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MEETING**

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Chairman: Mr. Charles T. O. KING (Liberia).

AGENDA ITEM 62

Question of the consistent application of the principle of equitable geographical representation in the election of the President of the General Assembly (A/4182, A/SPC/L.39)

1. Mr. KURKA (Czechoslovakia) explained the reasons which had prompted his Government, in agreement with the Governments of other socialist countries, to propose the inclusion in the Assembly's agenda of the item under discussion. The principle of equitable geographical representation was one of the fundamental principles on which the United Nations was based. A direct expression of the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States, it applied equally to all organs and functional offices of the United Nations; and its consistent application was the basic pre-condition for the normal operation of United Nations organs, whose representative character it ensured. However, since the establishment of the United Nations, that principle had been systematically flouted in the election of the President of the General Assembly. Since 1945, representatives of all the geographical areas except Eastern Europe had several times held in turn the office of President of the General Assembly. His Government's intention had not been to propose the inclusion in the agenda of a controversial question. It wished only to put an end to the discrimination to which the countries of Eastern Europe were being subjected. The existing state of affairs was incompatible with the role played in the world by the socialist States and with the principle of the universality of the United Nations. The discrimination practised against the countries of Eastern Europe in the election of the President of the General Assembly and the opposition which had been offered to the candidature of their representative for the vacant seat on the Security Council—a seat which, under Article 23 of the United Nations Charter and the gentleman's agreement reached in London in 1946, was their rightful due—were among the regrettable survivals of "cold war" methods which impeded progress in international

co-operation and detracted from the Organization's authority and prestige.

2. It was time the United Nations took steps to remedy that situation. The shortcomings connected with the practice followed in electing the President of the General Assembly had not been removed even after the adoption of resolution 1192 (XII) on the composition of the General Committee, which resolution at the same time indicated the principles which should govern the election of the President of the General Assembly. His delegation believed that the application of the principle of equitable geographical representation, which was compulsory in the election of the Vice-Presidents, should be observed consistently in the election of the President. Accordingly, Czechoslovakia and Romania had submitted a draft resolution (A/SPC/L.39) which would confirm that that principle should be applied consistently also in the election of the President of the General Assembly, and recommend the order in which the different regions of the world should be represented in the Presidency of the General Assembly for the four years to come, the next Presidency being allotted to Eastern Europe. That was a perfectly fair suggestion, considering the situation which had prevailed up to the present. After the four years had elapsed, the question could be reviewed, particularly since the membership of the Organization would meanwhile have increased. In his delegation's opinion it was essential that the post of President of the General Assembly should be filled by a candidate nominated by the countries of the region in question. The imposition of the candidatures of representatives who did not belong to that region—as had recently occurred in the Security Council—should not be permitted; such methods could only poison the atmosphere and cause mistrust between Member States. It was self-evident that the choice of a candidate must to a large extent be determined on the basis of the qualifications required by a President of the General Assembly if he was to perform his high office successfully.

3. His delegation hoped that its proposal would be fully supported by all delegations. Confirmation of the principle laid down would guarantee respect for the interests of all geographical regions and reflect the spirit of the Charter. A number of delegations had dealt with the matter during the Assembly's general debate, and the Ethiopian representative, in particular, had emphasized (817th plenary meeting) the advantages which would accrue to the Organization from the consistent application of the principle. His delegation hoped that a satisfactory solution could be found—a solution which would promote co-operation among Member States and increase the effectiveness of the Organization's work. It would be prepared to consider any proposals which might be made to that end.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.