



General Assembly

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Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

Summary record of the 448th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 5 July 2001, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. de Saram. (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chairman** declared open the 2001 session.

Adoption of the agenda

2. **The Chairman** drew the attention of the members of the Ad Hoc Committee to the provisional agenda for the session contained in document A/AC.159/L.130. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt it.
3. *The agenda was adopted.*

Report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 54/47 of 1 December 1999

4. **The Chairman** said that, in its resolution 54/47 of 1 December 1999, the General Assembly had requested him to continue his informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report, through the Committee, to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.
5. He had held consultations with most of the members of the Committee. Unfortunately, the implementation of the Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace faced a number of difficulties, and it had not been possible to reach a consensus in the period since the submission of the last report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session in 1999.
6. At its 1997 and 1999 sessions, the General Assembly had emphasized the importance of participation by all permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the work of the Committee, which would facilitate the development of a mutually beneficial dialogue to promote peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. However, the United States, France and the United Kingdom, the three permanent members of the Security Council which had withdrawn from the Committee, had not changed their positions on the matter.
7. He trusted that, in accordance with the general view expressed during the informal consultations, the Committee would recognize the need to request additional time from the General Assembly in order to

hold further consultations on the possibilities for focusing the debate on the practical measures envisaged in the Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, with the goal of establishing peace, security and stability in the region.

8. **Mr. Shen** Guofang (China) said that, in order for the Indian Ocean to become a zone of peace, the great Powers must end their military presence in the region and refrain from any sort of threats against States. Relations among the countries of the region must be governed by the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, peaceful coexistence and non-interference in internal affairs. Practical measures must be taken to avoid the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

9. His delegation fully supported the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users in the work of the Committee, which would facilitate a dialogue aimed at promoting peace, stability and security in the region.

10. **Mr. Pohan** (Indonesia) said that his delegation agreed that it was best to deal with the less contentious and controversial issues, for instance the initiation of confidence-building measures, with a view to the adoption of cooperative security strategies. That would lay a solid foundation so that the Committee, on the basis of dialogue, negotiation and consensus, would be able to deal with the complex questions it would certainly face in the future.

11. As the Movement of Non-aligned Countries had emphasized, international cooperation and the participation of the great Powers and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean were essential in order to overcome the difficulties facing the Committee. Therefore, the non-participating permanent members of the Security Council must reconsider their position in the light of the new atmosphere of confidence fostered by the end of the cold war and rejoin the Committee. It was the appropriate multilateral forum for the coordination of the efforts of regional and extra-regional States and for progress towards achieving peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean.

12. **Ms. Moules** (Australia) said that prospects for progress in the Committee's work in the short term did not appear strong, and that therefore the time and resources devoted to its work should be limited until a

work programme had been agreed and substantive work could begin. Nevertheless, as a littoral State, Australia was committed to the strengthening of regional cooperation and to United Nations efforts to enhance security in that part of the world. Thus, she hoped that the Committee would in time become a useful forum for discussion on questions of Indian Ocean security.

13. **Mr. dos Santos** (Mozambique) said he regretted that no substantive progress had been made thus far. He supported the proposal to request from the General Assembly additional time to implement the measures provided for in the Declaration.

14. **Ms. Roholinirina** (Madagascar) reaffirmed that, in the current international environment rife with threats and uncertainty, the 1971 Declaration remained in full force. The Indian Ocean region occupied a strategic position that made it especially vulnerable. It harboured a major portion of the world's population and encompassed extraordinary resources. Therefore, the international community had a moral obligation to unite its efforts to establish an atmosphere of peace, security and stability in the region.

15. The Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which had chartered the course towards that noble objective, was a priceless achievement for the whole world which must be preserved and promoted. Therefore, her delegation appealed to all interested parties to increase their cooperation in the implementation of the measures it stipulated.

16. It was vitally important to ensure that all the States affected by the Declaration contributed to and participated in the process of promoting cooperation and consolidating peace in the region. To that end, her delegation encouraged the Chairman to continue his consultations with members of the Committee, the permanent members of Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in order to determine the best approach to allow the work of the Committee to move forward.

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session

17. **Ms. Roholinirina** (Madagascar), Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of the Committee, which would be issued as document A/AC.159/L.131. The paragraphs in the document would be renumbered as a result of the deletion of paragraph 11. In the second

part, former paragraph 12 would become paragraph 11 of part C, and former paragraph 13 would become paragraph 12 of part D.

18. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to adopt the report paragraph by paragraph.

Section I. Introduction

Paragraphs 1 to 5

19. *Paragraphs 1 to 5 were adopted.*

Section II. Work of the Ad Hoc Committee in 2001

20. **The Chairman** said that paragraphs 9 and 10 would be added. The wording was similar to that of the previous year.

21. *Paragraphs 6 to 14 were adopted.*

22. *The draft report as a whole was adopted.*

Other matters

23. **The Chairman** said that, there being no other matters to discuss, he declared closed the 2001 session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.