draft resolution (A/SPC/L.21) had been submitted at the 76th meeting, and that a revision of that draft (A/SPC/L.21/Rev.1) had been submitted at the 78th meeting. Paragraph 8 of the report recorded that the revised draft resolution had been adopted at the same meeting. The report did not mention that the revision had been undertaken following upon complaints made by the Syrian representative on behalf of the host countries. He asked that the report should make mention of his speech in that connexion at the 76th meeting on behalf of the Arab countries in such a way as to give a more faithful account of the discussions which had taken place.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that the observations made by the representative of Syria would be committed to the record.

### Completion of the Committee's work

26. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) paid tribute to the Chairman for the efficient way in which he had directed the Committee's difficult work.

27. Mr. DAOUDY (Syria), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of the other Arab States, expressed his appreciation to the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur, and thanked all staff members of the Secretariat for their collaboration.

28. Mr. URQUIA (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the countries of Latin America, Mr. DURAISWAMY (Ceylon), speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth countries, Mr. FRAGOSO (Portugal), Mr. CAVALIERATO (Greece), Mr. KIDRON (Israel), Miss SMYTHE (Liberia), Mr. PLAJA (Italy), Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. DE GRIPENBERG (Finland), speaking on behalf of the countries of Northern Europe, Mr. MALOLES (Philippines), Mr. ULLRICH (Czechoslovakia), speaking on behalf of several Eastern European countries, Mr. WASHINGTON (United States of America), Mr. DE LUNA (Spain), Mr. MAKIEDO (Yugoslavia), Mr. SAPOJNIKOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking also on behalf of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Mr. MITRA (India), Mr. KURA (Turkey) and Mr. MUMTAZ ALI KHAN (Pakistan) associated themselves with the expressions of appreciation and thanks.

29. Mr. DOBRYNIN (Under-Secretary) thanked the Chairman and the members of the Committee on behalf of the Secretariat.

30. The CHAIRMAN thanked the other officers and the members of the Special Political Committee as well as the staff members of the Secretariat for their co-operation, which had enabled him to complete his task.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.