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SECOND COMMITTEE 2nd meeting held on Tuesday, 3 October 1995 at 10 a.m. New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. PETRESKI

(The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had nominated Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua) and the Group of Western European and Other States had nominated Mr. Murphy (Ireland) for the two posts of Vice-Chairman.
- 2. Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua) and Mr. Murphy (Ireland) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.
- 3. The CHAIRMAN said that the election of the Rapporteur of the Second Committee was postponed. Referring to the heavy responsibility borne by the Vice-Chairmen in informal consultations, he said that he would inform the Committee of the distribution of responsibilities between the two Vice-Chairmen for the different items on the agenda.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/50/250; A/C.2/50/1; A/C.2/50/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.2/50/L.1/Add.1)

- The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to a letter dated 22 September 1995 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Second Committee (A/C.2/50/1) concerning the allocation of items to the Committee, noting that the Assembly had decided that sub-item 96 (c), entitled "Sustainable use and conservation of the marine living resources of the high seas", should be considered directly in plenary meeting, and that sub-item 96 (f), entitled "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction", should be allocated to the Second Committee. He invited the Committee to consider the draft programme of work contained in document A/C.2/50/L.1/Rev.1. He drew attention to the decisions taken by the General Assembly relating to the organization of the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, on the basis of the recommendations contained in the first report of the General Committee (A/50/250). He further pointed out that, in recent years, the Committee had established time-limits of 10 minutes for statements on agenda items and 15 minutes for statements in the general debate. Senior Secretariat officials were also asked to adhere to the time-limits.
- 5. Lastly, the General Assembly had decided to streamline the agenda of the Second Committee. Agenda items on related subjects were to be clustered, in accordance with annex II to General Assembly resolution 48/162, on the understanding that that would not preclude the discussion of any specific issue that a delegation wished to raise in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure.
- 6. Mrs. REBONG (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed concern at the assassination attempt the previous day against the President of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and wished him a speedy recovery. Referring to document A/C.2/50/L.1/Rev.1 on the organization of the work of the Second Committee, she expressed the hope that, despite the difficult financial situation of the United Nations, the Secretariat would produce the

documents on time and would be able to provide services for informal consultations. She would prefer less clustering of agenda items, so that delegations would be able to give increased attention to topics under discussion and to the related documentation. She asked the Secretariat to draw up a programme of work which would take that suggestion into account, without destroying the current classification and specify the time to be allocated to each item.

- 7. Mr. AGUIRRE de CÁRCER (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the delays in the production and distribution of documents had been a problem for a long time. He hoped that the Secretariat would be able to improve the situation, despite the current financial difficulties of the United Nations. Such delays had serious consequences for the work of all the Main Committees and for plenary meetings. The proposal made by the representative of the Philippines should certainly be given constructive consideration and concrete proposals should be made regarding the programme of work; a certain flexibility must, however, be preserved regarding the consideration of the various items.
- 8. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) emphasized the need for the timely issuance of documentation. If clusters were to be subdivided, each delegation should be able, if it so desired, to address each topic as a whole, and to do so throughout the period allotted to that topic.
- 9. The CHAIRMAN said that the Bureau would consider the various proposals which had been made and that, in the spirit of flexibility mentioned by the representative of Spain, he took it that the Committee was prepared to adopt the programme of work.

It was so decided.

- 10. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) expressed deep sympathy for the President of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, whose life had been threatened in an assassination attempt, and for the other victims of the attack.
- 11. Despite the devotion to duty of all the officials who had helped to prepare for the current session, the grave financial crisis which the United Nations was experiencing necessitated certain restrictions, in particular a reduction in overtime. With regard to the concern expressed by some delegations, he assured them that, while the Secretariat would do its utmost to ensure the timely distribution of pre-session documentation, delays could occur in the issuance of in-session documentation. Moreover, the schedule of informal meetings should be organized in such a way as to avoid any waste of time. The Secretariat would cooperate closely with the Chairman and the Bureau of the Second Committee in order to ensure the smooth progress of the Committee's work.
- 12. With regard to the context in which the work of the Committee would be carried out, he pointed out that the past year had been marked by several major events which had important consequences for the Committee's work: the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, had produced a Declaration and Programme of Action, many parts of which directly concerned the Second Committee, particularly in the areas of poverty and employment and, while the

Declaration and Programme of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women mostly concerned the Third Committee, they also had some impact on the work of the Second Committee. Moreover, in the context of efforts related to an agenda for development to establish development priorities and goals for the United Nations system, it would be appropriate to mention the Working Group on an agenda for development. In that context, and within the framework of the debate in the Economic and Social Council in Geneva on the coordination segment, one of the major topics which had emerged was primarily of concern to the Second Committee: namely, how to coordinate the follow-up to that series of major conferences.

- 13. All the processes which had just been mentioned would be included in the major motif for the year, namely reform, restructuring and revitalization, the purpose being not only to make the system more efficient and cost-effective, but also to give it the resources to carry out its fundamental mandate more fully and more effectively.
- 14. With regard to coordinated follow-up to the major conferences, while each had its own specificities and its own constituencies, especially among non-governmental organizations, there were clearly many elements which were common to all the conferences; there was therefore a need for close coordination in the follow-up activities. Whether they had dealt with sustainable development, the advancement of women or social development, all the conferences had had a development angle and all had addressed fundamental development issues such as resource flows, trade, the situation in the least developed countries and many others. Development had been one of the Second Committee's principal concerns for many years.
- 15. Besides development issues, the conferences had all highlighted gender concerns, issues relating to education, health and the situation of children, and environmental concerns. At a time when the dominant trend was towards liberalization and the decreasing role of the State, it was important to highlight gender issues, to establish priorities to promote social development and to be concerned about the environment when formulating national and international policies. It was no coincidence that almost all the conferences had addressed the problem of structural adjustment and emphasized the need to review some of its dimensions.
- 16. All the conferences had been characterized by a system-wide effort; one of their most striking successes had been to bring together all United Nations organs and their various secretariats to work together. The Organization had a duty to preserve that spirit of interagency cooperation and collaboration and that unity of purpose and to develop them in the follow-up process.
- 17. Another feature which the conferences had had in common was that they had provided a forum for a dialogue between Governments and non-governmental organizations, which had helped to revitalize the work of the Organization and enhance its credibility in the social and economic field in the eyes of world public opinion, which was looking for results. It was important that that interest, momentum and credibility should be maintained and developed in the follow-up to the conferences.

- 18. The question of follow-up was particularly important because the conferences had helped to create a type of development cooperation based on mutually-defined interests worked out through an open and transparent political process. The conferences had produced a number of projects, goals and basic commitments and had made it easier to organize national and international activities. The challenge now lay in ensuring that the standing political bodies of the United Nations made good use of those valuable gains to re-energize, revitalize, restructure and even reform development cooperation.
- 19. In conclusion, he said that his Department, which was participating actively in discussions on the reform of the relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions and which supported the work of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions and that of the Second and Third Committees, was in the forefront of the intergovernmental dialogue. It could not do more, but it did try to mobilize the valuable talents that were available throughout the system. One of the Department's great successes had been to set up a system-wide structure to support the work of the Committee: that should help to ensure that considerable progress would be achieved in development cooperation by the end of the current session.
- 20. Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Chairman, when speaking as Chairman of a Main Committee, had referred to his own country as "The Republic of Macedonia". His delegation believed that it was an inadvertent error. Security Council resolution 817 (1993) had very clearly stated how that country was to be designated. He urged the Chairman to implement the Security Council resolution and to follow the current practice in the United Nations by which States were designated according to their official names.
- 21. The CHAIRMAN said that rule 107 of the rules of procedure forbade him from speaking on his own behalf or as a representative of his country. He therefore invited the representative of his country to exercise the right of reply.
- 22. Mr. DŽUNDEV (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that Security Council resolution 817 (1993) did not oblige anyone to use the designation contained therein. Those who wished to use it did so. His country was, however, called the Republic of Macedonia and it was a waste of time to discuss that issue, which had no bearing on the work of the Second Committee.
- 23. Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) said that he had no intention of politicizing the Second Committee. He accepted the fact that the Chairman had invoked rule 107 of the rules of procedure, but said that, with regard to the designation of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which was currently being considered in other forums, the Security Council resolution stated that this State must be "provisionally referred to for all purposes within the United Nations as 'the former Yugsolav Republic of Macedonia' pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of the State".