



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CHOUDHURY (President of the General Assembly)

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ORGANIZATION OF THE FORTY-FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADOPTION
OF THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 2.50 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FORTY-FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(continued) (A/BUR/41/1)

Section II. Organization of the session (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to section II of the memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/BUR/41/1) relating to the organization of the session and reminded members that consideration of several paragraphs of that document had been deferred to the present meeting.

Paragraphs 5 to 7 (Rationalization of work) (continued)

2. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 5, in which the Secretary-General suggested that in view of the current financial crisis and the efforts being undertaken to review the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the Organization, questions relating to the rationalization of work should be dealt with on a priority basis.

3. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that the purpose of paragraph 6 was merely to draw the Committee's attention to three documents which contained recommendations relevant to the rationalization of the procedures of the Assembly.

5. The Committee took note of the documents referred to in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

6. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 7, which concerned the relevant recommendations contained in the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations (A/41/49).

7. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should consider the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts relating to the rationalization of work of the Assembly at the earliest possible opportunity.

Paragraphs 8 and 10 (Closing date of the session) (continued)

8. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with rule 2 of the rules of procedure and in the light of the recommendation of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly that the Assembly should meet for a period of 13 weeks, the closing date of the forty-first session should be Tuesday, 16 December 1986. However, in paragraph 8, the Secretary-General drew the Committee's attention to the relevant part of General Assembly decision 40/472 of 9 May 1986, by which the Assembly had decided that it

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(The Chairman)

would consider the Secretary-General's proposal to shorten the forty-first session of the General Assembly by three weeks at that session, in the light of the financial situation prevailing at that time.

9. Mr. KABANDA (Rwanda) said that the Secretary-General's proposal had a great deal of merit, because it would permit a savings of \$1.5 million. He noted, however, that sacrifices would have to be made if the session were curtailed, in view of the Assembly's full agenda. He wished to know, therefore, which agenda items would have to be postponed or eliminated.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that that question could be answered only after he had consulted the heads of the regional groups.

11. Mr. AL-ANSI (Oman) noted that the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, had already undertaken consultations on the subject, as all the heads of regional groups were well aware. Some delegations, in particular those of third world countries, had had difficulty in accepting the proposals contained in paragraphs 8 to 10. He therefore proposed that a decision of the dates of the session should be postponed to a future meeting, and that paragraph 8 should specify that the closing date would be 16 December 1986, unless the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the Main Committees were able to complete the scheduled work of the Assembly before that date.

12. Mr. ROSENSTOCK (United States of America) said that if the decision to curtail the session were taken at the beginning, the session could be better organized to that end. Subsequently, if circumstances changed, the decision could be reconsidered. He noted that the Secretary-General, in the spring, had recommended that the decision should be considered in the light of the prevailing financial situation. Since the situation had not improved, that recommendation had acquired added weight. His delegation would bear in mind Oman's suggestion and the Chairman's response. It would be wise to hold consultations, as suggested, in order to ascertain to what extent the Assembly could be shortened without doing irreparable damage.

13. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 10, which suggested that in the light of the prevailing financial situation the General Committee might wish to recommend to the General Assembly a closing date for the forty-first session, taking into account the need to achieve economies. He suggested that it would be highly desirable for the Chairmen of the Main Committees to build sufficient flexibility into their programmes of work to allow for an orderly shortening of the session, if the Assembly so decided. In the mean while, he would continue his consultations with the heads of the regional groups. In the light of the views expressed by members and in order to allow for further consultations, he suggested that consideration of the question should be deferred.

14. The Committee decided to defer consideration of paragraphs 8 and 10 until a future meeting and to draw the attention of the Chairmen of the Main Committees to the desirability, when approving the programmes of work of their respective Committees, of sufficient flexibility to allow for an orderly shortening of the session if the Assembly so decided.

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15. Mr. HAMER (Netherlands) asked whether it would be possible for the Secretariat to give some indication to the Chairmen of the Main Committees as to the possibility of issuing the documentation ahead of schedule, in view of the proposal to curtail the session.

16. Mr. BUFFUM (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs) said that the Secretariat would do its best to accelerate the schedule of submission of reports.

Paragraph 11 (Observance of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights) (continued)

17. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the fact that paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 40/114 called for the holding of a commemorative plenary meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights on 16 December 1986. However, in accordance with rule 2 of the rules of procedure, and in the light of the recommendation of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly, 16 December would normally be the closing date of the forty-first session.

18. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that a commemorative plenary meeting of the Assembly should be convened during the forty-first session on a date to be decided at a later stage.

Paragraph 14 (Schedule of meetings) (continued)

19. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 14, which suggested that, in order to avoid the late start of meetings and as a cost-saving measure, the General Assembly might waive, at the current session, the requirement of the presence of at least one third of the members to declare a plenary meeting open and permit the debate to proceed and one quarter of the members to declare a meeting of a Main Committee open and permit the debate to proceed. That recommendation would be made on the understanding that such a waiver would not imply any permanent change in the relevant provisions of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure. He noted that under the rules of procedure the presence of a majority of members would be required for any decision to be taken.

20. The Committee decided to recommend that the requirement of a quorum to declare open meetings of the Assembly or its Main Committees should be waived.

Paragraph 20 (Explanations of vote, right of reply and length of statements) (continued)

21. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 20, which dealt with setting the time-limits for statements in the debate on items that had been considered by the Assembly at previous sessions.

22. Mr. LOZINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that rules 72 and 114 were already clear on the subject. His delegation felt that the proposal contained in paragraph 20 departed too far from practice and would apply to approximately 80 per cent of the agenda items. It should suffice to recall rule 72 of the rules of procedure and to recommend that the Chairmen of the Main Committees and other bodies should have more frequent recourse to that rule.

23. Sir John THOMSON (United Kingdom) said that it was his understanding that the statement made by the Soviet representative in no way detracted from the provision contained in paragraph 22 of annex VI of the rules of procedure.

24. Mr. LOZINSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he had no objection to a reference being made to that paragraph.

25. The Committee decided to draw the Assembly's attention to rules 72 and 114 of the rules of procedure, and to paragraph 22 of annex VI to the rules of procedure.

Section III. Adoption of the agenda (continued)

26. The CHAIRMAN reminded members that, in accordance with rule 40 of the rules of procedure, the Committee was not considering the substance of any item except in so far as it bore on the question of whether or not to recommend the inclusion of that item in the agenda.

Paragraph 34

27. The Committee took note of paragraph 34 of the Secretary-General's memorandum and decided to defer consideration of it to a subsequent meeting to be scheduled to be held soon.

Inclusion of items (continued)

Item 143 (continued)

28. Mr. NORRIS (United States of America) said that the United States would not vote against inclusion of item 143 only because it supported the right of any Member State to inscribe agenda items of concern, unless there was a specific legal reason that would put the subject outside the jurisdiction of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the United States strongly opposed the inclusion of the item on the ground that it would detract from serious negotiations being undertaken by countries seeking assistance from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the two specialized institutions which had been created specifically by the United Nations to deal with debt and development finance issues. His delegation felt that the General Assembly lacked the expertise to deal with the issue and consideration of the item by the Assembly was only likely to complicate matters in a manner unacceptable to all parties concerned.

29. Sir John THOMSON (United Kingdom) said that, although the United Kingdom would not stand in the way of consensus, it regretted that the consultations which the delegations had agreed to hold on the basis of General Assembly decision 40/477 had not taken place. In view of the importance of the question of debt, the United Kingdom would continue to discuss it in the General Assembly, provided that the competencies of other organizations and forums were respected and that the discussion was organized by common agreement among all parties. His delegation would have preferred the title of the item to be worded in a way which did not prejudice the issue before the debate began. Moreover, it was not necessary to include the discussion of debt and development financing under a separate item. Those questions properly fell under item 81, entitled "Development and international economic co-operation". He noted that the need to rationalize the agenda had long been recognized by the General Assembly, and he drew attention to the Secretary-General's recommendation, in paragraph 34 of his memorandum (A/BUR/41/1), that related items should be grouped under a single heading. He regretted that it had not been possible to resolve the issue before the current meeting. Lastly, he noted that the views which he had expressed were also those of the States members of the European Economic Community.

30. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 143 in the agenda.

Section IV. Allocation of items (continued)

Paragraph 48

31. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 143 should be allocated to the Second Committee.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.