

REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 32 (A/35/32)



UNITED NATIONS

REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 32 (A/35/32)



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1980

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	1
II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS	3 - 10	2
A. Officers	3 - 4	2
B. Organization of work	5 - 7	2
C. Programme of work	8 - 10	2
III. CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES	11 - 15	4
A. Matters related to, and intersessional departures from the approved calendar for 1980	12 - 14	4
1. Additions to or changes in the conference programme.	12	4
2. Departures not requiring action by the Committee . .	13 - 14	5
B. Revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1981	15	5
IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE PATTERN OF CONFERENCES	16 - 31	6
A. Overprogramming	17 - 23	6
B. Planned and actual duration of sessions of subsidiary organs	24 - 29	7
C. Other matters	30 - 31	8
V. IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONTROL AND LIMIT DOCUMENTATION	32 - 42	9
VI. ORGANIZATIONAL AND SERVICING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SPECIAL CONFERENCES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THEIR PREPARATORY MEETINGS	43 - 61	11
VII. EXAMINATION OF WAYS TO ENABLE THE COMMITTEE TO PLAY A MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE	62 - 69	15
VIII. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES .	70	17

CONTENTS (continued)

Page

ANNEXES

I.	List of documents issued in 1980	22
II.	List of bodies approached by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences regarding a review of the length of sessions of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly	25
III.	Format to be followed in the presentation of national or technical papers	26

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 32/72 of 9 December 1977, decided to retain the Committee on Conferences established under its resolution 3351 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974. The Committee's terms of reference were defined as follows:

"(a) To advise the General Assembly on the calendar of conferences;

"(b) To act on behalf of the General Assembly in dealing with departures from the approved calendar of conferences that have administrative and financial implications;

"(c) To recommend to the General Assembly means to provide the optimum apportionment of conference resources, facilities and services including documentation, in order to ensure their most efficient and effective use;

"(d) To advise the General Assembly on the current and future requirements of the Organization for conference services, facilities and documentation;

"(e) To advise the General Assembly on means to ensure improved co-ordination of conferences within the United Nations system, including conference services and facilities, and to conduct the appropriate consultations in that regard."

2. The membership of the Committee on Conferences in 1980 remained the same as in 1979 and consisted of the following Member States:

Algeria
Austria
Canada
Chile
Czechoslovakia
Egypt
France
Honduras
Indonesia
Ivory Coast
Japan
Kenya

Mexico
New Zealand
Nigeria
Peru
Philippines
Sri Lanka
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yugoslavia

CHAPTER II
ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Officers

3. The Committee elected the following officers to serve in 1980:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. Michael G. Okeyo (Kenya)
<u>Vice Chairmen:</u>	Mr. D. E. N. Rodrigo (Sri Lanka) Mr. Javier Suazo Tomé (Honduras)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Richard J. Martin (New Zealand)

4. One post of vice-chairman, from the Group of Eastern European States, remained vacant.

B. Organization of work

5. The Committee agreed to meet whenever the need arose to deal with matters related to the calendar of conferences and meetings. For the consideration of various substantive questions, the Committee decided to hold a series of substantive meetings.

6. The Committee also agreed to continue taking decisions by consensus, bearing in mind the substance of the items discussed and adopting, where necessary, a pragmatic and flexible approach in order not to impede the exercise of the Committee's functions.

7. The Committee held 11 meetings between 30 January 1980 and 27 May 1980. It held seven meetings during the series of substantive meetings in the period 21 to 25 April 1980.

C. Programme of work

8. On the basis of a note by the Secretariat, the Committee discussed its programme of work for the substantive meetings in 1980. In the light of its terms of reference and General Assembly resolution 34/50 of 23 November 1979, the Committee agreed upon the following agenda for its substantive meetings:

1. Implementation of resolutions and recommendations adopted by the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences
2. Implementation of all measures adopted by the General Assembly to control and limit documentation

3. Review of the organizational and servicing arrangements of past special conferences of the United Nations and their preparatory meetings
 4. Examination of ways to enable the Committee to play a more effective role.
 5. Calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980-1981
 6. Adoption of the report of the Committee
9. The Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments made an introductory statement to the Committee at its first meeting of the series of substantive meetings.
10. A list of the documents submitted to the Committee on Conferences by the Secretariat appear in annex I.

CHAPTER III
CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

11. By its decision 34/405 of 1 November 1979, the General Assembly, inter alia, approved the draft calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980-1981 set out in annex II to the report of the Committee on Conferences. 1/ Subsequent decisions taken by the Assembly and other organs that affected the calendar were reflected in the calendar issued as document A/AC.172/26 on 11 January 1980. The Committee acted under its mandate on several occasions to deal with intersessional departures from the approved calendar.

A. Matters related to, and intersessional departures from, the approved calendar for 1980

1. Additions to or changes in the conference programme

12. The Committee considered six requests for additions to or changes in the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980. It approved all requests on the understanding that any additional expenditure required for their servicing and travel could be met from within the approved budgetary appropriations for the biennium 1980-1981. The requests acted upon are contained in the following table:

<u>Name of body</u>	<u>Original schedule</u>	<u>Change authorized by the Committee</u>
1. Group of Experts on a Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons	21 April to 2 May 1980, New York	Shortening of session by one week, i.e., from 21 to 25 April 1980, and holding of an additional session from 7 to 11 July 1980, both at New York
2. Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development, second session	22 to 30 May 1980, New York	Extension of session to two weeks, i.e., from 22 May to 4 June 1980, New York
3. Group of Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and International Security	28 April to 8 May 1980, Geneva	Same dates, but change of venue to New York

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 32 (A/34/32 and Corr.1).

<u>Name of body</u>	<u>Original schedule</u>	<u>Change authorized by the Committee</u>
4. Drafting Committee of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea	not scheduled	Addition of meetings to be held from 9 to 27 June 1980, New York
5. Group of 77 of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea	not scheduled	Addition of meetings to be held from 23 to 25 July 1980, Geneva
6. Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy	14 to 25 July 1980, New York	Change of dates and venue to 21 July to 1 August 1980, Geneva

2. Departures not requiring action by the Committee

13. The Committee agreed that, in accordance with past practice, the Secretariat should deal with departures that do not have financial or administrative implications, do not involve matters of policy or entail significant administrative changes in the calendar of conferences, and should inform it of any actions taken.

14. In the course of the year, the Committee was advised of several such changes, including those made pursuant to General Assembly decision 34/401. By paragraph 24 of this decision, the Assembly had decided that subsidiary organs should be required to complete their work by 1 September, so that their reports might be available in all the working languages in time for consideration by the opening of its regular sessions.

B. Revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1981

15. The Committee on Conferences will discuss the revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1981 on the basis of a draft annual programme to be submitted by the Secretariat in late August 1980. Accordingly, this calendar will be contained in an addendum to the present report.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE PATTERN OF CONFERENCES

16. By paragraph 4 of resolution 34/50, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to review the extent to which resolutions and recommendations adopted by the Assembly on the pattern of conferences had been implemented, including an examination of the planned and actual duration of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Assembly, and to report its findings to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

A. Overprogramming

17. Committee consideration of this subject was based on a report by the Secretariat (A/AC.172/29), presenting experience gained in the application of overprogramming at Headquarters and at Geneva in accordance with General Assembly decision 32/420 of 9 December 1977, resolution 33/55 of 14 December 1978 and decision 33/417 of 14 December 1978.

18. The Secretariat noted that the overprogramming was intended to reduce the negative impact of cancellations of scheduled meetings on the utilization of conference resources. It was assumed that in any week some scheduled meetings would not be held and that, accordingly, interpretation services each week should be provided at a level that took expected cancellations into account.

19. The benefits of overprogramming became obvious only when permanent interpretation capacity was not sufficient for the servicing of all planned meetings and free-lance interpreters had to be recruited to satisfy the "excess" demand. The Committee was informed that the selection of the overprogramming factor constituted the most crucial element in the entire process. In principle, its level corresponded to the average rate of cancellations. In practice, the different requirements of each week's meeting programme called for a flexible approach which took account of the type of meetings scheduled, their meeting pattern during previous sessions and the subjects under consideration. Nevertheless, for planning purposes the Secretariat had adopted an overprogramming rate of 20 per cent as a yardstick, subject to adjustments that might be required as a consequence of the specifics of the meeting programme in any given week.

20. The results of overprogramming both at Headquarters and Geneva indicated that, compared to earlier years, the utilization of permanent interpretation staff was at a consistently higher level, coming close to, or even exceeding, the agreed work-load standard of seven assignments in most weeks when overprogramming was implemented. The extent to which half-day servicing capacity was wasted as a consequence of meeting cancellations also declined. The improvement in the management of the programme of meetings had resulted in a reduction in the level of free-lance recruitment.

21. The Committee was informed that overprogramming has become a permanent feature of the operations of the Secretariat. During the two years when the practice had been systematically applied, the Secretariat had constantly refined its operating methods in order to ensure the better utilization of conference resources. The Secretary-General therefore intended to continue implementing overprogramming in the future. However, it was expected that in the long run the relevance of overprogramming to the better utilization of conference resources might decrease as the effects of the improvement in the organization of work of United Nations bodies were gradually felt. Moreover, it had to be recognized that efforts to improve the utilization of conference resources might also be limited by political developments and other exigencies when services were made available on a large scale but ultimately were not utilized.

22. The Committee noted with satisfaction the positive effects of overprogramming and welcomed the fact that it was considered to be an integral element of the operations of the Secretariat. In view of the unabated extent of cancellations, some delegations suggested, however, that a higher overprogramming rate should be chosen in order to further offset the negative impact of such cancellations.

23. The Committee then decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the positive effects of overprogramming and that it should encourage the Secretary-General to continue applying maximum overprogramming, whenever possible, to achieve the better utilization of conference resources.

B. Planned and actual duration of sessions of subsidiary organs

24. By its resolution 33/55 of 14 December 1978, the General Assembly requested United Nations bodies to review the length and cycle of their sessions with a view to exploring the possibilities of shortening them and of meeting on a biennial basis or less frequently. Subsequently, by resolution 34/50, the Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to examine the planned and actual duration of the subsidiary bodies.

25. The Committee received a report by the Secretariat providing data on the planned and actual duration of sessions of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly that met in 1979 at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva. This report showed that, on average, about one third of the time allotted to the United Nations bodies was wasted due to late start, early ending of meetings as well as of cancellation of scheduled meetings.

26. The Committee agreed that the Chairman should carry out necessary consultations with the Chairmen of subsidiary bodies identified on the basis of the available statistics. To assist the Chairman in his task, the Committee decided to establish a small working group consisting of Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.

27. The list of bodies identified by the Working Group is contained in annex II. The Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed letters to the Chairmen of

each body listed, taking into account the individual performance of each body with regard to cancellations, late starting and early ending, and requested their co-operation in the review to be carried out by the Committee on Conferences.

28. In that connexion, the Committee also considered that it would be desirable to establish a formal link between itself and the Ad Hoc Committee on Subsidiary Organs established by section VI of General Assembly decision 34/401 of 12 December 1979. The Chairman of the Committee on Conferences provided the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee with information about the action taken.

29. It was agreed that the relevant results of all reviews undertaken with a view to streamlining the subsidiary machinery of the General Assembly should be fully reflected in the draft calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for the biennium 1982-1983.

C. Other matters

30. The Committee also received a report on steps taken by the Secretariat over the past years to implement various other decisions taken by the General Assembly in connexion with the pattern of conferences. The report dealt with:

(a) guide-lines to reduce the wastage resulting from cancellations of scheduled meetings; (b) organization of work of United Nations bodies; (c) informal meetings; (d) manual for committee secretaries; (e) special conferences; and (f) standards of staffing requirements.

31. The Committee on Conferences took note of this report.

CHAPTER V

IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONTROL AND LIMIT DOCUMENTATION

32. By paragraph 5 of its resolution 34/50, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to monitor the implementation of all measures adopted by the Assembly to control and limit documentation, including those on the provision of meeting records.

33. Consideration by the Committee was based on a report containing information about action taken by the Secretariat to inform all organizational units concerned of the various resolutions and decisions which were adopted by the General Assembly and, where appropriate, to establish procedures for follow up on implementation. Because of the short time which had lapsed since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 34/50, it was not possible for the report to include information concerning the results of action taken in accordance with that resolution. The report concentrated on three main areas: meeting records (including a list of present entitlements to meeting records); content and format of reports of subsidiary bodies; and presentation, volume, length and timely circulation of documentation.

34. In presenting the report, the Chief Editor noted that the one-stage system of meeting records with subsequent corrigenda introduced by General Assembly resolution 34/15 (XXX) had proven to work successfully. It was, however, too early to assess the effect of the decision of the General Assembly to dispense with summary records for all its subsidiary bodies other than the International Law Commission and the Committee of the Whole, and of the Economic and Social Council to suspend the provision of summary records for all its subsidiary bodies. Nevertheless, difficulties arising from the absence of summary records had to date been reported by two bodies only, namely, for the 1980 session of the Commission on Human Rights and for the session of the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. At the same time, the Chief Editor noted, as anticipated, there was a tendency for reports of bodies to grow in volume as Governments took advantage of the opportunity provided in the rules on reports to have their views on certain items recorded. This, however, represented only a fraction of the volume of material that would have been produced had full summary records had to be provided. The absence of summary records had thus contributed to a sizable reduction of documentation.

35. As regards the 32-page rule, the Chief Editor suggested that some documents emanating from the Secretariat patently could not be kept within that limit, for example, the budget estimates, the budget performance report, the medium-term plan, and the annotated agenda for the General Assembly. The rule was, however, being applied strictly when it was practical to do so, and the minor deviations which had occurred were transitional in nature. In general, the Chief Editor believed that the rule itself yielded positive results, and served as a constant reminder to all contributors to a document of the need for brevity and conciseness.

36. As regards the 32-page rule, some delegations proposed that criteria should be developed to guide effectively the granting of exceptions to the rule.

37. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretariat to implement and enforce the various measures.

38. Several delegations commented on the nature of the information provided in documents reporting on the state of preparedness of documentation for sessions of bodies. It was generally felt that these documents, which report on compliance with the six-week rule for the issuance of documentation and offer explanations for delays, were superficial and did not meet the requirements of delegations. The Committee on Conferences concluded that the Secretary-General should be asked to ensure that detailed and adequate explanations are provided for any delays in the issuance of documentation in all required languages and that these are adequately reflected in documents on the state of preparedness of documentation.

39. On related matters:

(a) All delegations expressed concern at the continuing delays in the timely issuance of documentation for the sessions of many bodies. Some delegations questioned the validity of reasons typically advanced in the explanation of such delays; another wondered whether there could be an advantage in the bureau or a working group of the Committee on Conferences discussing the issue with bureaux of those bodies whose work was suffering from such delays, with a view to devising solutions for improvement.

(b) Some delegations noted that some documents on the state of preparedness indicated that delays in clearance of documents by various substantive offices were responsible for the late issuance of documents. This, it was felt, was not an acceptable explanation; clearance-time should be allowed for in planning, and it was up to the Secretary-General to see that clearance procedures were clearly defined and firmly adhered to.

40. Several delegations also observed that, consistent with General Assembly resolution 33/56 of 14 December 1978, the Secretariat had a responsibility to ensure that intergovernmental bodies are told before decisions are taken if any request for documentation exceeds, or is likely to exceed, the capability of the Secretariat to produce within a given time-frame and within its approved resources. It should also be ready to explain why this is so.

41. Some delegations recalled that the provision of summary records had been suspended by the Economic and Social Council only on the understanding that the record of the Secretariat in producing documents on time would show substantial improvement. If this expectation was not fulfilled, the greater reporting burden that suspension of summary records placed on delegations, particularly small delegations, would not be balanced by the relief that an early availability of documents would provide. In those circumstances it was inevitable that doubts would be raised as to whether the experimental suspension of summary records should be continued.

42. Delegations emphasized that the rules which the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had addressed to intergovernmental bodies should be strictly observed, particularly the rule that every body, at the outset of each regular session, should review all recurrent documents to determine whether they had become redundant, had lost their usefulness or could be issued at less frequent intervals.

CHAPTER VI

ORGANIZATIONAL AND SERVICING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SPECIAL CONFERENCES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THEIR PREPARATORY MEETINGS

43. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 34/50, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to review the organizational servicing arrangements of past special conferences and their preparatory meetings with a view to identifying the most effective framework for the organization of such conferences in the future.

44. In its consideration of this question, the Committee had the benefit of a report (A/AC.172/28) on special conferences. In this report, a special conference was defined as a conference that was not part of the regular recurrent conference programme of a biennium, but that was convened in response to a specific resolution of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council, for whose substantive preparation specific additional budgetary provisions were made and which all States were normally invited to attend. Such a conference usually extended over a period of a minimum of two to a maximum of four to six weeks and required an intense level of planning and servicing.

45. In introducing the report, the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments stated that the number of special conferences had reached considerable proportions as at least 30 such conferences on a global scale had taken place since 1972 within the framework of the United Nations. The identifiable costs of these conferences were substantial, amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars, involving expenditures for extensive conference services, substantive support services, public information activities, preparation and participation by specialized agencies, Governments, media and non-governmental organizations.

46. The Under-Secretary-General emphasized that definition of the purpose of any special conference was of particular importance as confusion over objectives could negatively affect the outcome of such a conference. There were basically two main types of a special conference: (a) one which served as a tool to raise public consciousness or to draw the attention of decision-making bodies or centres in the world to a certain subject, as was, for example, the case with the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment; (b) one which was convened to resolve a specific problem, or at least to organize the framework within which solution could be sought, for which the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea could be used as another example.

47. Each type required not only a different approach to preparation, conduct and follow-up action, but also to publicity and media arrangements. Moreover, the objectives of a conference had a bearing on its duration, for example, 10 working days might not be a sufficient time-frame for problem-solving purposes.

48. In the opinion of the Under-Secretary-General, such questions needed to be more carefully addressed. Considerable disenchantment with the United Nations

could grow among the public, Governments, delegations and the Secretariat if special conferences failed to produce the results expected of them. A final decision to hold such a conference should accordingly be taken only when the exact purpose and terms of reference of each conference have been determined and accepted.

49. The Under-Secretary-General also pointed to the need for policy guidance on organization of follow-up action for special conferences. There were three conceivable options: (a) the creation of new Secretariat machinery; (b) the assignment of additional tasks to existing Secretariat machinery; (c) the holding of a follow-up conference on the same subject within a certain time to review the progress made in the implementation of programmes or declarations agreed on at the original special conference.

50. The Secretariat report itself centred on organizational and servicing arrangements of past special conferences and their preparatory meetings and, based on previous experience, developed a number of possible guide-lines to be used as a framework for the preparation, organization and servicing of all future special conferences of the United Nations and their preparatory meetings. Such guide-lines were felt to be necessary, as many special conferences of past years had been organized on the basis of ad hoc arrangements, not drawing upon experience previously gathered in a systematic manner. As a consequence, organizational and servicing features had had to be developed and agreed afresh in many instances by preparatory organs. With the growth in the number of special conferences and the recent emphasis attached by many Governments to a proper organization of work and an effective conduct of business of intergovernmental meetings, a relationship between the "success" of conferences and the practical arrangements for their organization and servicing had come to be more clearly recognized, as had the need for rationalization and effectiveness in their functioning.

51. The report dealt separately with aspects of the preparatory and the conference phases as well as arrangements for documentation during both phases. Specific problems which arise when a special conference is held away from established headquarters, upon the invitation of a host Government, in accordance with section I, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 31/140 of 17 December 1976, were also discussed since such a geographical shift not only created logistical difficulties but called also for special servicing arrangements as back-up assistance in the area of translation and typing usually existing at established headquarters was not readily available at other locations.

52. In the course of the Committee's discussion, some delegations wondered whether a thorough study should be made on the genesis of special conferences. Other delegations, however, did not perceive a need for such a study as any decision to call for a conference rested ultimately with Member States. Once a main organ had convened a special conference all parties to such a decision had to share the responsibility for a conference's initiation.

53. One delegation suggested that special conferences should only be convened if no international organization or machinery existed to deal with a particular subject to which a conference should be devoted. Moreover, there should be a clearly identifiable deficiency in international activities with regard to such a subject. Other delegations did not share this view, as, despite the

availability of international machinery, there might well be a justification for a conference either to highlight a perceived problem or to mobilize public opinion.

54. The Committee also discussed the need for the establishment of preparatory organs for special conferences. In that context, one delegation recalled General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977, in which it had been affirmed that the Economic and Social Council should act as preparatory organ for conferences in the economic and social field. Other delegations questioned the necessity for creating new preparatory organs and stated their preference to entrust the relevant tasks to already existing intergovernmental machinery instead. Another delegation saw no need for several sessions of a preparatory organ, if there was adequate substantive preparation by the Secretariat and an efficient conduct of business by a preparatory organ.

55. Many delegations emphasized that existing Secretariat machinery should normally form the core for the provision of substantive Secretariat support services for a conference. This existing expertise should be strengthened to the extent necessary by additional staff on a temporary basis.

56. The need for close consultations between the Secretariat and a host country, whenever a conference is held away from established headquarters in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/140, was also underlined by several delegations, in order to ensure a smooth functioning of a conference. A few delegations stated that in such cases locally available staff and services should be utilized whenever possible.

57. Some delegations expressed their concern at the high number of special conferences held and planned, while other delegations felt that a consideration of this aspect was not called for under paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 34/50.

58. The Committee also heard a statement by the First Vice-President of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council on the question of participation by invited non-governmental organizations in the general debate of a special conference.

59. After detailed discussion the Committee on Conferences adopted a set of guide-lines on the preparation, organization and servicing of special conferences of the United Nations and their preparatory meetings, contained in chapter VIII of the present report, which the Committee recommends to the General Assembly for approval.

60. The Committee also recommends to the General Assembly that it should request the Secretary-General to bring these guide-lines to the attention of a special conference and, where appropriate, a preparatory organ for a conference.

61. Upon proposal by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and as amended in the course of the Committee's consideration, the Committee on Conferences then recommended to the General Assembly that it should adopt the following draft resolution:

"The General Assembly,

"Concerned about the growth in the number of special conferences and their preparatory meetings, and in the expenditure entailed,

"1. Invites Member States and United Nations organs when considering the convening of special conferences to determine whether the objectives of the proposed conference are such that they cannot be pursued through the established intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations and the specialized agencies;

"2. Decides that preparatory committees should only be established for special conferences if this function cannot be appropriately performed by an existing intergovernmental organ;

"3. Decides that the secretariat for special conferences should, to the extent possible, be provided by the existing Secretariat machinery, with such temporary strengthening as may be required;

"4. Approved the guide-lines for the preparation, organization and servicing of special conferences as set out in chapter VIII to the report of the Committee on Conferences; 2/

"5. Requests the Secretary-General to propose draft standard rules of procedure for special conferences of the United Nations to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session for its consideration."

CHAPTER VII

EXAMINATION OF WAYS TO ENABLE THE COMMITTEE TO PLAY A MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE

62. By paragraph 3 of its resolution 34/50, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to examine ways to enable it to play a more effective role in the scheduling of conference resources, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

63. At the outset of the consideration of this issue, the Secretariat presented some thoughts on areas in which the Committee on Conferences might wish to get involved in future years. One suggestion related to an examination of problems in the production of documents and publications, and in particular the scope for achieving greater efficiency and economy through the application of technical innovations. Other suggestions related to a more active involvement in the programming process of the United Nations, to a more active consideration of conference service operations at Geneva, Vienna and the regional commissions, and to seeking authority to independently adjust the calendar of conferences should developments so require.

64. In connexion with the question of technological innovations, the Assistant Director of the Electronic Data Processing and Information Systems Division informed the Committee about the present status in the introduction of technological innovations into the Secretariat operations and about other advanced electronic systems, both available and in development which could potentially be used by the Secretariat.

65. In the view of one delegation, the Committee's mandate needed no strengthening. The Committee had not even exhausted the entire range of activities called for under its present mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 32/72 of 9 December 1977, rather it had performed at times functions which ought to be carried out by the Secretariat. This delegation also stated that, in particular, the Committee had not achieved clear-cut results in fulfilling the Assembly's request to recommend means to provide the optimum apportionment of conference resources, facilities and services. This request had clearly implied the need for the establishment of a quota system. If the Committee failed to draw up such a system, the necessity of its continued existence might have to be questioned.

66. Other delegations believed that, given the continuing wastage of conference resources, the Committee had an important role to play. As it was the only body able to get a comprehensive view of all conference activities of the Organization its existence was valuable per se and, to increase its role in that area, it should be strengthened.

67. Another delegation thought the Committee should accept the constraints of its present mandate and should continue, as in the past, to address itself to the economical and efficient use of conference resources.

68. A number of delegations supported the suggestions put forward by the Secretariat.

69. One delegation felt that ways should also be explored to avoid the duplication that existed between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in the preparation of the calendar of conferences, requiring a number of meetings by each main organ.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES

70. The recommendations of the Committee on Conferences are set forth below:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly should take note of the positive effects of overprogramming and that it should encourage the Secretary-General to continue applying maximum overprogramming, whenever possible, to achieve the better utilization of conference resources. [see para. 23]

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly should ask the Secretary-General to ensure that detailed and adequate explanations are provided for any delays in the issuance of documentation in all required languages and that these are adequately reflected in documents on the state of preparedness of documentation. [see para. 38]

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly should approve the following set of guide-lines on the preparation, organization and servicing of special conferences of the United Nations and their preparatory meetings. [see para. 59]

I. PREPARATORY PHASE

A. Action to be taken at the intergovernmental and the national levels

1. If the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council designates or establishes a preparatory organ for a conference, this organ should hold as soon as possible or practical a short organizational session of a few days' duration in order to elect its officers, to consider the organization and timing of further session(s) during the preparatory period, to adopt a provisional agenda for its first substantive session, and to provide initial guidance for the substantive activities of the Secretariat.
2. If a preparatory organ is scheduled to hold several sessions, it should adopt at the end of each session a provisional agenda for the subsequent session.
3. If a preparatory organ is established its last session prior to the conference should be scheduled so as to allow enough time, between the closing of the session and the opening of the conference, for the timely circulation of the preparatory organ's report in all official languages.

4. States should be invited to designate, whenever appropriate and where possible, a single national focal point early in the preparatory process and to inform the conference secretariat thereof by a certain date.

B. Action to be taken by the Secretary-General

5. An indicative outline of the work programme derived from the general goals and objectives pronounced by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council when convening the conference should be submitted to the organizational session of the preparatory organ.

6. The bureau of a preparatory organ should be informed in an appropriate manner of the substance of all relevant measures to control and limit documentation which need to be applied to the documentation for a special conference and its preparatory organ.

7. Organizational rules and arrangements relevant to a conference, as well as a draft time-table for its work throughout its entire duration, should be submitted in the form of a document to a preparatory organ by the time of its last session.

8. An annotated provisional agenda, a document on the organization of work and related arrangements, including a time-table, and all required and available substantive documentation should be circulated well in advance of, but not later than, six weeks prior to the opening of a conference for which no preparatory organ is established.

C. Control and limitation of documentation

9. All measures to control and limit documentation, which are in force at the time when a conference is being prepared or held, shall be strictly applied to documentation for such a special conference and, where applicable, to its preparatory organ.

10. Summary records shall not be provided to special conferences and their preparatory organs, with the exception of legal codification conferences where the needs will be determined in each case.

11. Whenever the submission of national or technical papers or reports is proposed, the following rules might apply:

(a) Each paper or report should be prepared in the format described in the annex to these guidelines (see annex III).

(b) Each paper or report will be issued only once as an official document, either in the full text or in summary form, in the language of submission only.

(c) The length of each paper or report should normally be subject to a firm quantitative limit of 10 pages.

(d) A firm deadline for the submission of such papers or reports should be established taking into account the purpose for which they are required in the preparatory process and in any event not later than eight weeks before the opening of a conference.

(e) All papers or reports received should be listed by the Secretariat in an information document and grouped in various ways such as alphabetically by country, by region or by subject.

(f) Any Government should be permitted to submit only one paper or report for processing by the Secretariat.

(g) National or technical papers or reports should not be made available at a conference site, if the conference is held away from established headquarters. Instead a library should be established at such a conference site which shall contain in single copies all relevant material pertaining to the conference.

(h) The Secretary-General will keep the total number of copies printed for this type of documentation under constant review and adjust it to a realistic level of demand.

12. Submissions by non-governmental organizations shall bear a cover page issued and numbered by the Secretariat on each copy. A deadline shall be set for the presentation of such reports to the Secretariat. Reports by non-governmental organizations will not be reproduced by the Secretariat nor will they be transported to a conference site by the Secretariat. A list of all documents presented by non-governmental organizations will be issued by the Secretariat.

13. A single issue of the daily Journal in English and French shall be published during the conference.

D. Conferences held at the invitation of a host Government in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/140

14. Whenever it is decided by the General Assembly to hold a conference away from established headquarters a host Government should be invited to set up, at its earliest convenience, a national preparatory committee to serve as focal point for local arrangements to be made in connexion with the conference.

15. With respect to practical arrangements and working facilities account should be taken of:

(a) The need to accommodate working, drafting and negotiating groups, as well as caucuses and regional groups, interagency meetings and briefings of press and non-governmental organizations, in suitably-sized and suitably-equipped conference rooms;

(b) The possibility of setting up, under the host Government's auspices and on a commercial basis, a service centre at the conference site for use by delegations. The Secretary-General shall inform delegations well in advance of the opening of the conference about such local facilities and the conditions under which they would be available.

II. CONFERENCE PHASE

16. Special conferences should be scheduled so as to allow a sufficient interval, between the closing of the conference and the opening of the regular session of the

General Assembly at which the report of the conference is to be considered, for the timely circulation of the report in all official languages.

17. Where necessary, there should be provision for a total of up to two days of consultations immediately prior to the opening of a conference:

(a) For pre-conference consultations to consider organizational matters, preferably on the day prior to the opening of the conference;

(b) For consultations within regional groups.

18. Recommendations emanating from pre-conference consultations should, in principle, be acted upon without further discussion at the first plenary meeting of a conference.

19. If circumstances so require, each regional group could be requested to designate, immediately prior to the opening of the conference, two persons to serve as "friends of the Rapporteur or Rapporteur-General" to assist the latter in preparing the draft report of the conference.

20. Messages by Heads of State or Government which are made available during the opening meeting of a conference should be read from the floor by the delegation concerned prior to the substantive opening statement by the Secretariat.

21. If a general debate is to be held at a special conference, it should start at the second meeting, usually in the afternoon of the opening day.

22. A time-limit of 15 minutes for interventions by representatives of States and of 10 minutes for statements by other participants should normally be observed during the general debate.

23. The following procedure should apply in connexion with the right of reply:

(a) Delegations should exercise their right of reply at the end of the day whenever two meetings have been scheduled for that day and whenever such meetings are devoted to the consideration of the same item;

(b) The number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply of any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item;

(c) The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any given item at a given meeting should be limited to five minutes and the second intervention should be limited to three minutes.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to bring these guide-lines to the attention of a special conference and, where appropriate, a preparatory organ for a conference. [see para. 60]

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution: /see para 61/

The General Assembly,

Concerned about the growth in the number of special conferences and their preparatory meetings, and in the expenditure entailed,

1. Invites Member States and United Nations organs when considering the convening of special conferences to determine whether the objectives of the proposed conference are such that they cannot be pursued through the established intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations and the specialized agencies;
2. Decides that preparatory committees should only be established for special conferences if this function cannot be appropriately performed by an existing intergovernmental organ;
3. Decides that the secretariat for special conferences should, to the extent possible, be provided by the existing Secretariat machinery, with such temporary strengthening as may be required;
4. Approves the guide-lines for the preparation, organization and servicing of special conferences as set out in chapter VIII of the report of the Committee on Conferences; 3/
5. Requests the Secretary-General to propose draft standard rules of procedure for special conferences of the United Nations to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session for its consideration.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 32 (A/35/32).

ANNEX I

List of documents issued in 1980

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
A/AC.172/25	10 January 1980	Membership of the Committee on Conferences
A/AC.172/26	11 January 1980	Calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1980-1981
A/AC.172/27	31 January 1980	Annotated provisional agenda - series of substantive meetings
A/AC.172/28	19 March 1980	Organization and servicing arrangements of special conferences and their preparatory meetings
A/AC.172/29	13 March 1980	Implementation of resolutions and recommendations adopted by the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences-overprogramming
A/AC.172/30	17 March 1980	Implementation of resolutions and recommendations adopted by the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences-planned and actual duration of sessions of subsidiary organs
A/AC.172/31	1 April 1980	Implementation of all measures adopted by the General Assembly to control and limit documentation
A/AC.172/32	28 March 1980	Implementation of resolutions and recommendations adopted by the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences
A/AC.172/32/Corr.1	31 March 1980	Ditto
A/AC.172/32/Add.1	30 April 1980	Implementation of resolutions and recommendations adopted by the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences-standards of staffing requirements
A/AC.172/33	27 March 1980	Intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980 - Group of Experts on a Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
A/AC.172/34	27 March 1980	Intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980 - Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development, second session
A/AC.172/35	28 March 1980	Intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980 - Group of Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and International Security
A/AC.172/35/Add.1	22 April 1980	Ditto
A/AC.172/36	15 April 1980	Calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1980-1981 - Implementation of measures adopted by the General Assembly to control and limit documentation
A/AC.172/37	13 May 1980	Intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980 - Drafting Committee of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea
A/AC.172/38	13 May 1980	Intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980 - Group of 77 of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea
A/AC.172/39	22 May 1980	Intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 1980 - Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, second session
A/AC.172/INF.1	9 April 1980	Membership of the Committee on Conferences in 1980
A/AC.172/INF.2	9 April 1980	Information on conference facilities available to meetings and conferences of the United Nations
A/AC.172/INF.3	9 April 1980	Information on conference facilities available to meetings and conferences of the United Nations

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
Conference room paper 1980/1	25 January 1980	Provisional agenda for the organizational meeting in 1980
Conference room paper 1980/2	23 April 1980	Organization and servicing arrangements of special conferences and their preparatory meetings - draft proposal submitted by the United Kingdom
Conference room paper 1980/3	30 April 1980	Changes in the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1980 not requiring action by the Committee
Conference room paper 1980/4	2 May 1980	Decisions adopted by the Committee on Conferences during its series of substantive meetings
Conference room paper 1980/5	13 May 1980	Draft report of the Committee
Conference room paper 1980/6	30 May 1980	Amendments to the draft report approved by the Committee

ANNEX II

List of bodies approached by the Chairman of the Committee
on Conferences regarding a review of the length of sessions
of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference

Disarmament Commission

Committee on Disarmament

Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies

Group of Experts on a Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons

Group of Governmental Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development

Group of Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and International Security

Group of Governmental Experts to Study the Implications of Establishing an International Satellite Monitoring Agency

Special Committee on Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Non-Use of Force in International Relations

Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Role of the Organization

International Law Commission

International Law Seminar

Committee on Contributions

United Nations Trust Fund for Chile, Board of Trustees

ANNEX III

Format to be followed in the presentation of national or technical papers

General

1. Since the papers will be reproduced directly from the original as submitted strict adherence to the form of presentation described below will greatly facilitate the reproduction process.

Format

2. Papers should be typed in accordance with the instructions in sections 5 and 6 below, in single-line spacing on quarto (approximately 8.5" x 11" (about 21.5 cm x 28 cm), or about 500 words per page), or, where appropriate, on standard paper size A 4 (29.7 cm x 21 cm), and must be submitted as an original (on bond paper) plus two copies.

Length

3. Since about 150 papers will be printed, their length may not exceed () pages including table, figures, illustrations and annexes.

Languages

4. Papers must be submitted in one of the languages of the Conference, and they will be circulated only in the language of submission.

Typing

5. As papers will be reproduced from the original text by a photographic process, the original should be a fair copy, typed (single-spaced) with a fresh, dark typewriter ribbon on heavy white bond paper. Only one side of the paper should be used. A sample layout for typing purposes is attached.

Margins

6. As indicated in the layout sample attached, top and bottom margins should be 1 1/4", left-hand margins 1" and right-hand margins 1/2". Only the top third of the first page should be left blank so as to leave sufficient room for the masthead, which will be imprinted in the United Nations printing shop. The layout sample indicates:

(a) Where to start the text on the first page;

- (b) Where to start typing on succeeding pages;
 - (c) Where to place tabular matter;
 - (d) Where to place headings and page numbers on pages where it is necessary to type laterally on the paper (this will occur mainly in the presentation of charts, graphs, tables etc.);
 - (e) Total typing area to be used.
7. The title of the paper should be followed by the names, titles, etc. of the author or authors.

Headings

8. For main headings, Roman numerals: I, II, III ..., should be used for secondary headings, capital letters: A, B, C,
9. Paragraphs should be numbered consecutively from the beginning to the end of the paper with Arabic numerals: 1, 2, 3
10. Subparagraphs should be identified by lower-case letters in parentheses: (a), (b), (c) Further subdivisions should be identified by the series: (i), (ii), (iii) ...; a., b., c. ...; i., ii., iii. ..., in that order.
11. Annexes are self-contained and start with paragraph 1.

Cross references

12. Cross references should be made to paragraphs, not to pages.

Foot-notes

13. Foot-notes should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals from beginning to end of the paper (not page by page) and each should be set off by a frame (1/, 2/, 3/). In annexes, tables and appendices, foot-notes should be identified by lower-case letters, also set off by a frame (a/, b/, c/).
14. Source references in foot-notes should, as far as possible, conform to the following general pattern: author's name, title of work (underlined), place of publication, publisher's name and date of publication in parentheses, followed by volume number (vol.), chapter (chap.), paragraph (para.) or page number (p., pp.), as necessary. In the case of an article in a periodical, the title of the article should be in quotation marks followed by the name of the periodical (underlined), the volume (vol.), issue number (No.) and the date, followed by the page number. (pp.).

Example: E. H. Kennard, Kinetic Theory of Gases (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1938).

J. H. E. Griffiths, "Ferro-magnetic resonance in thin Ni-films", Physica, No. 17 (1951), p. 253.

Illustrations and tables

15. As all reproduction will be in black and white only, presentations may not be in colour. Tables, charts and graphs should be presented as annexes. All types of illustrations should be designated by the term "figure", and should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals throughout the manuscript whether or not they occur in the main body of the text or in an annex. Tables should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals, independently of the numbering of illustrations, e.g. "Table 5".

Diagrams and charts

16. Black ink, preferably waterproof, on white paper of medium weight should be used for drawing diagrams and charts. The finished drawings should be kept clear by means of a protective sheet of thin paper pasted lightly to the top edge: they must not be folded or bent.

17. Photographs will be reproduced in half-tone; black and white originals of exceptional clarity and contrast and/or negatives are essential. Colour prints cannot be accepted.

18. If a glossy print in black and white is submitted, it should be kept flat and protected from cracking, creasing or tearing by means of corrugated cardboard or similar material.

19. Since the slightest impression on the back of a print may show up in the reproduction, prints should not be mounted in any way or bear written matter on the back. A sheet of thin paper on which the number and caption of the figure has been typed should be used to cover the front of the print and folded over and pasted to the back thereof.

20. Each manuscript should be accompanied by a complete list (by figure, number and caption) of all half-tone reproductions required.

Deadline

21. The deadline for the submission of national papers is (date). National papers will be circulated to Member States and submitted to the (name of preparatory body), which will consider them from (date of session) in connexion with the drawing up of an outline for the draft final report of the Conference.

Address of submission

22. Papers should be addressed to:

(Substantive servicing unit of the Secretariat)
United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017
USA

Layout for typing

For first page only,
leave first third of
page blank. Start
below this point

Margin of at least 1 1/4" - 3.1 cm

Size of the paper:
8.5" x 11" -
21.5 cm x 28 cm
or, where
appropriate,
29.7 cm x 21 cm

I. MAIN HEADING

A. Secondary heading

1. Third heading

(a) Fourth heading

1. The paragraphs should be numbered consecutively and typed in single space, the subparagraphs being identified as follows:

(a) Text 1/ running on and back to the margin, the next subdivision being indented further as shown:

(i) These subparagraphs remain indented, and the same applies to further subdivisions a., then i.;

(ii) Etc.

(b) Text continues

2. Second paragraph 2/

Left margin of 10 spaces (1" - 2.5 cm)

Right margin no wider than 5 spaces (1/2" - 1.2 cm)

When no headings are used the text on all pages (except the first page) should start here

Indent 5 spaces

1/ Foot-notes

2/ If there is more than one foot-note, calculate the necessary space so that they end 1 1/4 inch (3.1 cm) from the bottom of the page.

Margin of at least 1 1/4" - 3.1 cm

كيفية الحصول على منشورات الأمم المتحدة

يمكن الحصول على منشورات الأمم المتحدة من المكتبات ودور التوزيع في جميع أنحاء العالم . استلم منها من المكتبة التي تتعامل معها أو اكتب إلى : الأمم المتحدة ، قسم البيع في نيويورك أو في جنيف .

如何购取联合国出版物

联合国出版物在全世界各地的书店和经营处均有发售。请向书店询问或写信到纽约或日内瓦的联合国销售组。

HOW TO OBTAIN UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS

United Nations publications may be obtained from bookstores and distributors throughout the world. Consult your bookstore or write to: United Nations, Sales Section, New York or Geneva.

COMMENT SE PROCURER LES PUBLICATIONS DES NATIONS UNIES

Les publications des Nations Unies sont en vente dans les librairies et les agences dépositaires du monde entier. Informez-vous auprès de votre libraire ou adressez-vous à : Nations Unies, Section des ventes, New York ou Genève.

КАК ПОЛУЧИТЬ ИЗДАНИЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ

Издания Организации Объединенных Наций можно купить в книжных магазинах и агентствах во всех районах мира. Наводите справки об изданиях в вашем книжном магазине или пишите по адресу: Организация Объединенных Наций, Секция по продаже изданий, Нью-Йорк или Женева.

COMO CONSEGUIR PUBLICACIONES DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

Las publicaciones de las Naciones Unidas están en venta en librerías y casas distribuidoras en todas partes del mundo. Consulte a su librero o diríjase a: Naciones Unidas, Sección de Ventas, Nueva York o Ginebra.
