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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
Agenda item 115

PROGRAMME PLANNING

Letter dated 4 November 1988 from the Chairman of the
Special Political Committee addressed to the President
of the General Assembly

I have the honour to request that the attached letter be forwarded to the
Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

(Signed) Eugeniusz NOWORYTA
Chairman
Special Political Committee

Annex

LETTER DATED 4 NOVEMBER 1988 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN
OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

I have the honour to refer to your letter dated 12 October 1988 (A/SPC/43/L.4) concerning programme planning, in which you requested the views of the Special Political Committee on the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 (which has been extended to 1991), and on the draft introduction to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

I wish to inform you that this matter was brought to the attention of the Special Political Committee at its 5th meeting, on 17 October 1988, with the request that any members of the Committee wishing to express their views should do so in writing.

I have the honour to transmit to you, for the attention of the Fifth Committee, a communication which I have received in that connection, namely, a letter dated 3 November 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77.

(Signed) Eugeniusz NOWORYTA
Chairman
Special Political Committee

Appendix

LETTER DATED 3 NOVEMBER 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF TUNISIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

With regard to the letter addressed to you by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/SPC/43/L.4) concerning agenda item 115, entitled "Programme planning", I have the honour to submit to you the views of the Group of 77 on the subject.

In the above-mentioned letter, the Chairman of the Fifth Committee in accordance with the request of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, asks the Member States wishing to express their views at the Special Political Committee on the relevant chapters of the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 (extended to 1991) (A/43/6 and Corr.1) and on the note by the Secretary-General (A/43/329) containing the draft introduction to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

The Group of 77 reiterates the importance it attaches to the work of the Department of Public Information which is entrusted with an essential role in better reaching the peoples of the world to explain to them the role and the objectives of the United Nations system as a universal multilateral forum dedicated to the maintenance of international peace and security, to the development of friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights, of self-determination of peoples and to the achievement of international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging global development and respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms.

The Group of 77 considers it essential that the Department of Public Information should discharge its mandate in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and with the General Assembly resolutions, including the recommendations of the Committee on Information. In this context, the Department of Public Information should seek to improve the quality and the impact of the programmes it produces in the priority areas as set by the General Assembly, namely decolonization, the question of Palestine, apartheid and Namibia, external debt and human rights. Special emphasis should be given to the need to establish the new world information and communication order, which is based, inter alia, on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and on the urgent need to change the dependant status of the developing countries in the field of information and communication and which is seen as an evolving and continuous process. To this end, co-operation between the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization should be further strengthened. The Department should also seek to enhance its co-operation with the news media of the developing countries.

The United Nations system should endeavour to promote further co-operation between developed and developing countries, on the one hand, and among developing countries, on the other hand, to create, improve and strengthen the necessary

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infrastructure of the developing countries in the field of information and communication. This type of co-operation would certainly contribute to a large degree to understanding and friendship between all nations of the world. Therefore, this should be duly reflected in the medium-term plan and in the Secretary-General's note.

With regard to the restructuring in the Department of Public Information, the Group of 77 is of the view that the General Assembly should closely monitor and evaluate the performance of the Department to ensure that it functions efficiently and effectively and fulfils the legislative mandates assigned to it.

Concerning the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Group of 77 is of the view that more emphasis should be given to international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Such co-operation is closely linked with the progressive development of space law, which must keep step with technological progress and fill the gaps in existing international legal instruments. Increasing and further strengthening international co-operation is essential for the rapid spread of the benefits of space explorations and space technology.

In this regard, the agreement reached by the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, during its twenty-seventh session, on the inclusion in its agenda of the new item entitled "Consideration of the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries" is an important break-through that should be duly taken into consideration. The convening of a working group to deliberate on this task and the compilation of the views of Member States on this matter is of high importance.

The Group of 77 reiterates its opinion that with regard to the United Nations reform process, Member States should be constantly informed about full programme implementation. Further information about the new proposed programmes in the medium-term plan and their concrete impact on the existing programmes should be provided.

The Group of 77 emphasizes that the existing priorities and mandates as set by the General Assembly should be fulfilled and that programmes related to them should not be reduced in scope or substance.

Finally, the Group of 77 considers that the new programme structure proposed in paragraph 33 of the introduction of the medium-term plan (A/43/329, annex) needs further consideration once relevant information about the criteria used to change the present structure is provided.

The Group of 77 requests that the list of concrete major programmes and programmes circulated during the September meeting of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination also be circulated in the General Assembly so as to allow all Committees to have a preliminary view on the subject.

(Signed) Ahmed GHEZAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Tunisia to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77
