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Summary record of the 3rd meeting

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Chairman: Mr. Operti (President of the General Assembly) (Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-third regular session of the General Assembly and allocation of items *(continued)*

Request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (A/53/232)

1. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to consider a request by the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the inclusion of an additional item entitled "The armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo", contained in document A/53/232. The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had asked to address the Committee in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

2. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Makonga (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a place at the Committee table.*

3. **Mr. Makonga** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that an explanatory memorandum (A/53/232, annex) provided the background to his delegation's request. On 28 July 1998, President Kabila had decided to terminate military cooperation with Uganda and Rwanda. On 2 August 1998, the coalition troops of Rwanda and Uganda had begun an invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and had seized a number of towns in the eastern part of the country. The troops had engaged in acts of terrorism, murder, rape, pillage and many other heinous acts.

4. In order to maintain the credibility of the United Nations, which should not allow aggressor States to act with impunity, the General Committee should authorize the inclusion of the additional item, which should be considered directly by the General Assembly in plenary meeting. The Assembly should condemn the aggression by Rwanda and Uganda and should demand the withdrawal of their troops from Congolese territory, and ensure that those two countries respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

5. **Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka** (Uganda) said that African organizations, including the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and the South Africa Development Community, were currently engaged in a number of initiatives with a view to restoring peace and security in the Great Lakes region. Uganda had agreed to a number of important proposals that had been put forward at a summit meeting of the leaders of Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, which had been held in Nairobi on 19 October 1998. Those proposals included a call for an immediate cessation of

hostilities, the conclusion of a ceasefire agreement, the orderly withdrawal of foreign troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the stationing of a peacekeeping force under the auspices of OAU and the United Nations. His delegation believed that the regional initiatives should be allowed to run their full course before the matter was referred to the General Assembly, since a premature debate in the Assembly might undermine those initiatives.

6. **Mr. Makonga** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that the fact that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was being discussed in other forums should not be a reason for preventing its debate in the General Assembly. On the contrary, a settlement would be accelerated if the matter was referred to the Assembly.

7. **Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka** (Uganda) said that his delegation proposed that the item should be included in the agenda, but that the decision as to when the item would be discussed should be taken at a later date with the agreement of the parties concerned.

8. **Mr. Mangoela** (Lesotho) said that the consequences of the inclusion of the item in the agenda was an entirely separate matter, and there was no need for the Committee to take up the issue of when the item would be discussed by the General Assembly.

9. **Mr. Makonga** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that his delegation was interested in having the item discussed at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, and consideration of the item by the Assembly should in no way depend on the outcome of the regional initiatives.

10. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Rwanda had asked to participate in the discussion. Rule 43 of the rules of procedure did not apply. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to accede to the request.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda) took a place at the Committee table.*

13. **Mr. Kayinamura** (Rwanda) suggested that the Committee should refer to annex IV, paragraphs 22 and 23, of the rules of procedure.

14. *Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda) withdrew.*

15. **Mr. Macedo** (Mexico) said that the Committee should confine itself to deciding whether or not to include the item in the agenda.

16. **The Chairman** suggested that, since there had been no objection to the inclusion of the item, the Committee should

recommend the inclusion of the additional item but should defer a decision on when the issue would be debated.

17. *The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include the additional item in the agenda.*

*Request for the inclusion of an additional item
submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran
(A/53/233)*

18. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to consider a request by the Islamic Republic of Iran for the inclusion of an additional item entitled “Dialogue among civilizations”, contained in document A/53/233. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran had asked to address the Committee in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

19. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Nejad-Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran) took a place at the Committee table.*

20. **Mr. Nejad-Hosseinian** (Islamic Republic of Iran) drew attention to the explanatory memorandum contained in annex I of document A/53/233, and to a draft resolution entitled “United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations”, contained in annex II of the same document. The initiative, which had been endorsed by the Eighth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Twelfth Summit of Non-Aligned Countries, had been launched with a view to promoting dialogue and understanding among cultures and religions. His delegation was prepared to engage in consultations on the draft resolution.

21. *Mr. Nejad-Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran) withdrew.*

22. **The Chairman** said that the representatives of Italy and India had asked to participate in the discussion. Rule 43 of the rules of procedure did not apply. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to accede to the requests.

23. *It was so decided.*

24. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Politi (Italy) and Mr. Pal (India) took places at the Committee table.*

25. **Mr. Politi** (Italy), supported by **Mr. Ka** (Senegal), **Mr. Fedotov** (Russian Federation), **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), **Mr. Abelian** (Armenia) and **Mr. Enkhsaikhan** (Mongolia), said that dialogue among civilizations was the best way of enhancing peace, tolerance and cooperation among nations. He was therefore in favour of including the item in the agenda, and expressed his support for the draft resolution.

26. **Mr. Pal** (India) said that nations and civilizations were faced with the choice between dialogue and conflict, and it was only fitting that the United Nations should support an initiative that promoted understanding among cultures and civilizations.

27. **Mr. Mangoela** (Lesotho) said that one year might not be long enough to achieve the objectives of the draft resolution, and he proposed that consideration should be given to proclaiming a United Nations Decade of Dialogue among Civilizations.

28. *The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include the additional item in the agenda.*

29. *Mr. Politi (Italy) and Mr. Pal (India) withdrew.*

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.