

**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FORTY-FIRST SESSION

*Official Records**



FIFTH COMMITTEE

2nd meeting

held on

Tuesday, 23 September 1986

at 3 p.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FONTAINE-ORTIZ (Cuba)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that his election was a reflection of the Committee's gratitude for the work done by his country in connection with the administrative and budgetary affairs of the United Nations.
2. The Organization was facing a crisis with profound political causes, even though its immediate impact was financial. It was generally understood that the administrative and budgetary functioning of the United Nations needed to be improved, but the time had come to adopt specific measures in that domain. However, views as to how the process of reform should be carried out varied widely, given the structure and composition of the United Nations, which comprised more than 160 members from a wide range of socio-political systems and numerous cultures. Rather than an insurmountable obstacle, that constituted a challenge to the collective intelligence of Member States. For the various positions and interests to be harmonized, it was necessary first and foremost to place the interests of the Organization above individual interests, something that could only be done if a true and authentic political commitment, based on a realistic approach to the divergences of view of the various parties, was displayed.
3. The success of the Committee's work would depend primarily on its members. The Committee was faced with an historic opportunity to make an extremely valuable contribution to the future of the Organization, and had the necessary stature, experience and expertise to do so. He called upon the members of the Committee to work in good faith, in a constructive, open and candid spirit of realistic compromise and, above all, with a vision of the future.
4. The *raison d'être* of the United Nations was the full implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, and any administrative and budgetary reform must be undertaken with a view to strengthening those precepts and facilitating their implementation. Thus, while it was necessary to act with caution, there could be no waivering in the adoption of decisions which, in the long run, might affect the very life of the Organization.
5. Due recognition must be given to the work done by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations (Group of 18), which in a relatively short period of time had prepared an analysis and presented a set of recommendations which the Committee would have to consider.
6. It was a "personnel year" and the Committee would have before it lengthy reports submitted by the Secretary-General. There was no question that the decisions which the General Assembly would adopt on the basis of the recommendations of the Group of 18 would have repercussions for the staff. The staff would have to bear its share of sacrifices for the sake of the administrative and financial health of the Organization. He strongly hoped that the measures that

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(The Chairman)

would have to be taken would minimize the adverse effects on the staff and help bolster its morale. To that end, it was to be hoped that Article 101 of the Charter would be strictly applied in carrying out any staff changes that might be required.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

7. Mr. YONIS (Iraq) nominated Mr. Hadwen (Canada) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
8. Mr. MIKKELSEN (Denmark) nominated Mr. Ntakibirora (Burundi) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
9. Mr. Hadwen (Canada) and Mr. Ntakibirora (Burundi) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.
10. Mr. MELTKE (German Democratic Republic) nominated Mr. Herijanto (Indonesia) for the office of Rapporteur.
11. Mr. Herijanto (Indonesia) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.5/41/5; A/C.5/41/L.1).

12. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to document A/C.5/41/5, which contained the items which the General Assembly had allocated to the Committee and highlighted the recommendations regarding the organization of the session contained in section II of the first report of the General Committee (A/41/250 and Add. 1). He placed special emphasis on several of those recommendations. He first drew attention to the recommendation concerning the schedule of meetings (para. 3) and said he intended to abide by it closely; all delegations were therefore earnestly requested to co-operate in that respect. With regard to the recommendation concerning explanations of vote (para. 8), he suggested that the Committee should continue its practice of indicating in its reports to the General Assembly the names of those countries that had explained their vote on each draft resolution. With regard to the recommendations relating to the programme budget (paras. 12 and 13) and the mandatory deadline for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with financial implications (para. 12), he noted that the General Assembly had not yet set the closing date for the current session; however, if the Assembly decided to shorten the session, the mandatory deadline would have to be adjusted in consequence. The General Assembly had endorsed the General Committee's recommendation that the attention of the Chairmen of the Main Committees should be drawn to the desirability, when approving their respective programmes of work for the session, for sufficient flexibility to allow for an orderly shortening of the session if the Assembly should decide on such a course (A/41/250/Add.1, para. 5). It had also taken note of the measures taken to reduce by 30 per cent costs relating to overtime (A/41/250/Add.1, para. 6), as a result of which the Secretariat would not be able to provide all the services rendered in previous years.

(The Chairman)

13. Finally, he drew attention to General Assembly decision 34/401, which provided that reports of the Main Committees should be as concise as possible (para. 14), that the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs should be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponded to the number of seats to be filled (para. 16), and that during the sessions informal negotiations should be conducted in the Main Committees with the aim of reaching agreement on specific issues (para. 21).

14. With regard to Fifth Committee procedures, he suggested that the practice of recent years should continue to be followed, namely, that the list of speakers on each of the main agenda items should be closed no later than 48 hours following the introduction of the item; that speakers should take the floor in the order in which they were inscribed on the list of speakers, and that, in the event that a delegation was not present in the room when it was due to take the floor, it should go to the end of the list; and, finally, that the Rapporteur should be authorized to report directly to the General Assembly on all items taken up, unless, in a specific instance, the Committee decided to include a summary of the debate in its report.

15. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to endorse his suggestions.

16. It was so decided.

17. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider document A/C.5/41/L.1, on the status of documentation of the Fifth Committee. He then drew the Committee's attention to the chart which had been distributed and which constituted a preliminary programme of work for the current session. In preparing the programme, account had been taken of the availability of documentation, the availability of the Chairmen of subsidiary organs whose reports would be considered by the Committee and the appeal by the General Assembly for sufficient flexibility to be allowed for in preparing and adopting the programme of work for the session to enable the session to be shortened in an orderly manner should the Assembly decide on such a course. It was intended to begin with consideration of the items relating to the financial reports and audited financial statements, the reports of the Board of Auditors and the reports of the Committee on Contributions and the Committee on Conferences, for all of which the documentation was already available. With respect to item 10, on the programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987 throughout the session, the Committee would consider the various reports of the Secretary-General and the related commentaries or reports submitted by the Advisory Committee.

18. With regard to item 38, relating to the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, the Chairman stated that the General Assembly had decided that the item should be considered in plenary meeting. During the course of such consideration, the Fifth Committee would, within the scope of its responsibilities, undertake a factual examination of the report and submit its findings to the plenary Assembly (A/C.5/41/5, para. 15).

(The Chairman)

The Assembly would take up the report of the Group of 18 immediately following the general debate, i.e., during the week of 13 October, and it had been suggested that the Fifth Committee could begin its factual examination on 17 October. Priority had been given to the item in the provisional programme for the fortnight following that date.

19. Mr. MURRAY (United Kingdom) noted that document A/C.5/41/L.1 referred to documents with estimated dates of issue in early or mid-December, whereas the chart of the provisional programme of work left the last two weeks of the session free. He wished to know whether the dates appearing in document A/C.5/41/L.1 would be amended if a decision was taken to shorten the session. With respect to the report of Group of 18, it would, perhaps, be premature for the Committee to specify when and for how long it would consider the question. It might be more prudent to wait until it had been decided by the plenary Assembly when the item would be considered and what was expected of the Fifth Committee during its work.

20. The CHAIRMAN said that the document on the status of documentation portrayed a provisional situation, which could be amended and changed as documentation was issued and events developed. With respect to the question on the report of the Group of 18, he reiterated that the President of the General Assembly had indicated that it was his intention that the report should be considered in plenary meeting following the general debate. He agreed with the representative of the United Kingdom that it was difficult to calculate the time needed for the factual examination; that would depend on how events developed. In any case, the starting date reflected the wish of the President of the General Assembly for consideration to take place following the end of the discussion in the plenary Assembly. Accordingly, he suggested that the proposed calendar should be maintained, with due flexibility.

21. Mr. LOZA (Egypt) said that the Committee's work should not be hurried so long as the General Assembly did not decide to curtail the session. Further, the Committee should begin its consideration of the report of the Group of 18 without delay.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee's calendar of work was merely provisional and that, furthermore, he had no intention of curtailing debate in the Committee or of restricting the time available to representatives for their statements. With regard to the report of the Group of 18, it was not convenient for the Committee to begin its consideration forthwith; it would be more productive to take the report up at a later stage.

23. Mr. HADWEN (Canada) said that he agreed with the Chairman.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.