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Chairman: Sir Leslie MUNRO (New Zealand).

Consideration of the agenda of the twelfth session and allocation of items (A/3687 and Add.1) (continued)

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE TWELFTH SESSION: ITEM PROPOSED BY ITALY, JAPAN, NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, PARAGUAY AND PHILIPPINES (A/3687 and Add.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Japan had requested to be included in the list of sponsors of the additional item entitled "Question of the establishment of a ninth Vice-Presidency for the twelfth session of the General Assembly".

2. Mr. VAN ASCH VAN WIJCK (Netherlands) said that his delegation, acting also on behalf of the other co-sponsors, formally requested the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the twelfth session of the General Assembly, and asked that it be dealt with as an urgent question.

3. The sponsors felt that the representative character of the General Committee could and should be improved by the establishment of a ninth Vice-Presidency for the current session. No permanent increase in the number of Vice-Presidents was being proposed. The proposal was simply an *ad hoc* measure to be adopted for the twelfth session and could be acted upon by the Assembly if included in the agenda.

4. Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) said that his delegation was unable to support the proposal. In its view, the question of an increase in the number of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly was not merely a procedural matter, as the composition of the General Committee was determined by political considerations. Under rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Vice-Presidents should be elected on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the Committee. In other words, the composition of the Committee should as far as possible meet the requirements of equitable geographical distribution.

5. While the Czechoslovak delegation readily appreciated the view held by a number of delegations that the composition of the Committee should reflect the increase in the number of Member States by which the various geographical groups were now represented in the United Nations, it felt that the question could not be solved by requesting the Assembly every year to amend the provisions of rules 31 and 38 of the rules

of procedure. That had been done at the previous session, and similar action was being proposed for the current session.

6. The question of the composition of the General Committee should be dealt with as a whole, due regard being paid to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The procedure proposed by the Netherlands and several other delegations was bound to result in a situation in which the representation of individual geographical areas would reflect the position of a single group of Member States.

7. For the reasons given, and in order to permit a thorough discussion in the Assembly of all aspects of the question, the Czechoslovak delegation proposed that the title of the item submitted by the Netherlands in association with five other delegations should be amended to read "Question of the composition of the General Committee of the General Assembly".

8. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet delegation was unable to support the proposal before the Committee. The item had been submitted as an urgent question in order to satisfy the claims of certain delegations. The same procedure had been adopted at the previous session when an eighth Vice-President had been hastily elected without a general discussion of the question of the composition of the General Committee. The Soviet delegation felt that, if the time had come to consider the question of increasing the number of Vice-Presidents, the matter should be settled on the basis of the requirements of the Charter of the United Nations in the light of the existing situation. The interests of the United Nations should not be made to serve any single delegation or group of delegations. The concept of equitable geographical representation was endorsed both in the Charter and in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. However, the sponsors of the proposal under consideration, while appearing to recognize that fact in their explanatory memorandum (A/3687), in effect violated the Charter and the rules of procedure by proposing the election of a ninth Vice-President without providing for consideration by the Assembly of the whole question of the composition of the General Committee.

9. The Soviet delegation therefore supported the Czechoslovak proposal and felt that, if adopted, the question could be dealt with at an early meeting of the Assembly.

10. Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) said that the composition of the General Committee did not constitute an equitable geographical representation of all Member States. He would therefore vote in favour of the six-Power proposal, but strictly as an *ad hoc* measure, since he felt that the final composition of the General Committee should not be prejudged. That was a matter to be considered by the Assembly at its thirteenth session

and settled on the basis of an equitable geographical representation of Member States.

11. He therefore proposed the addition of the following sentence at the end of the draft resolution contained in the explanatory memorandum: "without prejudging the number of Vice-Presidents to be finally determined by the General Assembly at its next session". A ninth Vice-President could thus be elected for the current session without prejudging a decision on the final composition of the General Committee.

12. Mr. VAN ASCH VAN WIJCK (Netherlands) said that his delegation could not accept the amendment proposed by Czechoslovakia, since it did not believe that a full discussion of the question of the General Committee's composition would be opportune at the current session, when all that should be done was to establish a ninth Vice-Presidency and thus improve the representative character of the General Committee. The Assembly could consider the whole question of the Committee's composition at a subsequent session.

13. The Tunisian amendment could not be entertained by the General Committee, since the latter was not competent to take any action on the draft resolution contained in the explanatory memorandum. However, the Netherlands delegation would not object to a discussion of the amendment in the Assembly.

14. The CHAIRMAN explained that the Committee could decide only whether to recommend the inclusion of the item proposed by the six Powers in the agenda of the present session. It could not take any action on the draft resolution.

15. Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom) observed that the representatives of nine Member States had received the required majority at the election of Vice-Presidents for the present session of the Assembly. Under the rules of procedure, only eight had been elected. The United Kingdom delegation therefore supported the six-Power proposal and hoped that the Assembly would include the item in its agenda and adopt the draft resolution submitted by the six sponsors.

16. The question of a permanent increase in the membership of the General Committee should be carefully examined during the forthcoming year, but should not preclude consideration of the more immediate six-Power proposal. Hence the Czechoslovak amendment was unnecessary.

17. Mr. ARENALES CATALAN (Guatemala) said that he had intended to make only a brief procedural statement, since he would vote in favour of the inclusion of the item proposed by the six Powers, in accordance with his delegation's policy of agreeing to the inclusion of all items requested. Guatemala had a number of serious reservations in regard to the substance of the item which it would probably bring up in the Assembly if the item was included in the agenda. His delegation's vote in favour would not prejudice its consideration of the substance of the item or imply any agreement with the points made in the explanatory memorandum or the draft resolution contained therein. However, the amendments proposed by Czechoslovakia and Tunisia made it necessary to touch to some extent on substance.

18. The delegation of Guatemala did not feel that the

establishment of a ninth Vice-Presidency would solve the problem of maintaining a balance between the representation of the various geographical areas, although it might settle the immediate procedural problem that had arisen in connexion with the election of the Vice-Presidents. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of the Czechoslovak amendment, which recognized the wider implications of the question of the membership of the General Committee. It would abstain from voting on the Tunisian amendment, on the grounds that it prejudged the fundamental question and ought to be discussed in the Assembly rather than in the General Committee. Nevertheless, if the Czechoslovak amendment was defeated, the Guatemalan delegation, in keeping with its customary policy of free inclusion would still vote in favour of including the item, while at the same time reserving its position fully in respect of the discussion of the item in the Assembly.

19. Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon) said that his delegation was fully aware of the political considerations behind the proposed item. At the same time it was difficult to see why a session which had seen the admission of only one new Member required the establishment of a new Vice-Presidency, when one new Vice-Presidency had been judged adequate at the previous session at which eighteen new Members had been admitted. The whole question of proper geographical representation in the General Committee needed the most careful consideration, and ad hoc arrangements of the kind proposed should not be encouraged. In principle the delegation of Ceylon supported all requests for the inclusion of items in the agenda. However, the claim that the proposal would not prejudice the final determination of the membership of the General Committee was not acceptable. He would therefore vote in favour of the amendment proposed by Czechoslovakia.

20. Mr. BARCO (United States of America) felt that the additional item proposed by the six Powers was reasonable in the light of the requirement that the General Committee must have a representative character. However, a representative character could not be defined in absolute terms, and there were practical limits on the size of the Committee. As matters stood one more Vice-Presidency would meet the needs of the situation. The proposal reflected the spirit of understanding and accommodation that had been displayed by the Members of the Assembly, and the United States would vote in favour of it, provided that the Czechoslovak amendment, which it opposed, was not adopted. If the amendment were adopted, the United States would be unable to support the inclusion of the item.

21. Mr. MONTERO DE VARGAS (Paraguay) said that, as one of the co-sponsors of the proposal, his delegation wished to reaffirm the point made in the explanatory memorandum that there was a widely-held view that, since the composition of the General Committee must have a representative character reflecting the membership of the Organization, the number of Vice-Presidencies should be considered in the light of the increase in that membership. The sponsors recognized in the explanatory memorandum that the question of a permanent increase in the composition of the Committee might require further consideration. They felt, however, that in the meantime ad hoc measures were needed to make the Committee fully representative at the current session. Viewing

the item proposed in that light, on the understanding that further consideration would be possible, the Paraguayan delegation was opposed to the Czechoslovak proposal that the title of the item should be changed. The Tunisian amendment to the proposed draft resolution seemed to some extent to prejudge the decision of the Assembly at its next session, and Paraguay would therefore be unable to support it.

22. Mr. KHOMAN (Thailand) noted that there was wide agreement on the need to alter the composition of the General Committee so that it should reflect the character of the membership more closely. The draft resolution submitted by the six Powers made it clear that the establishment of a ninth Vice-Presidency would be a purely ad hoc measure. He suggested, therefore, that the words "on an ad hoc basis" should be inserted after the word "establishment" in the title of the additional item.

23. Mr. ABDOLAH (Iran) felt that the increase in the membership of the United Nations should be reflected in an enlarging of the General Committee. If the number of Vice-Presidencies was increased, it would be possible to reorganize the composition of the Committee on a basis of equitable geographical distribution. The substance of the matter would need careful examination by the Assembly, but since the proposal concerned a purely ad hoc arrangement and would not prejudge any decision of the Assembly at its twelfth or thirteenth session, the Iranian delegation would not oppose the inclusion of the item.

24. He sympathized with the substance of the Czechoslovak amendment, but had some doubts as to its form. It really constituted a new item and had it been put forward as such the Iranian delegation would have supported it. If it were maintained as an amendment, the Iranian delegation would have to abstain from voting upon it on the grounds that it contravened the rules of procedure. His delegation would vote in favour of the six-Power item, on the understanding that that item referred to a purely ad hoc measure.

25. Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) said that his delegation had proposed its amendment to the draft resolution in the explanatory memorandum merely in order to draw attention to the fact that the Assembly would not be bound by the precedent that would be created. He had no desire to have the amendment voted upon at the present meeting, and would support the amendment proposed by the delegation of Thailand.

26. Mr. PEREZ PEREZ (Venezuela) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the six-Power proposal as a step towards making the composition of the General Committee reflect more faithfully the composition of the United Nations. The sponsors fully realized that it might be necessary to go further into the question of a permanent increase in the membership of the General Committee. The Czechoslovak amendment raised a completely different question which would need very close consideration and require representatives to consult their Governments. His delegation would therefore be unable to support it.

27. Mr. VAN ASCH VAN WIJCK (Netherlands) said that his delegation would agree to the addition proposed by Thailand, in order to make the situation quite clear.

28. Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) thanked the representatives of the USSR, Guatemala and Ceylon for their support. He noted that the representatives of Tunisia and the United Kingdom had agreed that the question of the composition of the General Committee ought to be discussed at the thirteenth session of the General Assembly. Since the election of the Vice-Presidents was usually one of the first items on the agenda, it would be preferable to discuss the matter at the current session, thus clearing the way for the elections at the thirteenth session. In order to meet the objection of the representatives of Iran and Venezuela, he suggested that the Committee should decide to recommend the inclusion of both questions. He would therefore withdraw his amendment and instead submit his proposal in writing through the regular channels, as a separate request for the inclusion of an additional item, to be considered at a subsequent meeting.

29. The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on the inclusion in the agenda of the item entitled "Question of the establishment of a ninth Vice-Presidency for the twelfth session of the General Assembly", with the amendment submitted by Thailand to the effect that the words "on an ad hoc basis" should be inserted after the word "establishment".

The Committee decided by 13 votes to none, with 2 abstentions, to recommend that the item proposed by the six Powers, as amended by the representative of Thailand, should be included in the agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.