

REPORT
OF THE
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
FOR THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 49 (A/37/49)



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

26 October 1982

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 36/120 C.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the Preparatory Committee
on the Question of Palestine

His Excellency
Mr. J. Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In resolution 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session decided to convene, under the auspices of the United Nations, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine not later than 1984, on the basis of General Assembly resolution ES-7/2.
2. The General Assembly authorized the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to act as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference and to take all the necessary steps for its organization, to hold sessions particularly for this purpose and to make recommendations regarding, inter alia, the site, scheduling, participation in, and the provisional agenda of the Conference.
3. The Assembly also invited all appropriate United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to co-operate with the Committee in the implementation of that resolution and requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Secretary-General of the Conference and to provide all the necessary assistance to the Committee in the organization of the Conference.
4. In compliance with paragraph 4 of resolution 36/120 C, the Secretary-General appointed Mrs. Lucille Mair to take office from 1 May 1982 as Secretary-General of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

II. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Duration of the session

5. The Preparatory Committee held its first session at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 31 March to 22 October 1982. During that session, the Committee held seven meetings.

B. Membership and officers

6. In accordance with resolution 36/120 C of 10 December 1981 the membership of the Preparatory Committee is as follows:

Afghanistan	Indonesia	Romania
Cuba	Lao People's Democratic	Senegal
Cyprus	Republic	Sierra Leone
German Democratic	Madagascar	Tunisia
Republic	Malaysia	Turkey
Guinea	Mali	Ukrainian Soviet
Guyana	Malta	Socialist Republic
Hungary	Nigeria	Yugoslavia
India	Pakistan	

7. The following Member States and organizations having received observer status from the General Assembly participated in the work of the Preparatory Committee as Observers:

Algeria	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Viet Nam
Czechoslovakia	Mauritania	League of Arab States
Ecuador	Morocco	Organization of the
Egypt	Niger	Islamic Conference
Iraq	Syrian Arab Republic	Palestine Liberation
Jordan	United Arab Emirates	Organization

8. At its 1st meeting, on 31 March 1982, the Preparatory Committee, decided that the officers of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman, Mr. Raúl Roa-Kouri (Cuba) and Mr. Mohammed Farid Zarif (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairmen, and Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), Rapporteur, should also serve in a similar capacity as the officers of the Preparatory Committee.

9. At its 2nd meeting, on 24 May, the Preparatory Committee decided to establish an open-ended working group of the Preparatory Committee to deal with preparations for the Conference. The Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), was appointed to serve on the Working Group and to act as its Chairman. The following expressed willingness to participate in the Working Group:

Afghanistan	Indonesia	Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
Cuba	Pakistan	Yugoslavia
German Democratic Republic	Senegal	Palestine Liberation Organization
Hungary	Tunisia	
India	Turkey	

10. The Preparatory Committee expressed the hope that the proceedings of the Working Group, which are open to all Member and Observer States of the United Nations, would be widely followed so as to encourage universal participation in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, the importance of which was evidenced daily by the alarming deterioration of conditions in the region.

C. Adoption of the agenda

11. The Preparatory Committee considered the following items:

- (a) Date and venue;
- (b) Preparatory activities;
- (c) Objectives;
- (d) Organization of work;
- (e) Documentation;
- (f) Draft provisional agenda;
- (g) Participation;
- (h) Draft provisional rules of procedure;
- (i) Organization of the future work of the Preparatory Committee.

For its consideration it had before it document A/CONF.114/PC/2 of 17 May 1982 which outlined the preparatory arrangements for the Conference and the future work of the Preparatory Committee.

III. PREPARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

A. Date and venue of the Conference

12. There was a consensus in the Preparatory Committee on the desirability of holding the Conference in Europe at United Nations Headquarters or the headquarters of a specialized agency. Accordingly at its 3rd meeting, on 27 May, the Preparatory Committee recommended that the Conference be held in Europe for a 10-working day period during the first semester of 1984.

13. At its 4th meeting, on 27 July, however, the Preparatory Committee, because of the political and military situation in Lebanon, assessed the question of the date of the Conference in the light of the recommendation of the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries which took place at Nicosia, Cyprus, from 15 to 17 July 1982 "to review the decision contained in resolution 36/120 of 28 January 1982 ... with a view to advancing [the] date [of the Conference] to 1983 and allocating the necessary resources in time" (A/37/366, annex, para. 27, subpara. viii).

14. After further consideration, the Preparatory Committee recommended that the Conference be convened at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris from 16 to 27 August 1983. It also recommended the initiation of necessary procedures by the resumed seventh emergency special session to authorize adequate resources in time to permit the holding of the Conference in 1983 with the necessary preparations and follow-up activities.

15. The General Assembly at its resumed seventh emergency special session adopted resolution ES-7/7 of 19 August 1982, which endorsed the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee.

B. Preparatory activities for the Conference

16. In considering this question, the Preparatory Committee had before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/CONF.114/PC/1/CRP.1). At its 4th meeting, on 27 July, the Preparatory Committee recommended the adoption of the following comprehensive programme of preparatory activities to ensure the successful preparations for the Conference:

(a) Governmental and intergovernmental activities

- (i) Governmental activities would include the establishment of national focal points at a senior policy-making level for stimulating national discussion of policy alternatives, co-ordinating preparation at the national level and providing a link to the Conference Secretariat;

- (ii) Intergovernmental activities would include the organization of five regional preparatory meetings with the aim of securing active involvement of the Governments of Member States of the various regions during the preparatory stage of the Conference and during the Conference itself. Specialized agencies, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations would also be invited to participate in these meetings;
- (iii) Such activities would also include the holding of a round table of eminent persons on some of the substantive issues of the Palestine question.

(b) Interagency activities

All organizations of the United Nations system would be actively involved in the preparatory regional meetings and in the Conference itself.

(c) Non-governmental activities

- (i) A varied network of non-governmental organizations responsive to the Palestinian/Israeli issue would be invited to make an active and broad contribution to the work of the Conference. Activities of non-governmental organizations would be well spaced so that there would be a continuous flow of activities throughout the months preceding and subsequent to the Conference;
- (ii) - The programmes proposed for non-governmental organizations encompass organizational and educative activities, such as dissemination of news-letters, booklets and brochures, screening of films and videotapes, and mounting of photographic exhibits, posters, in addition to television and radio programmes. A series of regional meetings of non-governmental organizations throughout the world held in conjunction with the intergovernmental meetings would be designed to create a ground swell of activities and interest.

(d) Public information

Public information activities would be undertaken with a view to highlighting the issues before the Conference and generating public understanding of these issues. The activities would include:

- (i) A promotional brochure outlining the essential details of the Conference;
- (ii) A news-letter to act as a link for all involved or interested in the Conference and its preparatory process;
- (iii) Fact sheets and background notes on various aspects of the question of Palestine;
- (iv) Special briefings by non-governmental organizations in New York and Geneva about the Conference;

- (v) Radio programmes for world-wide distribution;
- (vi) A photo exhibit at the site of the Conference;
- (vii) Seminars for media representatives in different regions to discuss various issues related to the Conference with leading personalities;
- (viii) An encounter prior to the Conference for journalists, to provide a forum for discussions with senior officials of the United Nations and of Permanent Missions and with leading personalities on the Palestine issue.

C. Objectives of the Conference

17. When considering this question, the Preparatory Committee had before it a conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/CONF.114/PC/1/CRP.2), containing the objectives of the Conference.

18. In that paper, it was affirmed that the attainment of peace and security, justice and equity in the Middle East constituted the fundamental guiding principles of the Conference and that those principles, which were enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, imposed a responsibility on the United Nations and its Member States to work for their achievement.

19. The two main objectives of the Conference were:

- (a) To increase international awareness of the facts relating to the question;
- (b) To attain governmental and non-governmental support for effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights in Palestine on the basis of United Nations resolutions.

20. More specifically, the Conference was to ensure a universal commitment by all Member States to the achievement of Palestinian rights and the establishment of a Palestinian State within the framework of action adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session. The Conference and preparatory work for the Conference would set in motion agreed modalities for the implementation of agreed decisions.

21. At its 5th meeting, on 18 August, the Preparatory Committee adopted the objectives of the Conference as outlined in paragraphs 18 to 20 above.

D. Organization of work

22. The Preparatory Committee had before it conference room papers prepared by the Secretariat (A/CONF.114/PC.1/CRP.2 and CRP.3) for its consideration. The Preparatory Committee decided to recommend that the Conference should consist of a plenary, two main committees and such sub-committees and working groups as may be considered necessary. In addition to these committees and working groups, the Conference would be required to establish a Credentials Committee. It was also recommended that the Conference should be preceded by pre-conference consultations of one-day duration.

23. The following further assumptions were made with respect to the organization of the Conference:

(a) The two main committees would, if necessary, meet simultaneously with the plenary, that is, there would be not more than three meetings simultaneously;

(b) The working days would be from Tuesday, 16 August, to Friday, 19 August, and from Monday, 22 August, to Saturday, 27 August;

(c) Plenary meetings and meetings of the main committees would be held from 10.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., and from 3.00 to 6.00 p.m.;

(d) The General Committee of the Conference, the Credentials Committee, the sub-committees and working groups would normally meet when the plenary or the main committees were not meeting;

(e) Meeting facilities would be provided for regional and other groups which might wish to meet during the Conference;

(f) The languages of the Conference would be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish;

(g) Sound recordings of the proceedings would be made;

(h) There would be no summary records of meetings.

E. Documentation

24. At its 5th meeting, on 18 August, the Preparatory Committee had before it a conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/CONF.114/PC/1/CRP.2), containing the proposed documentation of the Conference. The Preparatory Committee endorsed the documentation as outlined below:

(a) "The Palestinian people":

An updated profile of the Palestinian people;

(b) "Palestine and international law":

(i) A report on Palestinian refugees;

(ii) Legal status of Palestinians in the occupied territories;

(iii) Status of prisoners of war;

(c) "Political and constitutional aspects of the question of Palestine":

(i) Palestine within the historical process of decolonization;

(ii) Comparative study of national liberation movements;

(iii) Development, structure and role of the Palestine Liberation Organization;

- (d) "Economic, civic, social and cultural condition of Palestinians":
 - (i) Application of law in determining rights and opportunities of citizens - a comparative study with special reference to the African experience;
 - (ii) Economic activity and access to national resources;
 - (iii) Social and cultural rights and development;
- (e) "Question of Palestine and world politics":
 - (i) Strategic and economic significance of Palestine;
 - (ii) Development of world opinion on the question of Palestine, including an update of opinion polls;
 - (iii) Palestine and conflict of ideology;
- (f) "United Nations and the question of Palestine":
 - A report on United Nations involvement in the question of Palestine;
- (g) "Recommendations for action":
 - A draft of recommendations for action.

25. At its 6th meeting, on 19 October, the Preparatory Committee agreed that it might wish to recommend additional documentation at its next session, if necessary.

F. Draft provisional agenda of the Conference

26. The Preparatory Committee had before it for consideration a conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/CONF.114/PC/1/CRP.3). At its 6th meeting, on 19 October, the Preparatory Committee decided to recommend the following draft provisional agenda:

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Election of the President.
3. Opening addresses.
4. Adoption of the rules of procedure.
5. Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
 - (a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee;
 - (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.

7. Adoption of the agenda.
8. Organization of work.
9. Historical and contemporary review of the situation of the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights.
10. The status of the Holy City of Jerusalem.
11. The international framework of the question of Palestine and the role of the United Nations.
12. Obstacles to the achievement of Palestinian rights.
13. Recommendations for action for the achievement of Palestinian rights.
14. Adoption of the report and final documents of the Conference.

27. Upon the recommendations of the Working Group, the Preparatory Committee considered specific issues which should be discussed under agenda items 9 to 13 and recommended that the following substantive issues should be duly reflected in the annotations to the provisional agenda:

- (a) The Palestinian people - historical, political, constitutional, economic, social and cultural aspects and evolution;
- (b) Question of Palestine in world politics, recommendations of the Committee and other proposals;
- (c) The question of Palestine under international law;
- (d) The status of the Holy City of Jerusalem;
- (e) Obstacles to the achievement of Palestinian rights:
 - (i) Israeli policies and practices vis-à-vis the Palestinian people;
 - (ii) Other obstacles which impede the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;
- (f) The influence of the mass media in portraying the question of Palestine;
- (g) The right of return of the Palestinians;
- (h) The right to self-determination of peoples as it applies to the Palestinian people;
- (i) The United Nations and the question of Palestine.

28. The Preparatory Committee deferred consideration of the question of the allocation of the items of the draft provisional agenda to the plenary and the two main committees to the next session of the Preparatory Committee.

G. Participation in the Conference

29. At its 6th and 7th meetings, on 19 October and 22 October the Preparatory Committee had before it conference room papers prepared by the Secretariat (A/CONF.114/PC/1/CRP.3 and CRP.4). In conformity with document A/CONF.114/PC/2, section II, paragraph 3, and taking into account the established practice of previous conferences and also the requirements of this Conference, the Preparatory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General should invite to participate in the Conference those listed in subparagraphs (a) to (h) below:

(a) All States;

(b) Namibia, represented by the United Nations Council for Namibia;

(c) Representatives of organizations that had received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under its auspices in the capacity of observers, in accordance with Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 31/152 of 20 December 1976;

(d) Representatives of the national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity, in its region, in the capacity of observers, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3280 (XXIX) of 10 December 1974;

(e) The specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as interested United Nations organs, to be represented at the Conference;

(f) Interested intergovernmental organizations to be represented by observers at the Conference;

(g) Eminent persons designated by the Preparatory Committee that might have a specific contribution to make to the work of the Conference;

(h) Interested non-governmental organizations subscribing to the objectives of the Conference and having a specific contribution to make to the work of the Conference, whether in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or not, that were approved by the Preparatory Committee, to be represented by observers at the Conference. In respect of those non-governmental organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, the Committee would need to satisfy itself that the following additional criteria have been met:

(i) The organization must be a recognized international or national organization duly established or incorporated as a non-profit organization;

(ii) The organization must demonstrate that it has a positive programme in the field for which the Conference has been convened.

H. Draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference

30. At its 6th meeting, on 19 October, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft provisional rules of procedure contained in document A/CONF.114/PC/3, with the understanding that the number of Vice-Presidents to be elected by the Conference would be considered at a later stage.

I. Organization of the future work of the Preparatory Committee

31. At its 6th meeting, on 19 October, the Preparatory Committee considered this question and decided to recommend that another session should be held for the purpose of considering all outstanding matters pertaining to the ongoing preparations for the Conference.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

32. At its first session, the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine made a number of recommendations which either called for action by the General Assembly or should be brought to its attention. They are listed below in the order in which they are discussed in section III of this report:

(a) Preparatory activities for the Conference

The Preparatory Committee recommends for the consideration of the General Assembly the programme of preparatory activities contained in paragraph 16 above.

(b) Objectives of the Conference

The Preparatory Committee recommends for the consideration of the General Assembly the objectives of the Conference contained in paragraphs 18 to 20 above.

(c) Documentation for the Conference

The Preparatory Committee recommends for the consideration of the General Assembly the proposals for documentation contained in paragraphs 24 and 25 above.

(d) Draft provisional agenda of the Conference

The Preparatory Committee recommends for the consideration of the General Assembly the draft provisional agenda of the Conference contained in paragraph 26 above.

(e) Participation in the Conference

The Preparatory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General should invite to participate in the Conference:

- (i) All States;
- (ii) Namibia, represented by the United Nations Council for Namibia;
- (iii) Representatives of organizations that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under its auspices in the capacity of observers, in accordance with Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 31/152 of 20 December 1976;
- (iv) Representatives of the national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity, in its region, in the capacity of observers, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3280 (XXIX) of 10 December 1974;
- (v) The specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as interested United Nations organs, to be represented at the Conference;
- (vi) Interested intergovernmental organizations to be represented by observers at the Conference;
- (vii) Eminent persons designated by the Preparatory Committee that may have a specific contribution to make to the work of the Conference;
- (viii) Interested non-governmental organizations subscribing to the objectives of the Conference and having a specific contribution to make to the work of the Conference, whether in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or not, that are approved by the Preparatory Committee, to be represented by observers at the Conference. In respect of those non-governmental organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, the Committee would need to satisfy itself that the following additional criteria have been met:
 - a. The organization must be a recognized international or national organization duly established or incorporated as a non-profit organization;
 - b. The organization must demonstrate that it has a positive programme in the field for which the Conference has been convened.

(f) Draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference

The Preparatory Committee recommends for the consideration of the General Assembly the draft provisional rules of procedure contained in document A/CONF.114/PC/3.

(g) Organization of the future work of the Preparatory Committee

The Preparatory Committee recommends that another session of the Committee be held for the purpose of considering all outstanding matters pertaining to the preparation for the Conference.

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