



GENERAL COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Thursday, 21 September 1978
at 10.30 a.m.

New York

UN/SA COLLECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. LIEVANO (President of the General Assembly)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THIRTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADOPTION OF
THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(A/BUR/33/1, A/BUR/33/2) (continued)

Section IV: Allocation of items

1. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that the decisions it had already taken, including decisions involving the merging of items and the consequential renumbering of items, would be reflected in its report.
2. He drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 19 of the memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/BUR/33/1) and also to the final paragraph of section X of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/33/1) in which he suggested that items should only be referred to the plenary for final disposition after a full discussion in committee.
3. Mr. BARTON (Canada) endorsed the Secretary-General's comments concerning the importance of allocating items more effectively and the need to streamline the General Assembly's work. He agreed that the Committee could play an important part in that process by consolidating the agenda and redistributing items and that the practice of referring items to the plenary without prior discussion in committee was counterproductive.
4. Mr. LEONARD (United States of America) endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Canada. At the previous session, his delegation had stressed the importance of allocating agenda items to a Main Committee before referring them to the plenary Assembly as that traditional practice benefited both the Assembly and its individual members. He therefore appealed to members of the Committee to bear the Secretary-General's remarks in mind when considering the proposals contained in paragraph 20 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.
5. Mr. FALL (Senegal) endorsed the comment by the Secretary-General that important items should be discussed first by a Main Committee and then in plenary meeting, but pointed out that, when such items had already been discussed at a number of previous sessions both in committee and in plenary meetings, it should be possible to refer them directly to the plenary.
6. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to examine the proposals concerning the allocation of items dealing with matters which had not been considered previously by the General Assembly which were listed in paragraph 20 of the memorandum by the Secretary-General.
7. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should allocate item 130 to the Third Committee.
3. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the representative of the Soviet Union, as the sponsor of item 131 of the draft agenda, entitled "Conclusion of an international

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convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States", had proposed that the item should be considered directly in plenary meeting or be allocated to the First Committee.

9. Mr. KHLESTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in proposing the inclusion of item 131 in the agenda of the thirty-third session, his delegation had stressed the importance of considering the vital issue to which it related, which was inseparable from the decisions taken at the recent special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. His delegation attached such importance to the item that it believed that it should be considered in plenary meeting. However, it was open to suggestions from other delegations and would not object if they preferred to allocate the item to the First Committee.

10. Mr. BYATT (United Kingdom) again reminded the Committee of the general principle referred to in section X of document A/33/1. His delegation had already endorsed that principle at the thirty-second session, in the belief that items should be dealt with initially in plenary meeting only if they involved routine issues. He therefore suggested that item 131 should be allocated to the First Committee.

11. Mr. BARTON (Canada) recalled that at the special session devoted to disarmament the General Assembly had decided inter alia, that the First Committee should concentrate on the issues involved in item 131. He therefore agreed that the item should be allocated to the First Committee.

12. Mr. HUSSON (France) also agreed that item 131 should be allocated to the First Committee.

13. Mr. KHLESTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, although his delegation would have preferred item 131 to be discussed in plenary meeting, it would not press the point and would agree to the allocation of that item to the First Committee.

14. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should allocate item 131 to the First Committee.

15. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should consider item 132 directly in plenary meeting.

16. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the proposals contained in paragraphs 21 and 22 of the memorandum by the Secretary-General.

17. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the proposals contained in paragraph 21 of the memorandum by the Secretary-General, which related to item 12.

18. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the proposal contained in paragraph 22 of the memorandum by the Secretary-General, which related to item 24.

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19. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to paragraph 23 of the memorandum by the Secretary-General, which recalled, in connexion with item 28, the procedure followed at the thirty-second session. The representatives of Turkey, Cyprus and Saudi Arabia had asked to participate in the discussion of the allocation of item 28. If there was no objection, he would invite them to take places at the Committee table.

20. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Eralp (Turkey), Mr. Rossides (Cyprus) and Mr. Baroody (Saudi Arabia) took places at the Committee table.

21. Mr. ERALP (Turkey) said that the proposal in the memorandum by the Secretary-General that the question of Cyprus should be considered in plenary was apparently based on the practice followed at previous sessions when the question of Cyprus had been considered in plenary meeting and the Special Political Committee had been requested to hear the representatives of the two Cypriot communities. The procedure had, however, proved totally inadequate and consideration of the item in the Special Political Committee had, in fact, merely provided an opportunity for the Greek Cypriots to argue their case with two voices.

22. Members of the Committee would recall that all United Nations resolutions on the question of Cyprus called for a solution through negotiations between the two Cypriot communities. That required that both communities should be represented on an equal footing in all international forums in which the question of Cyprus was debated. The fact that the Turkish Cypriot community had not yet been allowed to participate in the debates of the General Assembly on the question therefore created a situation which was not only unjust but also incompatible with United Nations resolutions and it was therefore detrimental to the negotiating process. Moreover, the procedure followed so far prevented the General Assembly from becoming fully acquainted with the views of one of the parties to the dispute. It also ignored the fact that there were two separate and distinct administrations on the island. The fact that at the thirty-second session many delegations had been unable to vote in favour of the Committee's recommendation concerning the allocation of the item in accordance with that procedure showed beyond a doubt that misgivings as to the merits of the procedure were widespread.

23. The problem of Cyprus had now reached a crucial stage and one of the parties to the conflict was attempting to bring about a resumption of talks between the two communities. The time had come for the Committee to take a fresh look at the procedure followed at previous sessions. He hoped that it would adopt a procedure which would enable the General Assembly to hear the representative of the Turkish Cypriot community on an equal footing with that of the Greek Cypriot community so that it could learn the true nature of the proposals recently put forward by the Turkish Cypriot community.

24. While his delegation was aware of the procedural constraints in the United Nations, it believed that those constraints were generally applicable only to debates in the plenary. There could be no justifiable reason for opposing the allocation of the item to an appropriate Committee in order to enable the Turkish

(Mr. Eralp, Turkey)

community to participate in the debate at the committee stage and to take a more active part in consultations on a draft resolution. Such a procedure would redress the inequality suffered by the Turkish Cypriot community at previous sessions. In the past, the Greek Cypriot community had argued that the question of Cyprus was too important to be discussed in committee. That was not a valid argument, for many vital issues such as disarmament were discussed at the committee level. The purpose of a debate at the United Nations was not to provide a forum for a public exchange of arguments but to make a contribution to the settlement of a problem. The General Assembly could not make such a contribution if it ignored one of the parties to a dispute.

25. His delegation's proposal was, moreover, entirely in keeping with the suggestion made by the Secretary-General in section X of document A/33/1, which several delegations had rightly endorsed. He could not subscribe to the view put forward by the representative of Senegal that items which had been discussed repeatedly in plenary meeting should not be allocated to a Main Committee. It would be far wiser for the General Assembly to deal with the question of Cyprus in committee first and then in plenary meeting to attempt to arrive at a balanced judgement. His delegation therefore hoped that the General Committee would take a decision which would be in keeping with the resolutions and rules of procedure of the General Assembly and which, moreover, would take account of the views of the Turkish Cypriot community as expressed in document A/33/255. His delegation opposed the procedure suggested in paragraph 23 of document A/BUR/33/1 and requested that the paragraph should be put to a vote.

26. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) observed that the representative of Turkey had based his argument on a totally false premise. The question of Cyprus had been on the agenda of the plenary for many sessions; it had been discussed exhaustively and there was no need to allocate it now to the Special Political Committee. To do so would be to contradict the Secretary-General's procedural recommendations, for the question of Cyprus could be said to have been referred to the plenary for final disposition. All that remained to be done was to implement the Security Council resolution calling for the implementation of all related General Assembly resolutions. The representative of Canada had referred, in his statement, solely to new items and the representative of Senegal had clearly meant that items which had already been discussed at previous sessions should not be moved backwards and forwards from one forum to another.

27. The representative of Turkey had maintained that the main parties to the Cyprus dispute were the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. Yet the question of Cyprus was on the agenda because Turkey had violated Cypriot territory. Numerous resolutions had been adopted on that subject, including General Assembly resolution 3212 (XXIX), which had been adopted unanimously by the General Assembly after a very thorough discussion and had been endorsed unanimously by the Security Council. That resolution called for the withdrawal of foreign armed forces and foreign military presence from Cyprus and made no reference to action taken by the Turkish Cypriot community.

28. Mr. ERALP (Turkey), speaking on a point of order, observed that the representative of Cyprus should not discuss questions of substance in the present

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(Mr. Eralp, Turkey)

debate. Moreover, that representative wrongly assumed that, just because the question of Cyprus had already been discussed in plenary meeting, it must henceforth always be dealt with in that forum. If his assumption was correct, there would be no point in discussing the allocation of items at the beginning of each session.

29. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) reiterated that it was inconceivable that the representative of Turkey should pretend that Turkey was not implicated in the problem of Cyprus and that the matter was one solely for the two Cypriot communities. Turkey had supplanted a third of the Cypriot population, an action opposed by the Turkish Cypriots themselves. Turkey was trying to annex Cyprus, and its recent proposals were in fact aimed at the partition of the island. It was impossible to pretend that there was no Turkish presence in Cyprus, when that presence was the reason why the question had been referred to the General Assembly in the first place. By seeking to have the question of Cyprus allocated to the Special Political Committee, Turkey was attempting to wash its hands of the crimes it had committed in Cyprus.

30. It had long been agreed that the views of the Turkish Cypriot community would be sought only on constitutional issues and not on such issues as the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. In fact, the Turkish Cypriots did not agree with Turkey on constitutional issues either, for they had opposed the partition proposal which had effectively halted the Cyprus negotiations. Negotiations could continue only if the partition proposal was dropped, for partition would violate the right of Cyprus to territorial integrity and sovereignty.

31. In so far as procedure was concerned, the Secretary-General proposed in paragraph 29 of document A/BUR/33/1 that the question of Cyprus should be discussed in plenary meeting. If the Committee were to vote on that issue, it must therefore vote directly on the Secretary-General's proposal. It was inconceivable, at the present stage, to change the forum for discussing a question which, as the Secretary-General had reiterated, was one of the main problems confronting the United Nations and one of the most important items on the agenda of the thirty-third session. To allocate the item to a Main Committee would be a gross violation of the principles governing General Assembly procedure.

32. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that, in determining the forum in which the question of Cyprus was to be discussed, a sense of equity and justice should prevail over narrow legal considerations and the same reasonable attitude should be shown as had been demonstrated in the past by the Greek and Turkish Governments and by the leaders of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Both parties concerned should address either the plenary Assembly or the Special Political Committee. He appealed to the representatives of Cyprus and Turkey not to prolong the discussion.

33. Mr. ERALP (Turkey) said that he would refrain from replying to the groundless distortions of the situation by the representative of Cyprus. However, with regard to the question of precedent which he had mentioned ~~the~~ General Committee was free to take any decision it chose regarding the allocation of the item. In his view, it should be allocated to the Special Political Committee.

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34. The Committee decided, by 14 votes to none, with 5 abstentions, to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the procedure described in paragraph 23 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, which related to item 28.
35. Mr. Rossides (Cyprus), Mr. Baroody (Saudi Arabia) and Mr. Eralp (Turkey) withdrew.
36. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the procedure described in paragraph 24 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, which related to item 32.
37. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the proposals in paragraphs 25 and 26 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, which related to items 47 and 63, respectively.
38. The Committee took note of paragraph 27 of the Secretary-General's memorandum and decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the First Committee should deal only with questions of disarmament and related international security questions.
39. The Committee took note of paragraph 28 of the Secretary-General's memorandum and decided to take it into account when considering the allocation of items suggested in paragraph 29 of that memorandum.

Items proposed for consideration in plenary meeting

40. The CHAIRMAN invited members of the Committee to consider the items proposed for consideration in plenary meeting, as listed in paragraph 29 of the Secretary-General's memorandum. In that connexion, he drew the attention of members of the Committee to document A/BUR/33/2 containing a request submitted by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77, that subitem (a) (Report of the Committee Established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174) of item 58, entitled "Development and international economic co-operation", should be considered directly in plenary meeting and that it should be taken as the first item following item 9 (General debate). The representative of Jamaica had asked to participate in the discussion of the item; if there was no objection, he would invite him to take a place at the Committee table.
41. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Mills (Jamaica) took a place at the Committee table.
42. Mr. MILLS (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the question of development and international economic co-operation was of the greatest importance. At its thirty-second session, the General Assembly had decided that the dialogue regarding the new international economic order should take place within the framework of the United Nations. Although that decision was of the greatest significance to the international community, attempts to implement it had encountered serious difficulties, so that the process of discussion and negotiation was at a standstill. The consideration of the item in plenary meeting would

(Mr. Mills, Jamaica)

accord it the importance that it deserved and provide the necessary impetus. Failure to clarify the situation could have a negative effect on negotiations to be held in other international forums. Moreover, early consideration of the question could provide the Second Committee with a sound basis from which to proceed with its work.

43. Mr. CHOU Nan (China) said that his delegation supported the proposal put forward by the Group of 77. The Committee Established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174 had been created at the previous session of the General Assembly on the initiative of the developing countries, which had placed great hopes on it. Over the past year, however, no progress had been made in the work of the Committee, and, in order to enable it to play its proper role in promoting the struggle for the establishment of the new international economic order, his delegation deemed it appropriate to allocate the item to the plenary Assembly and to give it priority after the general debate.

44. Mr. BYATT (United Kingdom) said that, if the item was to be considered in plenary meeting, delegations participating in the discussion should feel free to consider all aspects of the role of the Committee Established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174 against the background of the North-South dialogue and should not feel that they had to confine themselves to the question of procedure which had been outstanding when the work of the Committee had last been suspended.

45. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 58 (a) should be considered directly in plenary meeting and should be taken as the first item following item 9.

46. Mr. Mills (Jamaica) withdrew.

47. Mr. FALL (Senegal), speaking on behalf of the Group of African countries, proposed that, in view of recent developments, the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that item 27 (Question of Namibia) should be considered immediately after item 58 (a).

48. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 27 should be considered immediately after item 58 (a).

49. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration in plenary meeting in the Secretary-General's memorandum, with the addition of items 132 and 58 (a), should be allocated to the plenary Assembly and that items 58 (a) and 27 should be considered, in that order, immediately after the general debate.

Items proposed for allocation to the First Committee

50. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the decisions taken by the Committee concerning paragraphs 27 and 28 of the Secretary-General's memorandum (see paras. 38 and 39 above), he would take it that the Committee agreed to recommend that items 51 and 52, relating to outer space, should be allocated to the Special Political Committee.

51. It was so decided.

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52. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the First Committee in the Secretary-General's memorandum, with the exception of items 51 and 52 and with the addition of item 131, should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for allocation to the Special Political Committee

53. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that at the previous meeting (see A/BUR/33/SR.1, para. 51) it had decided to recommend that items 77, 91 and 104 should be merged as subitems (a), (b) and (c) of a single item entitled "Questions relating to information" and that it had been proposed that that item should be allocated to the Special Political Committee. The representative of Tunisia had asked to participate in the discussion of the item; if there was no objection, he would invite him to take a place at the Committee table.

54. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Mestiri (Tunisia) took a place at the Committee table.

55. Mr. MESTIRI (Tunisia) stated that the original proposal to merge the three items had been approved by the non-aligned countries and that he had received a mandate to transmit the proposal.

56. Mr. SEKYEI (Ghana) said that his remarks at the previous meeting (see A/BUR/33/SR.1, para. 48) should not be interpreted as an attempt to oppose a decision taken by the non-aligned countries, to which Ghana belonged. It was a fact, however, that it would be more appropriate for subitem (c) to be allocated to the Fifth Committee, which could review United Nations public information policies and activities in relation to the over-all co-ordination of the activities of the Secretariat. The merging of the items failed to take into account the administrative and budgetary role of the Fifth Committee, and he doubted whether the Special Political Committee was the appropriate forum for dealing with subitem (c).

57. Mr. KIKHIA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) expressed support for the Tunisian proposal that items 77, 91 and 104, merged into a single item, should be allocated to the Special Political Committee. That Committee had a light agenda and could easily be allocated more items. Moreover, the new item entitled "Questions relating to information" was primarily a political item.

58. Mr. BARTON (Canada) agreed with the representative of Ghana that certain aspects of subitem (c) related to the functions of the Fifth Committee. A compromise solution would be to allocate it also to the Fifth Committee, adding to the title the words "Administrative and budgetary aspects". That would make it clear which aspects were being dealt with by the Fifth Committee. If the Special Political Committee adopted any definitive proposals in the context of its review, those proposals could then be referred to the Fifth Committee in the normal way.

59. Mr. KIKHIA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Special Political Committee could, in the light of its discussions, decide to refer to another Committee any parts of the items allocated it. Subitem (c) should not be allocated to the Fifth Committee at the present stage; it would be more appropriate to wait until the Special Political Committee had held its discussions.

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60. Mr. BYATT (United Kingdom) supported the Canadian proposal that subitem (c) should be allocated simultaneously to the Special Political Committee and the Fifth Committee. It was because of his delegation's concern about the administrative aspects of the subitem that it had not supported the merger of the items at the previous meeting.

61. Mr. SIMBANANIYE (Burundi) reminded the Committee that it had already taken a decision to merge items 77, 91 and 104. To adopt the Canadian proposal would be to call into question a decision that had already been taken and would set a dangerous precedent regarding the allocation of items.

62. Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan) supported the proposal that items 77, 91 and 104, merged into a single item, should be allocated to the Special Political Committee.

63. Mr. REIS (United States of America) said that subitem (c) should properly be allocated to the Fifth Committee, where it belonged. It was customary for the Fifth Committee to carry out a substantive review of the work of the Office of Public Information. That review had always aimed to ensure that the work of the Office served the interests of the entire community of nations and it would not be prejudicial to a more general discussion in the Special Political Committee.

64. Mr. HUSSON (France) expressed support for the Canadian proposal, which would allow the Fifth Committee to preserve its prerogatives.

65. Mr. SOKALSKI (Poland) said that item 104 had been included in the agenda as a result of substantive discussions at the previous session which had led to the conclusion that there was a need to discuss in greater detail the public information policies and activities of the United Nations. The item did not concern the Office of Public Information alone; it covered a wide range of questions, many of which had no financial aspects.

66. The Committee should bear in mind paragraph 22 of annex I to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which stated that questions which might be considered as falling within the competence of two or more committees should preferably be referred to the committee with the lightest agenda. It was also useful to note that in paragraph 28 of annex V to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly a recommendation had been made that agenda items should be so allocated as to ensure, as far as possible, that the same questions or the same aspects of a question were not considered by more than one Committee.

67. Mr. de PINIES (Spain) noted that traditionally the question of United Nations public information activities had been considered by the Fifth Committee, which had a specific function from the administrative and budgetary point of view and an exclusive responsibility with regard to the opening of information offices. The decision to combine the three items did not mean that the aspects of subitem (c) which concerned the Fifth Committee could not be submitted to it for consideration. The recommendation made to the General Assembly quoted by the representative of Poland stated that efforts should be made to ensure, as far as possible, that the same questions or the same aspects of a question were not considered by more than one Committee. It was to be noted, however, that there were very many aspects to

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(Mr. de Pinies, Spain)

the question of information. At the same time, the General Committee should also bear in mind the statement concerning conflicts of competence among Committees contained in paragraph 38 of annex V to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

68. Mr. FALL (Senegal) said that the Committee should adopt the Canadian proposal regarding the allocation to the Fifth Committee of subitem (c), reworded, on the understanding that, in discussing it, the Fifth Committee would deal exclusively with the administrative and budgetary aspects, and the political aspects would be considered only by the Special Political Committee.

69. Mr. BARTON (Canada) and Mr. SEKYEI (Ghana) supported that proposal.

70. Mr. MESTIRI (Tunisia) said that the proposal was perfectly acceptable, but that the Fifth Committee should deal with subitem (c) only after it had been considered by the Special Political Committee.

71. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the General Committee accepted Senegal's proposal.

72. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that subitem (c) (formerly item 104 of the draft agenda) should be allocated to the Special Political Committee, on the understanding that the administrative and budgetary aspects be considered in the Fifth Committee

73. Mr. Mestiri (Tunisia) withdrew.

74. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Special Political Committee in the Secretary-General's memorandum, with the addition of items 51 and 52 and of items 77, 91 and 104 merged into a single item, should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for allocation to the Second Committee

75. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Second Committee in the Secretary-General's memorandum, with the exception of item 58 (a), should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for allocation to the Third Committee

76. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Third Committee in the Secretary-General's memorandum, with the addition of item 129, combined as a single item with item 86, and of item 130, and with the exception of items 77 and 91, should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for allocation to the Fourth Committee

77. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Fourth Committee in the Secretary-General's memorandum should be allocated to that Committee.

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Items proposed for allocation to the Fifth Committee

78. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Fifth Committee in the Secretary-General's memorandum should be allocated to that Committee, on the understanding that, with regard to item 10⁴ (which would become subitem (c) of an item entitled "Questions relating to information"), the Committee would deal with the administrative and budgetary aspects exclusively.

Items proposed for allocation to the Sixth Committee

79. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Sixth Committee in the Secretary-General's memorandum should be allocated to that Committee.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.