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General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Monday, 7 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM

(Thailand)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The CHAIRMAN thanked the members of the Committee for his election, which he considered a tribute to Thailand. 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. POSSO SERRANO (Ecuador) nominated Mr. Schäfer (Germany) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
3. Miss DAPUL (Philippines) nominated Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
4. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the absence of other nominations, the Committee should not proceed to a secret vote.
5. Mr. Schäfer (Germany) and Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.
6. Mr. WIDE (Sweden) nominated Mr. Fawzy (Egypt) for the office of Rapporteur.
7. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the absence of other nominations, the Committee should not proceed to a secret vote.
8. Mr. Fawzy (Egypt) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/46/1 and A/SPC/46/L.1)

9. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the recommendations concerning the organization and rationalization of work contained in the report of the General Committee to the General Assembly (A/46/250). On the recommendation of the General Committee, the Assembly had decided that the forty-sixth session should recess on 17 December 1991 and close on 14 September 1992.
10. As a cost-saving measure, the Assembly had decided that all plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees should start promptly at 10 a.m. In that connection, he wished to recall the decision adopted by the General Assembly to waive, during the current session, the application of rule 108 of the rules of procedure 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 of the Assembly and that, in accordance with those rules, the presence of a majority of members was required for any decision to be taken. The extension of meetings beyond the normal time of adjournment placed a heavy burden on the interpreters. Any extension of more than 30 minutes should be requested 24 hours before the meeting. If additional meetings were required, they would probably have to be held on Saturdays.

(The Chairman)

11. In accordance with the recommendation in annex V of the rules of procedure, he intended to close the list of speakers on each agenda item when one third of the meetings allocated to that item had been held. Committee members who wished to make statements must 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 Committee's practice and the recommendation approved by the General Assembly, representatives wishing to exercise the right of reply should so inform the Secretariat, which would keep a list of replies to be heard by the Committee once all delegations on the list of speakers for a particular meeting had been heard. 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 five minutes. Explanations of 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.

12. In order to facilitate the work of the interpreters and précis-writers, 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.

13. 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." In that connection, 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 the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. The General Assembly had imposed a deadline of 20 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 Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications. Delegations were urged to bear those decisions in mind.

(The Chairman)

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

15. 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, transcripts of the debates of some of its meetings or portions thereof. Those transcripts, which were not part of the official records of the Committee, would not entail any extrabudgetary expenses, as they would be prepared when the required services became available. Accordingly, they would be issued at a later stage than the summary records. The simultaneous distribution of summary records in all the official languages had often delayed their distribution. Because of financial constraints, such delays were still liable to occur. Accordingly, he proposed that summary records should be distributed in the language in which they had originally been prepared - namely English, French or Spanish - as soon as they were available. It was understood that the other languages would follow as soon as they had been translated.

16. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposal designed to expedite its work.

17. It was so decided.

18. The CHAIRMAN invited delegations 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 decision taken by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session to prohibit smoking in small conference rooms (rooms 5 to 10 and A to E) and to discourage smoking in large conference rooms (rooms 1 to 4).

19. Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda), speaking as former Chairman of the Committee, congratulated Mr. Pibulsonggram on his election as Chairman and offered to work with him in the future.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/46/1 and L.1)

20. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to document A/SPC/46/1, containing a letter from the President of the General Assembly concerning the allocation of agenda items to the Committee and other decisions by the Assembly regarding the Committee's programme of work.

21. He also drew attention to document A/SPC/46/L.1, containing a tentative timetable for the work of the Committee, and said that the schedule would have to be interpreted with the necessary degree of flexibility in order to

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coordinate the Committee's work with that of the plenary Assembly and other bodies. The Committee would, in particular, continue the close coordination with the Fourth Committee that, during the previous three sessions, had enabled it to avoid as far as possible the holding of concurrent meetings. Such coordination would be done with the necessary flexibility to allow both Committees to complete their work on schedule.

22. In drawing up the Committee's programme of work, account had been taken of the available documents and the time at which other basic reports were expected to be issued. For the consideration of agenda item 70 (Effects of atomic radiation), the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effect of Atomic Radiation had been issued as document A/46/218. There was no basic document for agenda item 76 (Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations). Under agenda item 69 (Protection and security of small States), the report of the Secretary-General had been issued as document A/46/339. Under agenda item 75 (Questions relating to information), the report of the Committee on Information had been issued as document A/46/21. Before the Committee began its consideration of that item, the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/76 A would be issued as document A/46/449. Under agenda item 74 (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 been issued as document A/46/254. The reports of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/75 had also been issued: the report on Secretariat units dealing with peace-keeping operations (A/46/169 and Add.1) and the report on the model agreement between the United Nations and member States contributing personnel and equipment to United Nations peace-keeping operations (A/46/185/Corr.1 (Spanish only) and Corr.2-3 (Russian only)).

23. Under agenda item 71 (International cooperation 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/46/20. 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 as document A/46/389. With regard to agenda item 72 (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), the report of the Commissioner-General would be issued as document A/46/13 and Add.1. The report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had been issued as document A/46/373. The report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/73 H had been issued as document A/46/399. The remaining documents relating to that item would be published before the Committee began its consideration, namely: the reports of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 45/73 D, E, F, G, I, J and K, and the report of the Working Group on the financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. With regard to agenda item 73 (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 first and

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second periodic reports pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/74 A had been issued as documents A/46/65 and A/46/282, respectively. The Special Committee's third periodic report pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/74 A would be issued in due course. The reports of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 45/74 B, C, D, E, F and G had been issued as documents A/46/440 to 445. The report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/74 A was expected to be issued before the Committee began its consideration of the item in question.

Adoption of the proposed timetable

24. The CHAIRMAN said that the timetable proposed in document A/SPC/46/L.1 took account, inter alia, of the availability of the documentation, the consideration of related items in other bodies, and the number of meetings devoted to those questions at previous sessions. He would take it, if he heard no objection, that the Committee wished to adopt the timetable proposed in document A/SPC/46/L.1.

25. It was so decided.

Hearings on apartheid

26. The CHAIRMAN, referring to agenda item 37 (Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa), observed that the General Assembly had decided to consider it directly in plenary meeting and that organizations and individuals having a special interest in the question would be permitted to be heard by the Special Political Committee. The Committee would devote two meetings to such hearings on 14 November, and he suggested that organizations or individuals wishing to be heard by the Committee should submit their requests in writing to the Chairman no later than Thursday, 31 October. Communications containing requests for hearings would be circulated as Committee documents and considered by the Committee at a subsequent meeting prior to the hearings. Organizations and individuals approved by the Committee would be informed by the Secretariat of the date of the meeting. He would take it, if he heard no objection, that the Committee agreed to that procedure.

27. It was so decided.

Working Group on questions relating to information

28. The CHAIRMAN suggested, with a view to expediting the Committee's work, that the Committee should, as in previous years, establish an open-ended working group, presided over by one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, to prepare the draft resolution on agenda item 75 (Questions relating to information). He would take it, if he heard no objection, that the Committee agreed to do so.

29. It was so decided.

Working Group on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

30. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, as in previous sessions, the Committee should establish an open-ended working group, presided over by the representative of Austria, to prepare the draft resolution on agenda item 71 (International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space). He would take it, if he heard no objection, that the Committee wished to do so.

31. It was so decided.

32. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee was scheduled to meet again on Wednesday, 9 October, at 10 a.m., when it would begin its consideration of agenda item 70 (Effects of atomic radiation). He asked all delegations wishing to speak on the item to inscribe their names on the speaker's list, which was already open and would be closed at the end of the meeting on Wednesday, 9 October.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.