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Summary record of the 2nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 3 October 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001

1. **The Chairman** suggested observing a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

2. *At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.*

Organization of work (A/C.4/56/1; A/C.4/56/L.1*)

3. **The Chairman** drew attention to document A/56/250, which contained the recommendations of the General Committee on procedural aspects of the work of the Main Committees, in particular regarding schedules of meetings, explanations of vote, rights of reply, points of order and length of statements, records of meetings, concluding statements, resolutions and questions relating to the programme budget.

4. He intended to convene and adjourn meetings promptly. During the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Committee had lost 27 hours and 5 minutes of meeting time owing to late starts and early adjournments. As a result, the Committee's utilization factor had been 62 per cent, which was below the benchmark figure of 80 per cent established by the Committee on Conferences. He would try to improve that situation, and in that connection he emphasized the importance of punctuality, which was the "politeness of kings". Meetings would be held only if there was a sufficient number of delegations on the speakers' list, particularly since resources allocated for meetings which were cancelled in a timely fashion could be redirected to service other meetings. In accordance with a General Assembly decision, during the current session the practice would be maintained of waiving the rule that a meeting of a Main Committee could be declared open and the debate permitted to proceed when at least one quarter of the members of the Committee were present. At the same time, the requirement that a majority of the members needed to be present for any decision to be taken would remain in force.

5. Given the number of agenda items and the limited number of meetings allocated to the Committee, he suggested establishing a 10-minute limit on statements during general debates, and a 15-minute limit for

delegations making statements on behalf of several delegations.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **The Chairman** drew attention to the list of agenda items allocated to the Committee (A/C.4/56/1) and the note by the Chairman on the organization of work (A/C.4/56/L.1*). In the coming days a list of documents before the Committee (A/C.4/56/INF/1) would also be issued. The programme of work and timetable of meetings proposed in document A/C.4/56/L.1* had been prepared following consultations with the relevant units of the Secretariat and delegations and also taking into account the availability of documentation and the number of meetings allocated to the Committee.

8. **Mr. Jilani** (Observer for Palestine) drew attention to the dates set for consideration of agenda items 87 and 88. In both cases, consideration of the item would begin on Monday and continue on Thursday and Friday, which meant that there would be a two-day break. In the interests of appropriate consideration of the items it would be preferable to avoid such a break.

9. **The Chairman** said that the timetable had been determined in part by deadlines for the receipt of documentation, but that the main reason was difficulties related to conference room assignments. It was well known that meetings of the First and Fourth Committees were not held simultaneously since the questions dealt with in those Committees were generally covered by the same members of individual delegations.

10. **Mr. Jilani** (Observer for Palestine) said that the timetable of meetings would need to be modified only slightly so that the agenda items in question could be considered without a break. In that regard he would be guided by the Chairman and the Secretariat.

11. **Mr. Zaki** (Egypt) said that the difficulties involved in conference room assignments were extremely unfortunate. In its current form, the schedule for the consideration of items 87 and 88 made it difficult for delegations to follow the debates. On the other hand, experience had shown that agenda item 86 was unlikely to require the five meetings allocated for its consideration. It was to be hoped that the Chairman and the Secretariat would be able to agree upon a more

appropriate timetable which would allow items 87 and 88 to be considered without a break.

12. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that he supported the comments made in favour of optimizing the time period for consideration of items 87 and 88. With regard to the comment by the Chairman that the proposed timetable was determined in part by deadlines for the receipt of documentation, it should be pointed out that in recent years the documents on those items had been submitted late.

13. **Mr. Musonda** (Zambia) said that he agreed with the comment made by the representative of Egypt regarding the number of meetings allocated for consideration of item 86. Experience had shown that item 86 required no more than one or two meetings. The Chairman had mentioned that during its previous session the Committee had used only 62 per cent of the time allocated. In his opinion, that was due in large part to the fact that the delegations had had little to discuss on that agenda item at the previous session. If the schedule were better arranged, fuller use could be made of the time.

14. Another issue was that as things currently stood, the General Assembly was to hold a general debate from 12 to 16 November, but some meetings of the Committee had also been scheduled for the same dates. Some delegations would not be able to send representatives to the meetings of both the Committee and the Assembly if they were held at the same time.

15. **The Chairman** said that in conjunction with the Secretariat he would try to find a way to address these issues. He took it that the Committee wished to adopt the programme of work and the timetable of meetings as they appeared in document A/C.4/56/L.1*, on the understanding that modifications might be made.

16. *It was so decided.*

17. **The Chairman** drew attention to paragraph 5 of the programme of work that had just been adopted and suggested that, as at previous sessions, an open-ended working group should be set up, under the chairmanship of Chile, to prepare a draft resolution on agenda item 86.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **The Chairman** recalled that at previous sessions, the Committee had considered the chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard

to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples concerning military activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories under the agenda item entitled "Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories". He suggested that the Committee should follow the same procedure at the current session.

20. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

21. **The Chairman** announced that in view of the ongoing consultations, elections for Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur would be held at a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.