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**Chairman:** Mrs. Aase LIONAES (Norway).

**AGENDA ITEM 34**

**Draft Convention on Freedom of Information: report  
 of the Economic and Social Council (A/2181, A/2943,  
 chap. VI, sect. VI, paras. 673-675, A/3150, A/3589,  
 A/AC.42/7 and Corr.1, annex, A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1)  
 (concluded)**

1. Mr. PETER (Hungary) said that he had three general points to make before commenting on the Philippine draft resolutions (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1). First, if they were to be believed, the opponents of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information were all strong supporters of such freedom. It was surprising that some delegations, like that of the United States, which had participated in the preparation of the draft Convention, were now against not only the wording but the very idea of a draft Convention. They argued that what was needed was not a draft Convention but a freer flow of information. Those delegations, particularly the United States delegation, carefully avoided any allusion to the possible abuse of such freedom, when the dissemination of false reports and hostile propaganda became an international danger. They held that the standard to be maintained was that of the personnel of information agencies, and in that way they justified misrepresentation and distortion. If there was to be real freedom of information, the moral standard of those who disseminated news must be high; in the exercise of their profession they must accept limitations which must be stated clearly in the draft Convention.

2. Secondly, there could be no perfect and absolute freedom of information, as the United States representative claimed. Perfection was not of this world. It would be wiser to be more realistic. He himself had had personal experience of the lack of freedom of information in the United States of America. When, as Hungarian representative to the conference of the World Council of Churches held in the United States in 1954, he had wished to hold a meeting with the Press, it had been called off at the last moment on the instructions of the State Department. That was hardly absolute freedom of information.

3. Even supposing perfect freedom of information to exist, those who were responsible for disseminating news could not regard themselves as entitled to say what they wished, regardless of moral values. That view was shared by the Catholic Bishops of America, who were reported in a recent issue of the U.S. News & World Report to have stated that, because freedom of the Press was a basic right, it must be understood not as licence but as true and rational freedom. They had called attention to the danger of abuse and emphasized that freedom of expression could not be considered an absolute freedom. Thus, such freedom placed a moral responsibility on those who exercised it. The freedom of information for which the United Nations should strive would be in harmony with the moral principles laid down in the Charter: it could not countenance licence.

4. Turning to the Philippine draft resolutions (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1), he said that he had no objection to draft resolution A but considered that draft resolutions B and C were premature. Furthermore, draft resolutions B and C made no reference to the moral responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the dissemination of accurate information; it would be prejudicial to the prestige of the Organization if they were adopted.

5. Miss MacENTEE (Ireland) said that it was paradoxical that the United Nations, whose great force lay in public opinion, should fight shy of a radical study of the whole question of freedom of information. Her delegation therefore welcomed draft resolution A submitted by the Philippines (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1) and the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.661) to it. Her Government would be happy to submit its comments on the draft Convention (A/AC.42/7 and Corr.1, annex), which, after preliminary consideration, it was disposed to accept.

6. Her delegation had no objections to draft resolutions B and C, with the exception of the first paragraph of the preamble to draft resolution B. It could support that paragraph only on the understanding that the words "that the media of information have a more important role than ever before in strengthening friendly relations between peoples" were to be interpreted in only one way, namely, that the role could be discharged by those media solely by ensuring a free flow of accurate and undistorted information and that the words implied no licence to qualify or palliate the truth on the mistaken assumption that such distortion was in the interests of peace.

7. She was unable to grasp the usefulness of the United States amendment (A/C.3/L.662); unless the purposes of the proposed change could be clarified, she would support the original text.

8. Finally, she was strongly of the opinion that freedom of information should be kept under constant review by the United Nations.

9. Mr. ALDUNATE (Chile) said that, for the sake of ensuring the largest possible measure of agreement, he would not press the oral amendment he had proposed at the 832nd meeting, although he felt that there was an urgent need for some kind of permanent machinery to keep the United Nations informed of the situation with regard to freedom of information in the different countries. He hoped that the United Nations would eventually establish a permanent body to receive information regarding freedom of information, warn against abuses and take sanctions when necessary. There were financial reasons which militated against the immediate establishment of such a body, but he was convinced that it would eventually become one of the most important organs of the United Nations.
10. Replying to points which had been raised with regard to the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.661), he said that Governments which had already submitted the information in question would not be asked for a new report. It would suffice for them to mention the date on which their original report had been submitted. He emphasized the need for the information requested in his amendment. Many countries must have tackled the difficult problem of combining the maximum of freedom of information with the maximum of responsibility for those who exercised that freedom, and the methods they had used would be a subject of fruitful study. The information would be supplied entirely for information purposes.
11. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) said that the improvement of information media had made public opinion an important factor in world affairs. Full freedom of information was indispensable to the formation of a sound public opinion and he was therefore opposed to restrictions of any kind. It was true that freedom of information could be misused and that distorted news could be disseminated, but the way to cure that evil was not to introduce restrictions. On the contrary, the suppression of freedom of information promoted falsehood, as had been proved in Nazi Germany. If those who used the information media were imbued with a sense of their responsibilities, there would be no need for restrictions. The good resulting from real freedom of information outweighed the evil of its abuse in any case. Where the dissemination of malicious falsehoods could be proved, sanctions might be taken; the question would require careful study.
12. One important consideration was the inequality between the media of information at the disposal of the different countries; countries which were relatively ill-equipped in that field were sometimes unable to reply adequately to allegations made against them. Such a consideration would not, however, justify any interference with the free flow of information throughout the world. Greece had no powerful media of information but it was still a determined champion of freedom of information in the United Nations.
13. The United Nations should take constructive action in two main directions. First, it should strive to eliminate the inequality in information media by assisting the under-developed countries to improve theirs. Secondly, it should discourage the dissemination of false information by establishing a code of ethics for information personnel, by means of an international convention or a declaration, and explore the possibility of establishing sanctions for the dissemination of false information. The only real remedy was to raise the moral standards of the general public in every country by cultivating a respect for truth and a sense of responsibility. Education should therefore aim more at moulding character than merely at imparting information.
14. The Philippine draft resolutions (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1) were constructive; he would vote for them.
15. Mr. KLUTZNICK (United States of America) urged the Committee to give favourable consideration to the United States amendment (A/C.3/L.662). Although the United States delegation was opposed to the draft Convention for reasons which were well known, it was unequivocally in favour of any action which would promote freedom of information.
16. The Philippine draft resolutions (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1) were a step forward, particularly draft resolutions B and C. His delegation had reservations with regard to draft resolution A, however, which were connected with its general attitude to the draft Convention. Nevertheless, if the countries which had not previously given their views were in favour of it, his delegation would not oppose it.
17. Although his delegation supported the three draft resolutions and particularly draft resolution B, it had one reservation to make with regard to the first paragraph of the preamble of draft resolution B, which distinguished between the free flow of news and information in general and the free flow of accurate and undistorted news and information as a factor in maintaining international peace and understanding. His objection to the words "accurate and undistorted" was neither capricious nor arbitrary. All news should be accurate and undistorted. Unfortunately, there were probably no news or information which could be transmitted without some distortion, through human or mechanical limitations.
18. Referring to the Hungarian representative's remarks, he said that he had not avoided any allusion to the possible abuses of freedom of information. On the contrary, he had alluded to them specifically. Furthermore, he had never maintained that there could be perfect and absolute freedom of information. He did not wish to take up the Committee's time by a rebuttal of the other charges; it would suffice to say that they could all be disproved.
19. The ideal goal was to ensure the most ample possible flow of news and information so that individuals could judge for themselves. The undesirable course was to limit the free flow of information. For those reasons, the words "accurate and undistorted" involved certain assumptions: first, that completely accurate and undistorted information could be achieved, which was not true; and secondly, that one group of human beings was able to judge for another group what was accurate or distorted. The fundamental assumption was that the censor was infallible, which was obviously untenable. The words "accurate and undistorted" should therefore be deleted.
20. In a spirit of compromise, his delegation had proposed (A/C.3/L.662) the insertion of the qualifying clause "which is an essential basis for accurate and undistorted news and information" after the words "news and information". Although the proposed addition would make the wording a little cumbersome, it would place the dangers of distortion and inaccuracy

in a proper perspective. The amendment made it clear that accurate and undistorted information would follow from the freest possible flow.

21. As the Philippine representative had pointed out (832nd meeting), the General Assembly, in its resolution 127 (II), had invited States Members of the United Nations to study measures to combat, within the limits of constitutional procedure, the diffusion of false or distorted reports likely to injure friendly relations between States. To such a goal no exception could be taken and all delegations agreed that means should be found to achieve it; but to equate that with the freest possible flow of information might itself be regarded as a distortion. The resolution could not therefore be considered as a precedent for the wording used in draft resolution B. If the existing wording were accepted, without the United States amendment, it might be interpreted as authorizing the dissemination of pre-digested news, an interpretation which few countries now having freedom of information would be prepared to accept.

22. The reference to accurate and undistorted news and information in the first paragraph of the preamble to draft resolution C was in a different context, namely, that of the desirability of studying means of increasing the flow of such information. That was in harmony with resolution 127 (II) and his delegation did not object to it in that paragraph.

23. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that the desire for freedom was as old as time and an understanding of the responsibilities it involved nearly as old. The Ten Commandments were one expression of that dual conception of freedom and responsibility. Now that the world had become a small place, the abuse of freedom of information was harmful to the whole of mankind. It was immaterial whether freedom of information meant freedom of the Press only or something more: the important thing was to prevent the misuse of that freedom.

24. Some delegations felt that a draft convention might restrict freedom of information, but none was against the free flow of information in principle, provided that it was not distorted. Thus the supporters and the opponents of the draft Convention were really striving for the same goal: information that was really free from every kind of distortion and inaccuracy.

25. The reasons for opposition to the draft Convention were well known. The information media were used as vehicles for propaganda and propaganda had become an instrument in shaping the policy of States. The different means of distorting news for propaganda were too well known to need repeating. As a supporter of the draft Convention, he hoped that the views of the new Member States would agree with his own.

26. Education had been held out as the great remedy for misinformation, but there was no guarantee that it would eradicate the evil. In fact, literacy might merely render a population more vulnerable to penetration by distorted information. Furthermore, education could be used as a vehicle for indoctrination and there was no proof that education necessarily improved moral standards.

27. Society must be protected from the abuse of freedom of information. As it was governed by law in the

common interest, it was not unreasonable to suppose that standards could be set for information personnel which would ensure that they should use the media in their hands conscientiously and with a high moral purpose. The commercial advertisers sometimes appeared unprincipled in that they sought to influence the public, but they could do little harm compared with the distortion of ideas produced by inaccurate and tendentious information. Some delegations opposed the draft Convention because its entry into force would cause internal problems, but the countries which did not have such problems should not allow themselves to be discouraged by such opposition. He hoped that the discussion at the thirteenth session of the General Assembly would be a step towards the adoption of the draft Convention.

28. Turning to the Philippine draft resolutions (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1), he said that he would vote for draft resolution A without reservations; he hoped, however, that sub-paragraph (b) of the operative part would not be construed as meaning that the General Assembly might decide not to give priority to the discussion of the draft Convention. He would also vote for the preamble of draft resolution B, although he regretted that the wording was not stronger. He would vote against the United States amendment (A/C.3/L.662), as it would weaken the text still further. He would vote for operative paragraphs 1, 2 (a) and 3, and against paragraphs 2 (b) and (c) because he felt that the draft Convention should be given priority by the Commission on Human Rights. Although he could not vote for draft resolution C, he did not wish to oppose the wishes of those countries which felt that regional seminars would be useful and would therefore abstain on that draft resolution.

29. Mr. AÑEZ AÑEZ (Bolivia) said that freedom of information was dear to the heart of his Government, which, being democratic in nature, had nothing to hide from the public, inside or outside its country. All the independent newspapers, including those opposed to the present Government, were able to publish their views in complete freedom. To oppose freedom of information in any form would be contrary to the basic principle on which the national life of Bolivia reposed.

30. There was constant discussion of the question of freedom of information, because no solution had yet been found to the problem. Freedom of information did exist in some countries but only to a much smaller degree in many others. In the view of his delegation, there were two main obstacles to freedom of information: censorship and the pressure of private interests.

31. The Committee had been considering measures, including a draft Convention, to eliminate obstacles to the free flow of information but even if the Convention was adopted and enforced, the problem would not be entirely solved, as the influence of private interests would still be felt. It was understandable that a solution was difficult to find, as so many factors, including subjective factors, were involved; all that could be done was to trust to the honesty and good faith of the information personnel, but that of course varied greatly from country to country and from person to person.

32. Freedom of information was the goal to be sought, as accurate information enabled the peoples of different countries to know and understand each other and

their mutual interests and was essential to the building of a lasting world peace. Nevertheless, it could not be considered without taking the question of licence into account. Libel could be prosecuted but the laws were often inadequate, with the result that bodies and groups were open to unprincipled attacks from the Press.

33. There could be no doubt that the seminars proposed in draft resolution C submitted by the Philippines (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1) would cover that aspect of the matter and be useful in suggesting measures to ensure that the freedom of information should be exercised without licence. Although the draft resolutions were not entirely satisfactory, they dealt with some aspects of a fundamental human right which was fully respected in Bolivia. His delegation would therefore vote for them and for the amendments proposed by Chile (A/C.3/L.661) and the United States (A/C.3/L.662).

34. Mr. Di BERNARDO (Italy) said he would vote for draft resolution A submitted by the Philippines (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1) as a tribute to its author, although he was none too optimistic regarding its results, and for the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.661). He would abstain on draft resolution B, not because he was opposed to the measures suggested but because the Committee on Freedom of Information established by the Commission on Human Rights should not be overburdened with work before it had had a chance to complete its original task.

35. He was grateful for the favourable reception accorded to his suggestions (829th meeting) and at the next session of the General Assembly his delegation would consider the possibility of introducing a draft resolution on the dissemination of United Nations documents and information.

36. Mr. SAHNI (India) stated that he would vote for draft resolution A, provided that sub-paragraph (b) was interpreted as it had been by the Saudi Arabian representative. He would support the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.661), but felt that the words "or indirectly" should be omitted, since Member States would have enough to do to provide information on such of their laws as related directly to freedom of information.

37. He had some misgivings concerning the United States amendment (A/C.3/L.662) to draft resolution B. Not only was the resulting language clumsy, but the assumption that a free flow of news and information would result in accurate and undistorted news and information was scarcely tenable; ten lies would not make one truth. He would have preferred the words "accurate and undistorted" which occurred in the Philippine draft to be replaced by the words "objective and factual", which had the advantage of being generally recognized by the journalistic profession and of being readily definable in law. Since he realized, however, that the suggestion came rather late in the day, he would vote for draft resolution B as it stood.

38. He would also support draft resolution C.

39. Mr. FOMIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that his delegation favoured the eventual adoption of the draft Convention of Freedom of Information. He had no objection to draft resolution A submitted by the Philippines, on the understanding that

its adoption would not constitute a reason for any further postponement of work on the draft Convention.

40. For the reasons he had given during the general debate, he was unable to support draft resolution B, and in particular asked for a separate vote on paragraphs 2 (b) and (c), which were entirely unacceptable.

41. He would abstain on draft resolution C because, while he had no objection of principle to the proposal it embodied, the Committee had not examined the matter with sufficient care to be able to take a considered decision on it.

42. Mr. LOPEZ (Philippines) accepted the suggestion, made by the Israel representative at the 833rd meeting, that the word "free" should be inserted between the words "the" and "flow" in the first paragraph of the preamble to draft resolution C (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1).

43. Although he had not accepted the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.661) to draft resolution A, he would be able to vote for it.

44. While he understood the motives behind the United States amendment (A/C.3/L.662), he thought that the wording was unhappy and he was therefore unable to accept it.

45. He emphasized that draft resolution B was intended to provide some programme of future work in the field of freedom of information in the event that the Committee should decide at the following session to discontinue work on the draft Convention on Freedom of Information. It was most important to keep the subject on the Committee's agenda.

46. He thanked all those who had made suggestions and proposed amendments to his draft resolutions and had thus improved the texts, the purpose of which was to help to remove the existing barriers to international amity and understanding.

47. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote successively draft resolutions A, B and C submitted by the Philippines (A/C.3/L.660/Rev.1) and the amendments to them.

48. Mr. de SILVA (Ceylon) asked for a separate vote on the words "directly or indirectly" in the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.661), to draft resolution A.

Those words were rejected by 27 votes to 19, with 19 abstentions.

The Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.661), as amended, was adopted by 44 votes to none, with 18 abstentions.

Draft resolution A, as amended, was adopted by 66 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

The United States amendment (A/C.3/L.662) to draft resolution B was rejected by 29 votes to 27, with 8 abstentions.

The first paragraph of the preamble to draft resolution B was adopted by 51 votes to 1, with 16 abstentions

Paragraphs 2 (b) and 2 (c) of draft resolution B were rejected by 32 votes to 16, with 18 abstentions.

Draft resolution B as amended, was adopted by 43 votes to 2, with 21 abstentions.

Draft resolution C, as modified, was adopted by 48 votes to none, with 18 abstentions.

49. The CHAIRMAN stated that the Committee had completed its consideration of the item.

### AGENDA ITEM 33

#### Draft International Covenants on Human Rights (A/C.3/L.663) (concluded)<sup>1/</sup>

50. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece), supported by Miss MacENTEE (Ireland) and Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq), considered that the discussion of the important question of the organization of future work on the draft International Covenants on Human Rights should not be conducted hastily and that a meeting should be held on the following day.

51. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee should conclude its work at the current meeting, as it was already behind schedule.

52. Mr. FOMIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), supported by Mr. BAHNEV (Bulgaria), suggested that the Greek representative should introduce the fourteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.663) and that the Committee should then decide whether or not it wished to adjourn the meeting.

53. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) moved the adjournment of the meeting.

The motion for adjournment was rejected by 27 votes to 16, with 18 abstentions.

54. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece), introducing the fourteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.663), stressed the importance of completing the draft Covenants, as an effective and practical step for the protection of human rights. In spite of all the academic support of human rights, nothing had been done by the United Nations since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and yet human rights were being continually and grossly violated throughout the world. One example of such violation, in Cyprus, was now being discussed in the First Committee of the General Assembly; it would be far better to examine such matters from the humanitarian point of view.

55. The Council of Europe had adopted procedural methods for preventing the violation of human rights and had put them into effect in certain cases. The United Nations could surely do likewise; its failure to act was inconsistent with the Charter and the Universal Declaration. He asked what explanation there could be for such indifference to the completion of the Covenants, which at the current rate of progress would not be finished for ten or twelve years. Moreover, the same indifference was shown to suggestions for interim measures pending the conclusion of the Covenants. His delegation had submitted a draft resolution on the subject at the eleventh session and it had eventually been adopted as General Assembly resolution 1041 (XI), which stated that the Committee should devote enough time to the Covenants to be able to complete them if possible by the end of the thirteenth session. Only four articles had been adopted at the current session, however, and sixty-two remained. At that rate, it was hardly likely that the completion would coincide with the twentieth, let alone the tenth, anniversary of the Universal Declaration.

56. Resolution 1041 (XI) had been widely publicized. The millions of people who looked to the United Nations for protection of their human rights would be deceived if the Committee did nothing to expedite its work on the draft Covenants. Such a failure would shake the faith of the world in the Organization, which existed through that faith. The Committee must show consistency with its principles and a sense of responsibility in putting them into effect. If nothing was done to complete the Covenants within the time specified in resolution 1041 (XI) or a reasonably short time thereafter, the Greek delegation would reintroduce its draft resolution for interim measures to be taken with respect to violations of human rights.

57. The purpose of the fourteen-Power draft resolution was to call the attention of the General Assembly and the Secretariat to the matter, with a view to devising ways and means of completing the Covenants in accordance with the earlier resolution. A few alterations of the text had been suggested and accepted. The words "if possible" should be inserted after "draft Covenants" in the second paragraph of the preamble, and the phrase "otherwise than by curtailing the consideration of other items of importance on its agenda, particularly those relating to international respect for self-determination and freedom of information" should be added at the end of the operative paragraph.

58. Mr. THIERRY (France) observed that the drafting of the Covenants was going through a period of crisis and that the prospect of tangible results in a short time was not encouraging. There were two reasons for the crisis: problems of method and the substance of the Covenants. It was obvious that, from the methodological point of view, the drafting of international conventions by eighty-two participants was a long and difficult task. Similarly, while disagreement on the substance of the Covenants might be overcome by a will to compromise, as in the case of article 6 of the draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, some divergencies of opinion were more serious, as in the case of article 1 of both Covenants and of certain articles on implementation.

59. The methodological problems were not insoluble; some simple procedures for shortening the time allotted to the study of the articles might be devised. For example, the total number of meetings allocated for consideration of the draft Covenants might be subdivided in advance into the number required for certain articles, and a time limit might be set for statements. A remedy for substantive differences, however, was much more difficult to find. It should be sought primarily in the will to accept the universal nature of the Covenants, but that will to compromise and conciliate had unfortunately been lacking for years.

60. Mr. BRILLANTES (Philippines) pointed out that the third paragraph of the preamble gave the impression that only four articles of the seventy-four had been adopted by the General Assembly, and suggested that it should be made clear that those articles had been adopted by the Third Committee at the twelfth session.

61. With regard to the operative paragraph, he pointed out that the General Assembly could make recommendations only to its Councils and to Member States;

<sup>1/</sup> Resumed from 821st meeting.

it would therefore be more logical to replace the word "Recommends" by the word "Decides". It was also not clear when the appropriate steps were to be taken. If the Third Committee did not begin to take such steps until the thirteenth session, its work would be held up; it would therefore be better to request the Secretary-General to study the question between sessions.

62. He would support the fourteen-Power draft resolution, but hoped that the sponsors would take his comments into account.

63. Mrs. SHOHAM-SHARON (Israel) said that her delegation was in favour of any measures designed to expedite the completion of the draft Covenants, but felt strongly that the Committee should not adopt a meaningless draft resolution. According to her interpretation, the fourteen-Power draft provided that certain unspecified arrangements were to be decided upon at the thirteenth session of the General Assembly for discussing all the items on the Committee's agenda and also to complete the Covenants at that session. That course of action would be useless unless recommendations could be made in good time.

64. Secondly, she thought that the amendment to the operative paragraph might lead to neglect of certain agenda items in favour of self-determination and freedom of information. She therefore suggested that the proposed addition might be altered to read "otherwise than by curtailing the consideration of any other item on its agenda".

65. Mr. FOMIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed his delegation's concern at the delay in the completion of the draft Covenants, but considered that the fourteen-Power draft resolution was unsatisfactory in its existing form. He agreed with the Philippine representative that the third paragraph of the preamble gave an erroneous impression of the progress already made and pointed out that most of the articles adopted were substantive and had therefore required exhaustive discussion. It would not take so long to consider the articles on implementation.

66. Without going into details with regard to the special organizational steps to be taken, he said that his delegation required an assurance that the draft resolution was merely procedural and that it implied no prolongation of the Committee's session, the cost of which would be prohibitive. At that late stage, moreover, representatives could not vote for a proposal the implications of which were not clear.

67. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) accepted the Philippine representative's suggestion that the word "Recommends" should be replaced by the word "Decides" in the operative paragraph of the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.663) and that the words "by the Third Committee" should be inserted after the words "have been adopted" in the third paragraph of the preamble. He could not, however, accept the Israel representative's suggestion concerning the addition to the operative paragraph (see paragraphs 57 and 64 above). Self-determination and freedom of information had been singled out for special consideration during the session and the word "particularly" would eliminate the danger of excluding other agenda items.

68. He accepted the USSR representative's suggestion concerning the use of the adjectives "special organizational" instead of "appropriate" in the operative paragraph. He could not, however, state specifically

what steps would be taken. The purpose of the draft resolution was to show the Committee's awareness of the situation that had been created by its failure to take vigorous action. If the Committee did not wish to show its concern, it could reject the draft resolution.

69. Mrs. SHOHAM-SHARON (Israel) observed that procedurally the Committee was not in a position to decide what should be done at the thirteenth session, since each General Assembly was autonomous. The Committee could do no more than make recommendations.

70. Mr. QUENTIN-BAXTER (New Zealand) thought that it would be unwise at that stage of the session to consider such a radical innovation of General Assembly procedure as a proposal that one of the Main Committees should hold special sessions. He hoped that the sponsors would not insist on a vote on the fourteen-Power draft resolution.

71. The draft resolution could only mean that the Third Committee's sessions would be extended; there was no alternative, if the usual priorities were assigned to agenda items. Representatives had had no time to consult their Governments; his own would be appalled at the prospect of a prolonged session of one Committee, for it found it difficult enough to ensure adequate representation on the international bodies in which it participated. In those circumstances, which must apply to many delegations, the work of the special session could not be satisfactory.

72. The New Zealand delegation had long had some doubts about the course followed in discussing the draft Covenants. The Committee dealt with a few articles at a time, and it was not known in advance how many articles would be considered. It was surely unique for an international treaty to be drawn up at successive sessions over many years; and there must therefore be some doubt about the quality of the finished product. Nevertheless, the annual discussions served a very useful purpose by making possible exchanges of views about fundamental human rights. If the primary aim of the Committee was to express and lead world opinion, it need grudge no time spent in working for the acceptance of common standards. If, on the other hand, the main aim was to complete a treaty embodying standards already generally accepted, it would be more usual to entrust the task to a special conference.

73. He agreed with the Israel representative that it was inadvisable to stress the importance of any agenda items. It was the Committee's duty to examine the social aspects of the work of the Economic and Social Council; if it failed to do so, the General Assembly itself would be failing to carry out its terms of reference.

74. Mr. EL-FARRA (Syria) thought that some of the difficulties that had arisen in connexion with the third paragraph of the preamble to the fourteen-Power draft resolution might be removed by altering the last phrase to read "while sixty-two are still pending".

75. Mr. FOMIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the Greek representative for his explanation of the purpose of the fourteen-Power draft resolution. The USSR delegation would be able to vote for the text, on the understanding that the decision merely consisted in studying the steps to be taken at the

thirteenth session of the General Assembly and that no direct or indirect obligations were entailed.

76. Mr. HANCKE (Norway) said that, although his delegation was concerned at the slow rate of progress towards the completion of the draft Covenants, he shared the New Zealand representative's views concerning the danger of adopting a resolution without thorough study. The discussion had been useful and would undoubtedly yield valuable results. He appealed to the sponsors not to press for a vote on their text, but to agree that it should be included in the Rapporteur's report.

77. Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) said she sympathized with the motives of the draft resolution and did not consider that it would have a detrimental effect on the Committee's work with regard to other social aspects of the Economic and Social Council's activities. Nevertheless, she did not feel that the Committee had had sufficient time to discuss the draft fully and agreed with the Norwegian representative that the sponsors might withdraw their proposal, on the understanding that it would be recorded in the report.

78. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece) asked for a brief suspension of the meeting, to enable the sponsors to consult together.

The meeting was suspended at 7.20 p.m. and resumed at 7.25 p.m.

79. Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece), speaking on behalf of the sponsors of the fourteen-Power draft resolution, stated that they had agreed to withdraw their draft, on the understanding that the Rapporteur's report would contain the text of the proposal and a full account of the debate. His delegation was glad that it had raised the issue and had thus drawn the attention of the General Assembly and the Secretariat to such an important matter. The Committee's obliga-

tions had thus been stressed; it would have been irresponsible to remain silent.

### Completion of the Committee's work

80. The CHAIRMAN stated that the Committee had completed its agenda.

81. Mr. COLOMA (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of a number of Latin American countries, expressed their gratitude to the Chairman for the calm, wise and impartial manner in which she had conducted the debate, to the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur for their invaluable assistance, and to the Secretariat for its devoted efforts, all of which had enabled the Committee to accomplish its work in a spirit of harmony and mutual understanding.

82. Mr. THIERRY (France), speaking on behalf of several countries of Western Europe, Mr. FOMIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. ROSSIDES (Greece), speaking for Greece and Yugoslavia, Mr. OWEN (United States of America), Miss FUJITA (Japan), Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia), speaking on behalf of several Arab countries and Portugal, Mrs. AFNAN (Iraq), Mrs. SIMONOVA (Czechoslovakia), speaking on behalf of several countries of Eastern Europe, Miss ADDAE (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth countries, Mr. HAMZAVI (Iran), Mrs. SHOHAM-SHARON (Israel), Mr. ASIROGLU (Turkey) and Mrs. JONES (Liberia) associated themselves with those remarks.

83. The CHAIRMAN thanked the various delegations for the kind words they had addressed to her and for their friendly co-operation during the session, and associated herself with the tributes paid to the Vice-Chairman, the Rapporteur and the Secretariat.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.