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General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 9 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE

(Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The CHAIRMAN thanked the members of the Committee for his election, which was also a tribute to Uganda. He invited the Committee to elect its two Vice-Chairmen and its Rapporteur, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.
2. Mr. FLEMING (Saint Lucia) nominated Mr. Posso Serrano (Ecuador) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
3. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should not proceed to a secret ballot at the current meeting.
4. Mr. Posso Serrano (Ecuador) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.
5. The CHAIRMAN, noting that there had been only one nomination for the two offices of Vice-Chairman, suggested that the Committee should postpone the election of the other Vice-Chairman until the next meeting.
6. It was so decided.
7. Miss DAPUL (Philippines) nominated Mrs. von Heidenstam (Sweden) for the office of Rapporteur.
8. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the absence of other nominations, the Committee should not proceed to a secret ballot.
9. Mrs. von Heidenstam (Sweden) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/45/1; A/SPC/45/L.1)

10. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the recommendations concerning the organization and rationalization of the work contained in the report of the General Committee (A/45/250 and Add.1). In view of the current process of renewal and reform and the practice followed at previous sessions, the Assembly had decided that the forty-fifth session would recess on 18 December 1990 and close on 16 September 1991.
11. As had been stressed by the Assembly, punctuality was of the utmost importance. The Committee was scheduled to meet a maximum of seven times per week. According to information provided by the Secretariat, the Special Political Committee had, during the previous session, lost more than 14 hours or the equivalent of five meetings. Although that represented a significant improvement over the forty-third session, it was essential that all representatives should be punctual so that the Committee could begin its work on time. The Committee should note the decision adopted by the General Assembly to waive, during the current session, the application of rule 108 of the rules of procedure

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regarding the quorum. It was understood that such a waiver did not in any way imply a permanent change in the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure and that, in accordance with those rules, the presence of a majority of members was required for any decision to be taken.

12. With respect to meetings, any extension of more than 30 minutes should be requested 24 hours before the meeting, and any additional meetings required would probably have to be held on Saturdays.

13. In accordance with the recommendation in annex V of the rules of procedure, he intended to close the list of speakers on each item when one third of the meetings allocated to the item had been held. Members wishing to make statements should place their names on the list kept by the Secretariat and would be called on to speak in that order. Once the list had been closed, any changes in the order could be made only by mutual consent between two delegations which had agreed to exchange places on the list. Otherwise, any representative not ready to speak when his turn came would be placed at the end of the list. In accordance with the practice established by the Committee and the recommendation approved by the General Assembly, representatives wishing to exercise the right of reply should inform the Secretariat, which would keep a list of replies to be heard by the Committee. If the same item was discussed at two meetings on the same day, delegations would exercise their right of reply at the end of the second meeting. The General Assembly had decided to limit to two the number of statements by any delegation in exercise of the right of reply, the first to be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes. Explanations of a vote should be limited to 10 minutes in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly. When the same draft resolution was considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, delegations should, as far as possible, explain their vote only once, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless their vote in plenary meeting was different from their vote in the Committee.

14. In order to facilitate the work of interpretation and the drafting of summary records, speakers should provide the conference officer with 15 copies of their prepared statements and 300 copies if they were also to be distributed to delegations, specialized agencies, observers and other parties concerned.

15. The General Assembly had drawn attention to regulation 4.9 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, which stipulated: "No Council, Commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving either a change in the programme budget approved by the General Assembly or the possible requirement of expenditure unless it has received and taken account of a report from the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the proposal." The Assembly had noted that it was imperative that Main Committees should allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by ACABQ and the Fifth Committee. The General Assembly had imposed a deadline of 21 November for submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions having financial implications, and had decided that a minimum period of 48 hours should elapse before the submission of and the voting on any proposal involving expenditure, in order to allow the

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Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications. Delegations were urged to keep those decisions in mind.

16. With respect to the very expensive item of documentation, and in light of the decisions of the General Assembly, he appealed to the delegations to limit as much as possible their requests for additional documents and duplicate copies of material already distributed. Similarly, they should bear in mind that, owing to financial constraints, overnight processing of documents was not always possible.

17. As in the past, the Special Political Committee would have summary records. Moreover, the General Assembly had once again approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Special Political Committee should be authorized to receive, on specific request, transcriptions of the debates of some of its meetings, or portions thereof. Those transcriptions, which were not part of the official records of the Committee, did not entail any extrabudgetary expense as they were prepared by verbatim reporters and typists from the tapes when the staff concerned were not otherwise occupied. Consequently, they appeared at a later stage than the summary records. The requirement that summary records should be distributed simultaneously in all the official languages had often led to delays in their distribution. Because of financial constraints, such delays were still liable to occur. It was therefore proposed to distribute summary records in the language in which they had originally been prepared, namely, English, French or Spanish, as soon as they were available. The other languages would follow immediately after they had been translated.

18. Delegations were asked to submit the names of their representatives so that a list of members of the Committee could be issued and to bear in mind the General Assembly's decision, taken at its thirty-eighth session, to prohibit smoking in small conference rooms, such as rooms 5 to 10 and A to E, and to discourage smoking in large conference rooms, such as rooms 1 to 4.

19. Referring to the organization of work, he drew attention to a letter dated 21 September 1990 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Committee (A/SPC/45/1) regarding the allocation of agenda items to the Special Political Committee. He also drew attention to document A/SPC/45/L.1, containing a provisional timetable for the work of the Committee. That timetable would have to be interpreted with the flexibility necessary to co-ordinate the Committee's work with that of the plenary Assembly and other bodies. In particular, the Special Political Committee would continue the close co-ordination with the Fourth Committee that had made it possible, during the previous three sessions, to avoid, as far as possible, holding concurrent meetings, on the understanding that such co-ordination would be carried out with flexibility to enable both committees to complete their work on schedule.

20. In the preparation of the programme of work, account has been taken of the documents available and the expected date of issuance of other basic documents. For the consideration of item 72 (Effects of atomic radiation) the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had been

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issued as document A/45/319. It should be noted that no basic documentation was expected for item 78 (Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations). Regarding item 76 (Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects), the report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had already been issued as document A/45/330; two of the five reports of the Secretary-General in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 44/49 had been issued, namely, the report on requirements of peace-keeping operations (A/45/217) and the report on use of civilian personnel in peace-keeping operations (A/45/502). The report of the Secretary-General on a training manual for peace-keeping operations would be issued as document A/45/572. The other two reports of the Secretary-General relating to item 76, concerning standard operating procedures and a model agreement between the United Nations and host countries of peace-keeping forces, would be issued before the Committee began its examination of that item. Regarding item 74 (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), the Commissioner-General's report would be issued shortly as document A/45/13. The report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had been issued as document A/45/382. The reports of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 44/47 D, E, F, G, H and J had been issued as documents A/45/463, A/45/464, A/45/465, A/45/466, A/45/429 and A/45/530, respectively. The remaining documents on that item - the reports of the Secretary-General in pursuance of resolution 44/47 I and K and the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA - would be issued before the Committee began its consideration of the item.

21. Regarding the consideration of item 77 (Questions relating to information), the report of the Committee on Information had been issued as document A/45/21. The report of the Director-General of UNESCO, as well as the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 44/50 (A/45/533), would be issued before the Committee began its consideration of that item. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit and the comments of the Secretary-General would also be available. With regard to item 71 (Science and peace), the report of the Secretary-General would be issued before the Committee began its consideration of that item. With reference to item 73 (International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space), the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had been issued as document A/45/20. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would be issued prior to the Committee's consideration of that item. Concerning item 75 (Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories), the Special Committee's report prepared in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 44/48 would be issued as document A/45/576. The other reports of the Special Committee submitted in compliance with resolution 44/48 A had been issued as documents A/45/84 and A/45/306. The reports of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolutions A/44/48 A, B, C, D, E, F and G would be issued before the Committee began its consideration of that item.

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Adoption of the proposed timetable

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the timetable proposed in document A/SPC/45/L.1 took into account, among other factors, the availability of documentation, the consideration of related items in other bodies and the number of meetings devoted to the same questions in previous sessions.

23. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) emphasized the importance of receiving documentation as early as possible, in particular on item 77 (Questions relating to information).

24. Mr. KIRSCH (Canada), referring to item 76 (Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects), said that it was scheduled very early in the session. His delegation felt that it was important for delegations to have an opportunity to hold consultations before beginning the debate, in the light of current circumstances, and he understood that several delegations shared that opinion. Consequently, he suggested that the consideration of item 76 should be postponed to a later date in the session.

25. Mr. MADI (Egypt) and Mr. ZAWELS (Argentina) supported that suggestion.

26. The CHAIRMAN accordingly suggested that the decision on the timetable for the programme of work should be postponed to allow for consultations and the submission of a revised draft timetable.

Hearings on apartheid

27. The CHAIRMAN, referring to item 34 (Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa), which was to be considered directly in plenary meeting, said that the General Assembly had decided that organizations and individuals having a special interest in that question could make statements to the Special Political Committee. Two afternoon meetings on 26 and 27 November would be devoted to such hearings. Organizations or individuals wishing to be heard by the Committee should submit their requests in writing to the Chairman by Thursday, 15 November. Communications containing requests for hearings would be distributed as Committee documents and considered at a later meeting, before the hearings. The Secretariat would inform organizations and individuals approved by the Committee of the date of the meeting. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that procedure.

28. It was so decided.

Working Group on Questions relating to Information

29. The CHAIRMAN said that, in order to expedite the work, he would propose that, as at previous sessions, the Committee should establish an open-ended working group, chaired by one of the Vice-Chairmen, to prepare the draft resolution on item 77 (Questions relating to information). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved that proposal.

30. It was so decided.

Working Group on International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

31. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, as at previous sessions, the Committee should establish an open-ended working group, chaired by the delegation of Austria, to prepare the draft resolution on item 73 (International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved that proposal.

32. It was so decided.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 15 October, at 10 a.m., and suggested that the Committee should take up item 72 (Effects of atomic radiation). He invited those delegations wishing to speak on that item to place their names on the list of speakers, which would be closed at the end of the meeting on Monday, 15 October.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.