



Twenty-first session

WORK OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES DURING THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In his closing statement at the 1501st plenary meeting, on 20 December 1966, the President of the twenty-first session of the General Assembly, referring to the work of the session, said that he had requested the Chairmen of the Main Committees to provide detailed statements on the work of their respective committees and that, if they did so, these statements would be circulated as official documents in order to make available a more elaborate assessment of the work of the Assembly at its twenty-first session.
2. In compliance with the President's request, the Secretary-General has the honour to communicate to the Members of the General Assembly the letters received by the President of the Assembly from the Chairmen of Main Committees.

A. LETTER DATED 20 DECEMBER 1966 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE FIRST COMMITTEE

[Original: Spanish]

With reference to your letter of 1 December 1966, I have the honour to inform you that, as Chairman of the First Committee, I made the following statement on Saturday, 17 December 1966, when the Committee completed its work; the purpose of the statement was to summarize the most important aspects of the Committee's work during the twenty-first session of the General Assembly:

"Now that we have completed the work assigned to this Committee, I should like to draw up a balance-sheet of what we have accomplished. I think I can safely say not only that the record of our work is a favourable one but that we have provided a practical basis for substantial progress towards the achievement of peace.

"Our work began with the achievement of virtually unanimous agreement concerning an undertaking by the great Powers to refrain from any action which might hamper the conclusion of a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. As we all know, the negotiations in this regard hold out great hope for the preparation of a treaty to prevent an increase in the still limited number of countries whose arsenals contain weapons of mass destruction.

"We have completed our work by adopting the text of a treaty on the peaceful uses of outer space. The importance of this treaty lies in the fact that it is not only a negative agreement requiring the parties to refrain from certain actions but also a positive instrument providing for international co-operation in the exploration and study of outer space - that outer space whole silence, as Ambassador Seydoux has reminded us, struck terror to the soul of Pascal - and in providing free access to all regions of the heavens which are still unknown to us.

"Having begun our work with an agreement dealing with one of the most immediate dangers facing the world, namely the proliferation of nuclear weapons, we have concluded by approving a treaty which removes any possibility of what might have been a terrible future danger, namely that fire and blood would, as in Biblical times, rain down from the heavens upon a terrified world.

"We have, to be sure, had explosively controversial items before us, but it has been possible, through patient negotiation, to find constructive solutions to even those questions. One example is, in my opinion, the item on the implementation of the Declaration on non-intervention, on which, after lengthy debate, we were able to adopt a resolution by a nearly unanimous vote.

"I take great satisfaction in saying that the work of the Committee has proceeded in an atmosphere of exceptional co-operativeness. The discussion of some items was inevitably heated and even impassioned, but when one recalls that there have been sessions at which this Committee devoted more than two weeks to a single procedural matter and that on some occasions there have been more than one hundred points of order, it can be stated that moderation has been the keynote of our work. This spirit of co-operation has greatly facilitated the work of the Chair, and I wish to express my sincere gratitude for that fact."

(Signed) Leopoldo BENITES V.
Chairman of the First Committee

B. LETTER DATED 16 DECEMBER 1966 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE SECOND COMMITTEE

[Original: English]

With reference to your letter of 1 December 1966 asking for a brief statement of the Second Committee's achievements at the present session, I have the honour to transmit to you the following:

The work of the Second Committee at this session could perhaps be divided into three general categories: new institutional arrangements, review of continuing programmes and activities, and planning for the future.

A. New institutional arrangements

1. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

In the first category, the spotlight was taken by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The Assembly, having decided unanimously at the last session to establish UNIDO as an autonomous organization within the United Nations, left to the present session the task of completing its structure and organization. The Second Committee and the Assembly were able to accomplish this task, again unanimously. The decision to locate the headquarters of the Organization in Vienna and the election by the General Assembly of the members of the Industrial Development Board were the final touches, so to speak, to the launching of UNIDO. It is our sincere hope that the new organization will provide a much-needed impetus to the work of the United Nations family in this most vital field for economic development.

2. United Nations Capital Development Fund

Again, in the category of new institutional arrangements the Second Committee recommended, and the Assembly decided, to "bring into operation the United Nations Capital Development Fund ... as an autonomous organization within the United Nations". Unfortunately, in this case the sharp division of opinion again persisted and a consensus decision was not possible. We have to await the results of the pledging conference, to be held during the next session of the Assembly, before we can have firm grounds for optimism about the future of this fund, which

has been under consideration for some fifteen years. The acute problems of financing for economic development, and in particular the absence of progress towards achieving the targets of the present Development Decade, is undoubtedly at the root of the impatience of developing countries and regardless of the institutional set-ups will continue to receive urgent attention from the Assembly. The Assembly has endorsed and put its full authority behind the Economic and Social Council resolution on this subject, which in several important aspects constitutes a landmark in the efforts of the Organization in this central area for development.

B. Review of continuing programmes and activities

1. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

In the second category, that of on-going programmes and activities, the report of the Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) topped the list of items before the Second Committee at this session. Two general and dominant preoccupations were reflected both in the report of the Board and the deliberations of the Committee, namely, the disappointing lack of progress thus far in the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the first session of UNCTAD of 1964, and preparations for the second session which the Assembly decided to convene in New Delhi in February 1968. One thing is clear - UNCTAD, a mere two years after its establishment, already occupies a most important place in international efforts to create a new world economic order with particular attention to the ever-pressing needs of the developing countries. Needless to say, a great deal depends on the preparations for and the results of the forthcoming session of the Conference. The five resolutions adopted by the Assembly on the recommendations of the Second Committee fully reflect this awareness.

2. The United Nations Development Programme and the United Institute for Training and Research

The Committee was able to review the activities of the United Nations Development Programme after one year of the merger of its two components. It also reviewed the encouraging progress of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

3. Other programmes and activities

Again in the category of review of on-going programmes and activities, unanimous decisions were recommended by the Committee on such important subjects as food aid, natural resources, population growth, and the World Campaign for Universal Literacy.

C. The future

1. General review

The Committee, after prolonged discussions, also decided that a general review be undertaken of programmes and activities of the entire United Nations family in the economic, social, technical co-operation and related fields through the enlarged Committee for Programme and Co-ordination of the Economic and Social Council.

2. Charter for development and planning

The Committee, fully aware of the general and frustrating lack of progress during the past few years, was unanimous in its view that better and more concerted efforts are needed for the periods following the present Decade, that the time has come to begin evolving these plans and that the lessons we have learned in the first period be fully applied in the future. The two resolutions we have adopted under the Development Decade item have already launched preparations for a two-pronged attack in the seventies and onward - an international charter for development and a fully co-ordinated programme of action both at the national and international levels.

3. Permanent sovereignty over natural resources

The near unanimous resolution on the subject of permanent sovereignty over natural resources will definitely contribute to the basic foundation of these important plans for the future.

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I wish to point out, Mr. President, that despite the fact that the agenda of the Committee this year was specially long [twenty items], containing some of the most difficult and long-standing subjects, the Committee was able to deal with all the items without deferring any of them to the next session of the Assembly. This successful conclusion was brought about primarily because of your effective leadership and guidance, the full co-operation I was able to receive from the members of the Committee and the unfailing assistance, at all times, of the members of the Secretariat. The Committee was able to hold a total of eighty-five meetings compared to sixty-six last year. Thus, the Committee was able to take unanimous or near unanimous decisions on such difficult questions as population, general review and permanent sovereignty over natural resources which were deferred from the last session.

Looking to the future, there are definite grounds for optimism. It is true that the problems we face in the field of development are enormous; it is equally true that our progress towards the solution of these problems has been painfully slow, but the third dimension - the growing realization in and outside the United Nations that this state of affairs must not be allowed to continue if mankind is to avoid disaster - represents a bright ray of hope.

(Signed) Moraiwid M. TELL
Chairman of the Second Committee

C. LETTER DATED 15 DECEMBER 1966 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE THIRD COMMITTEE

[Original: English]

I am writing this in response to your letter of 1 December 1966 in which you asked me to provide you with a brief statement of the Third Committee's achievements.

The most important achievement of the Committee was the completion of the draft International Covenants on Human Rights, which have been before the General Assembly since 1952. I have already indicated to you in my letter of 8 December all that need be said about the Covenants.

Because the Committee spent fifty-two meetings on the Covenants it was unable to give as much attention as it should have to the other items on its agenda. We will, I hope, finish consideration of at least nine of the twelve items referred to us, postponing three items to the next session of the General Assembly. We have adopted a number of resolutions unanimously and most of the others with large majorities.

Apart from the Covenants, we adopted two important resolutions on the question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including policies of racial discrimination and segregation and of apartheid, in all countries, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories. These resolutions not only dealt with the particular problems arising out of the question, including an appeal to the Security Council urgently to take effective measures with a view to eradicating apartheid in South Africa and other adjacent territories, but the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights were also asked to give urgent consideration to ways and means of improving the capacity of the United Nations to put a stop to violations of human rights wherever they may occur.

We have adopted a draft resolution relating to the world social situation, giving significant and essential guidelines for the work of the United Nations in the social field.

We have recommended that the General Assembly take note of the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees submitted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which provides that equal status should be enjoyed by all refugees

covered by the definition in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, irrespective of the date-line of 1 January 1951 fixed by the Convention, and request the Secretary-General to transmit the Protocol to States concerned to enable them to accede to it.

Although at the time of writing we have not considered the item on the International Year for Human Rights, the Third Committee is likely to recommend further measures connected with the observance of that Year in 1968 concerning the organization of the International Conference on Human Rights to be held in that year.

In conclusion, I should like to say how hard the Committee has worked in what amounts to a record number of nearly ninety meetings, and to note with great satisfaction the co-operative spirit which has prevailed among the members of the Committee throughout the session.

I should also like to add, Mr. President, my highest appreciation and gratitude to you for all your co-operation and kindness in carrying out our work.

(Signed) Halima WARZAZI
Chairman of the Third Committee

D. LETTER DATED 20 DECEMBER 1966 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE FOURTH COMMITTEE

[Original: English]

At the twenty-first session, the Fourth Committee was faced with a crowded agenda which included a number of highly complex questions. Further, the Committee decided to give separate consideration not only to the more intractable colonial problems, but also to many other individual dependent Territories which, despite their special circumstances, had not until the twentieth session received separate treatment.

The Committee's programme of work as indicated above thus placed a great strain on its resources and entailed a heavy schedule of meetings, including meetings at night and at week-ends. However, with the co-operation extended by members in this regard, the Committee was able to consider and adopt resolutions indicating in concrete terms the measures and modalities required in specific Territories for the attainment of the objectives laid down in Chapters XI and XII of the Charter and in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

In view of the imminent accession to independence of Basutoland and Bechuanaland, the Committee took up the item relating to Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland as a matter of priority. Having regard to their geographical location and their economic situation, the Committee adopted recommendations addressed to the question of securing their territorial integrity and sovereignty and to the promotion of their economic development. In connexion with the question of South West Africa, the Committee heard a number of petitioners and submitted to the General Assembly a report thereon which represented an important contribution to the consideration and adoption of decisions concerning the question.

The question of Southern Rhodesia, which the Committee took up thereafter, engaged the close attention of the Committee at a considerable number of meetings. The Committee was gravely concerned at recent developments regarding Southern Rhodesia and at the failure of the measures taken by States, in particular the United Kingdom, to bring about any positive movement towards a solution of the problem in keeping with the aspirations of the people of the Territory. This

concern was reflected in the two draft resolutions adopted by the Committee on the question. In these draft resolutions, the Assembly reiterated its previous recommendations regarding the Territory and condemned the Governments of Portugal and South Africa for their support of the illegal régime. The Committee also repeated its recommendation to the Assembly that the United Kingdom Government should take all necessary measures, including the use of force, to put an end to the illegal régime and to ensure the immediate application of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

The situation in Aden was also the subject of extensive discussion and prolonged consultations. In its continuing concern to ensure the restoration of conditions of stability and peace, the Committee recommended that the Assembly should call upon the administering Power, inter alia, to abolish the state of emergency, to cease repressive activities and to establish full democratic freedoms. Moreover, the Committee gave special attention to the role to be played by the United Nations in assisting the people of Aden to attain their independence in peace and harmony. To this end the Committee recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Special Committee and the administering Power, to appoint a special mission to Aden for the purpose of recommending practical steps for the full implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. That the resolution embodying this request was adopted without objection was a development of particular importance and a tribute to the spirit of mutual accommodation which pervaded the discussions and consultations on this question.

The growing conviction held by the majority of members that the United Nations should play an increasingly large role in the process of decolonization also found expression in the Committee's consideration of and decisions regarding a large number of other Territories. As regards Fiji and the smaller Territories in the Caribbean, Indian and Pacific Ocean Areas, the Committee adopted draft resolutions which laid stress on the importance of visiting missions as a means of ascertaining conditions in these Territories and the views, wishes and aspirations of their inhabitants. With regard to French Somaliland, Ifni and Spanish Sahara and Equatorial Guinea, the draft resolutions adopted by the Committee pointed to the need for active participation by a United Nations presence in the processes involved in the exercise by the peoples of these Territories of their right to

self-determination and independence. In this connexion the majority of members were appreciative of the co-operation extended by the Government of Spain in inviting a visiting mission to Equatorial Guinea and its willingness to permit access to a mission to Ifni and Spanish Sahara.

As regards the Territories under Portuguese administration, the draft resolution adopted by the Committee reflected the deep concern of members at the refusal of the Government of Portugal to give effect to the right of self-determination and reaffirmed the need for action by the Security Council with a view to the implementation of previous United Nations resolutions. Noteworthy also in connexion with the Committee's consideration of this item was the emphasis placed on the contribution which international institutions, particularly the specialized agencies, could make to a solution of the problem. In this regard, the draft resolution renewed the Assembly's appeal to the specialized agencies and international relief organizations to increase their assistance to the refugees from these Territories and to people suffering from Portuguese military operations. It also appealed to the specialized agencies, and in particular to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund, to refrain from granting Portugal any financial, economic and technical assistance as long as the Portuguese Government failed to implement General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). To that end, and in the light of statements made at its invitation by a representative of the Bank and by the Legal Counsel of the United Nations, the Committee recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to enter into consultation with the Bank. In considering the Territories under Portuguese administration as well as the question of Southern Rhodesia, the Committee took account of the prominent role played in the economic life of these Territories by international economic and financial interests. In this regard the Committee registered in the pertinent draft resolutions its serious disquiet at the impediment represented by the activities of these interests in the way of the implementation of the Declaration.

Another category of problems with which the Committee was concerned related to Territories which were the subject either of conflicting claims to sovereignty or of special interest to some Governments by reason of geographical, historical, economic or other circumstances. Among these Territories were the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), French Somaliland, Gibraltar and Ifni and Spanish Sahara.

While the objectives of the Committee in relation to these Territories were the same, namely decolonization, the specific measures recommended took into consideration the peculiarities of each, with a view to the peaceful solution of divergent claims and interests within the context of the implementation of the Declaration.

That the recommendations of the Committee were each adopted by a substantial majority is testimony, not only to the wide consensus that exists among members with regard to problems of decolonization, but also to the efforts which the various groups of delegations made, in close consultation with one another, to give full expression to this consensus. In this context, it should be noted that these recommendations have served once again to underline the increasing concern of the United Nations at the delay in the implementation of the Declaration and constitute a constructive contribution to the realization by colonial peoples of their aspirations to freedom and independence.

Signed) FAKHREDDINE Mohamed
Chairman of the Fourth Committee

E. LETTER DATED 15 DECEMBER 1966 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE SIXTH COMMITTEE

[Original: English]

The Sixth Committee considered the reports of the International Law Commission on the second part of its seventeenth session and on its eighteenth session, and recommended draft resolutions which were adopted by the General Assembly as resolutions 2166 (XXI) and 2167 (XXI) of 5 December 1966. The first of these draft resolutions decides to convene an international conference of plenipotentiaries to consider the law of treaties on the basis of draft articles prepared by the International Law Commission, and to embody the results of its work in an international convention and such other instruments as it may deem appropriate. This resolution marks an important stage in the codification and progressive development of the law of treaties, which is one of the most important branches of modern international law. Relations among States are increasingly governed by treaties, both bilateral and multilateral, and a convention laying down the basic rules concerning the conclusion, observance, application, interpretation, amendment, invalidity, termination and suspension of treaties will have the greatest importance in clarifying the law in this field.

The Sixth Committee also considered the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and recommended draft resolutions which the Assembly adopted as resolutions 2181 (XXI) and 2182 (XXI) of 12 December 1966. The first of these resolutions, which reconvenes the Special Committee on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States, is a further stage in work which will lead to the adoption of a declaration by the General Assembly embodying formulations of seven fundamental principles of the Charter and of modern international law. Such a declaration will, as stated in the resolution, "constitute a landmark in the progressive development and codification of those principles". The second resolution under this item looks forward to a decision at the next session of the General Assembly on what further action may be appropriate on the question of methods of fact-finding, a question which has been before the General Assembly since 1963.

The Sixth Committee, with the assistance of a working group under the effective chairmanship of Mr. E.E. Seaton (United Republic of Tanzania) has prepared a draft

declaration on territorial asylum, on the basis of a draft submitted to the General Assembly by the Commission on Human Rights in 1960 and numerous proposals and amendments thereto submitted by Governments of Member States. This draft declaration will come before the next session of the General Assembly with a view to the final adoption of the declaration on this subject.

The Sixth Committee has submitted to the General Assembly a draft resolution on technical assistance to promote the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law. Under this resolution, when adopted, a programme of assistance will be put into operation in 1967 and following years. That programme, which will be carried out with the participation of UNESCO and UNITAR and, in 1967, with the generous assistance of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, should do much to achieve its objective of promoting wider knowledge, appreciation and observance of international law.

Finally, the Sixth Committee has also recommended a draft resolution which proposes the creation of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, which will have the function of promoting the progressive development of the law of international trade. This Commission, whose members will be elected at the next session of the General Assembly and which will meet in 1968, should promote international trade co-operation among States, which is an important factor for promoting friendly relations and consequently for the maintenance of peace and security. The creation of the new Commission opens a new chapter in the activities of the General Assembly which is comparable in scope to its decision in 1947 to create the International Law Commission.

(Signed) Bratislaw PECHOTA
Chairman of the Sixth Committee
