

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 195th
MEETING**

Wednesday, 9 November 1960,
at 11 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 23:</i>	
<i>Question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council (continued).</i>	99

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 (A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1-3, A/SPC/L.52 and Add.1-3) (continued)

1. Mr. ITURRALDE CHINEL (Bolivia) said he was glad that it was not yet necessary to set up the committee provided for in General Assembly resolution 1404 (XIV). Bolivia had consistently worked for the enlargement of the Councils as the just and logical consequence of the growth of the United Nations and the only way in which the newly-admitted countries could be fairly represented. Although one permanent member of the Security Council refused to ratify the necessary amendments until the People's Republic of China was represented, there was no reason why the Assembly should not take the first step and adopt the amendments by a two-thirds majority. The draft resolutions before the Committee (A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1-3 and A/SPC/L.52 and Add.1-3) which Bolivia had co-sponsored, set a time-limit of three years for their ratification. During that time, circumstances might change, and the objection to the amendment might be withdrawn.

2. The redistribution of existing seats would be illogical, because there were too few to give any group proper representation; it would be unjust, because it would deprive some countries of seats to which they had acquired a right; and it would be at variance with the principles of the Charter, because it would lead to disputes and resentment. The Latin American countries would never give up their seats.

3. The moment had come to decide on the amendments by a democratic majority and to make the United Nations truly universal.

4. Mr. PACURARU (Romania) recalled that the problem before the Committee reappeared on the agenda year after year, and the reason in his opinion was that methods proposed for dealing with it concentrated on certain isolated aspects of the question only. The trouble was that there was a great divergence between the United Nations and the world outside the walls of its Headquarters. The inalienable rights of China, a founding Member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, were not yet recognized, because of the domination exercised by the United States. In spite of fundamental

changes in the international situation and in relative world strength, the Powers belonging to the Western military alliance, led by the United States, had an unfair preponderance in all United Nations organs, in all the specialized agencies and in the United Nations administration.

5. The present structure of the United Nations and its organs was detrimental, not only to the socialist and neutral countries, but to the achievement of the United Nations' essential task, which was the settlement of the great unsolved or disputed problems in a spirit of peaceful coexistence, taking into account the interests of all existing groups of States.

6. The existence of three groups of States—the socialist countries, the neutral countries and the countries of the Western military alliance—was a fundamental fact of our time. To ignore it was to escape into a world of dreams.

7. There were two courses open to the United Nations today. The United Nations could remain an expression of the preponderance of the Western military alliance, in which case it would be utterly incapable of solving the problems it faced; or it could take what the Romanian delegation considered the obvious course and make the necessary changes, so that the United Nations and its organs would accurately reflect the present world situation and ensure the equitable representation of the interests of the three main groups of States in the present-day world.

8. Such changes would require deep and radical measures, since partial measures would in fact only perpetuate the present situation. In that respect the Romanian delegation considered that one of the essential problems was the recognition of the rights of the Chinese People's Republic. The composition of the United Nations organs must also equitably reflect the existence of three groups of States in the present world, and the membership of the Security Council, and of the Secretariat, the executive organ of the United Nations, was most important for that purpose.

9. The Romanian delegation thought that if the United Nations did not start out from those basic facts, any recommendation could only perpetuate the present situation. The two draft resolutions before the Committee were examples of hypocritical and harmful proposals which could only set up new obstacles to the normal working of the United Nations.

10. The real reasons for the Committee's difficulties in discussing the problem of the structure and organs of the United Nations were the blind United States policy of persistent violation of the legal rights of China, and the United States' efforts to keep its preponderance in the United Nations. The procedural device proposed during the discussion—settlement of the question of the amendment of the Charter by means of a resolution adopted by the mechanical

majority—would set a dangerous precedent, and the Romanian delegation hoped the Committee would avoid it.

11. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ (Ecuador) recalled that ever since the eleventh session his delegation^{1/} had persistently urged the adoption of measures to enable the newer Member States to participate effectively in the work of the United Nations.

12. That could be done in two ways: by redistributing the existing seats on the two Councils, or by amending the Charter so as to increase the number of seats. The proposed redistribution would be unfair to the older Members and by reducing their representation would deprive the United Nations of their experience and the contribution they had been making. Furthermore as equitable geographical distribution would in any case not provide for representation exactly proportionate to the number of Member States in each area, the difficulty of securing agreement on the redistribution proposal might well prove to be even greater than that of securing agreement on the other proposal.

13. The Charter of the United Nations was not sacrosanct. Treaties such as the Charter should be flexible, and should be adapted to the facts of life. That idea was behind the demand for an amendment of the Charter, which would not impair the position of the older Members and seemed to offer the only just means of satisfying the desire of the newly-admitted Members for adequate representation in the Councils. It would be still easier to amend the Charter if it were remembered that amendments could be approved by two-thirds of the General Assembly without the affirmative vote of the permanent members of the Security Council. At the ratification stage the concurrence of all the permanent members of the Security Council would be required and, although one of them had indicated clearly its opposition to the proposal, the States concerned, and especially the great Powers, would have ample time before then to consider the matter in the light of the General Assembly resolution, the pressure of the new States of Africa and Asia and any new political developments which might have occurred in the meantime, and it might then be possible to obtain ratification of the necessary Charter amendments.

14. He appealed to the members of the Committee not to let the item become yet another cold war issue which could only aggravate the tensions besetting the world.

Mr. Gamboa (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

15. Mr. SULEIMAN (Sudan) said that in the view of his delegation the United Nations was intended to be a dynamic organization capable of responding to the changes inevitably taking place throughout the world. The fact that since the inception of the United Nations its membership had almost doubled was a striking example of that process of change; and it called for a corresponding increase in the number of members of the principal organs, particularly the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The argument that major structural changes in the United Nations as a whole were imperative and that the

question of the representation of China had yet to be settled, should not be allowed to deprive the new Members of their rights. They were, after all, not responsible for the exclusion of the People's Republic of China; in fact his own Government was a consistent supporter of its claim to membership. The desired increase in the composition of the Councils would, however, in no way affect that claim or stand in the way of any major structural changes. He hoped that the five permanent members of the Security Council would concur in the requisite Charter amendment, if only out of deference to the clearly expressed wishes of the majority.

16. Mr. SCHELTEMA (Netherlands) recalled that his delegation had pleaded at earlier sessions for swift action to increase the membership of the two Councils in order to keep pace with the ever-growing membership of the United Nations, since undue delay would eventually hamper the functioning of the whole Organization. With the admission of seventeen new Members the question was more urgent than ever. The draft resolutions before the Committee offered a solution which clearly had the support of the two-thirds majority required for adoption in the Assembly. His delegation felt strongly that the Assembly should not allow a minority to block for purely political reasons a practical measure that would be to the advantage of all Member States. If the force of persuasion was brought to bear on that minority it might well reconsider its stand. The suggestion that instead of voting on the draft resolutions the Committee should leave it to the permanent members of the Security Council to reach agreement among themselves was unacceptable, for the problem was one which had an important bearing on the position of all countries as equal Members of the Organization and on their right to be heard and to participate in the functioning of the United Nations. They could never let such a problem be decided by a small group.

17. An increase in the membership of the Economic and Social Council was particularly urgent, since that organ dealt on a continuing basis with problems of immediate concern to all countries. An increase in the membership of the Security Council was less urgent; if, therefore, political considerations were to be allowed to block an increase in either of the Councils it should be the political body rather than the body which was engaged in trying to improve conditions of life for peoples everywhere.

18. To accept the suggestion that in view of the difficulties involved in expanding the membership of the Councils the existing seats should be redistributed would be tantamount to appeasement of the USSR delegation at the expense of the overwhelming majority. His own country could not agree that the region of which it was a part would be sufficiently represented by a permanent member of the Security Council which happened to be located in the same geographical area. Moreover, as one of the countries which provided capital and technical assistance for economic and social development, the Netherlands had a right to representation just as the receiving countries had. The way to make the Economic and Social Council more effective was not to decrease the participation of the highly-developed countries but to increase that of the countries in the process of development. Accordingly he requested that the name of his delegation be added to the list of sponsors of

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

the first draft resolution (A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1 and 2) before the Special Political Committee.

19. Mr. DA COSTA (Portugal) said that the remarkable increase in the membership of the United Nations over the past fifteen years made it necessary to expand the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. His delegation could well understand the desire of the new African and Asian States to have an opportunity of participating actively in the work of both organs, and they should be enabled to do so as quickly as possible. The Portuguese delegation was of the opinion that in the case of an increase in the number of members of the Economic and Social Council to twenty-four, and were the number of members of the Security Council appropriately increased, the new Members would have an equitable representation without making the Councils unwieldy. A reallocation of the existing seats, on the other hand, would not only be unfair to the older Members but would not solve the problem. There are evidently other means of arriving at a fair solution of the question. The draft resolutions before the Committee embodied constructive proposals, and his delegation would support them. This is a question on which all were agreed and it could be rapidly solved in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. Any other considerations which did not directly concern that problem were merely of secondary importance. He therefore joined in the appeal to the key delegations to reconsider their positions.

20. Mr. TOWNSEND (Peru) said that Peru had always been in favour of universality of membership of the United Nations and of the principle of the sovereign equality of Member States. It also supported the logical consequence of the large increase in membership, namely the expansion of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and had therefore co-sponsored the two draft resolutions before the Committee.

21. He deeply regretted that outside considerations had been allowed to frustrate the move to provide the new African and Asian Members with adequate representation in the two principal organs. The problem of the representation of China was entirely separate from the question at issue and the one should not be made conditional upon the solution of the other. Some speakers had advocated taking the line of least resistance and reallocating the existing seats on the two Councils in order to secure increased representation of the African and Asian States. Peru felt that such a course would be misguided and unjust. The only adequate solution was to enlarge the two bodies. To compel certain of the groups now represented in the Councils to renounce their acquired rights would be no remedy; it would leave the position of the great Powers intact and reinforce the disparity that now existed between the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council.

22. The Committee had heard a number of doctrinaire statements on proposed changes in the structure of the United Nations, including the Secretariat. The United Nations was a living and growing organism. Its structure in 1945 had been in keeping with the realities of the time. Since then, its Membership had widened until it had become almost universal. A strong egalitarian trend had also made itself felt, and there was even a move to give permanent seats in the Security Council to other major regions of the world.

At the same time the Soviet Union, which had argued that the world was divided into three blocs, capitalist, socialist and neutralist, was insisting that that division should be reflected in the structure of the Organization. If such a division existed, it was a temporary phenomenon. It would be a mistake to perpetuate the antagonisms of the cold war by embodying them in the structure of the United Nations, contrary to the principles upon which it had been founded. Moreover, such a tripartite system would raise insoluble practical difficulties. The uncommitted countries would inevitably be harmed thereby. The world could be divided on more logical lines than the Soviet Union had suggested, for instance into developed and under-developed countries, nuclear and non-nuclear Powers, or countries which were capable of instigating a war and countries which would be its victims; but all such divisions were equally sterile.

23. The proposal was especially incongruous in regard to the Secretariat. The proposal that the Secretary-General should be replaced by a committee of three, representing the three blocs, completely disregarded the principle of the impartiality of the Secretariat and contravened the provisions of Article 100 of the Charter. The Peruvian delegation agreed that the Secretariat should be open to all Members of the United Nations and that the African and Asian States should be more strongly represented. However, one of the best immediate ways of promoting the interests of all Members of the United Nations would be to amend the Charter so as to increase the membership of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

24. Mr. MOHALLIM (Somalia) said that as a newcomer to the United Nations, Somalia had a very direct interest in the problem under discussion. Not only was it the inalienable right of all Members to participate on an equal footing in all the Organization's activities, but it was also in the United Nations own interests to keep pace with the changing realities of the world.

25. He could not agree that there was any connexion between the question of the representation of China and the proposal to increase the membership of the two Councils. Even if the exclusion of the People's Republic of China as asserted was unjust, it was not sufficient reason for discriminating against other nations. No objection had been raised to the proposal on its merits, and the wisest course would be to adopt it without delay. Even if the necessary amendments to the Charter were adopted at once and a start made on the process of ratification, there would be considerable delay before they came into effect; and Africa and Asia had already waited a long time for proper representation.

26. Pending the enlargement of the two Councils to secure fair representation of all interests, there were pressing reasons in favour of a temporary reallocation of seats to provide for the more equitable representation of the new Members, for their own benefit and for the benefit of the United Nations itself, since the problems of the under-developed countries figured so prominently on their agenda. The chief argument against the reallocation of the existing seats was the vested interests of the older Members of the United Nations. That argument overlooked the basic purpose of the original allocation, which had been to ensure equitable geographical representation

of the membership as it stood at that time. The proposed redistribution would not permanently deprive any region of its right to be represented; it would simply give the new Members the opportunity of serving on the two Councils, pending the adoption of the necessary amendments to the Charter and their ratification by the permanent members of the Security Council. His delegation fully recognized that the problem could only be solved ultimately by an increase in the two Councils. Accordingly, it had co-sponsored the first draft resolution (A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1-3) and it would also support the second draft resolution (A/SPC/L.52 and Add.1-3).

27. Mr. SHAHA (Nepal) said that despite general agreement that the African and Asian States were under-represented in the principal organs of the United Nations, and despite the wide-spread desire to secure justice for them, no positive results had been achieved. When the United Nations was first founded, it had been weighted in favour of Europe and the Americas, because much of Asia and most of Africa was still under colonial rule. The world had changed overwhelmingly since that time. Scores of countries and millions of people in Africa and Asia were now independent and anxious to make their voices heard in the United Nations. It was in the interests of the international community as a whole that those new forces should be guided into constructive channels through association with the principal organs of the United Nations, particularly the Economic and Social Council.

28. The founders of the United Nations had been aware that the world situation would not always remain unchanged, and for that reason Article 109 of the Charter provided for a Charter review conference. The question of convening such a conference had twice been shelved on the grounds that the international climate was not propitious. Now, the prospect of holding a review conference and amending the Charter was more remote than ever because of the deterioration in international relations. One way of coping with the situation would be to redistribute the existing seats. However, even those States which were in favour of more equitable representation for Africa and Asia, shied away from the notion of changing the present arrangement.

29. The African-Asian Members were showing a great sense of responsibility in not resorting to bloc voting, even on a question which affected them so directly. Their forbearance should not be interpreted as a sign of weakness. The Nepalese delegation felt that no immediate gain could be expected from the adoption of the draft resolutions in view of the announced opposition of the Soviet Union. Practical results could only be achieved through a common understanding between the great Powers, in deference to the legitimate wishes and demands of the African-Asian States.

30. The proposal to establish a good offices committee would bring no immediate benefit to the African-Asian States, unless the permanent members were willing to come to an agreement in such a committee at the present session. The alternative was a direct appeal to the great Powers to show consideration for the growing demand of the African and Asian States for immediate equitable representation in the Economic and Social Council, which was chiefly concerned with their problems as under-developed countries.

31. The African and Asian States could not be accused of any ulterior motive in trying to expand the Economic and Social Council. The question of their representation in the Security Council might be said to fall into a different category. It had political considerations and the Soviet Union's objections were valid. The Organization could not be said to represent all Asia when the 650 million inhabitants of the People's Republic of China were excluded. The position of Nepal on that point was well known.

32. He appealed to the permanent members of the Security Council to make every effort to reach an understanding. It was in the United Nations own interest that the African and Asian States should be adequately represented as soon as possible in all its organs and in the Economic and Social Council in particular.

33. The CHAIRMAN announced that Austria wished to join the list of co-sponsors of the first draft resolution (A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1-3) before the Committee.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.