

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**  
THIRTY-THIRD SESSION  
*Official Records\**

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GENERAL COMMITTEE  
3rd meeting  
held on  
Wednesday, 20 December 1978  
at 11 a.m.  
New York

UN/SA COLLECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

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

CONTENTS

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the meeting had been called because it had become increasingly clear that, no matter what efforts were made, the Assembly would be unable to finish its work before the end of the week. That situation was largely a reflection of the fact that the working methods of the General Assembly were no longer adequate to deal with the volume of work involved.
2. A number of difficulties had been encountered in coping with the heavy agenda for the session. Among them were the recent problems with the staff, as a result of which he had twice had consultations with the Secretary-General and the Chairmen of the regional groups. The Chairmen had since consulted their respective groups and, if there were no objections, he would invite those of them who were not already represented in the Committee to join in the discussion.
3. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Gayama (Congo), Chairman of the Group of African States, Mr. Al-Ali (Iraq), Chairman of the Group of Asian States, Mr. Marinescu (Romania), Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States, and Mr. Algard (Norway), Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States, took places at the Committee table.
4. Of the items which would still be outstanding following the afternoon plenary meeting, items 27 and 32 could be completed before the end of the session only if urgent steps were taken. While the draft resolutions under those items had been considered by delegations, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee had not discussed their administrative and financial implications. The proposals under both items involved substantial amounts. The Committee might wish to recommend a method of dealing with those items to the Assembly. One way, or course, would be to consider them at a resumed session.
5. Mr. BUFFUM (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs) said that the Assembly's uncompleted work had to be considered in the context of recent statements by the Chairmen of the regional groups and by individual delegations, from which it was clear that the session could not continue beyond 21 December. Items 70, 88 and 100 could certainly not be concluded in the time available and there was no assurance that the Second Committee would be able to take a final decision on item 58. A resumed session, to be held early in 1979, would probably be needed to complete those items.
6. With regard to items 27, Question of Namibia, and 32, Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa, it was unlikely that the financial implications of the draft resolutions under those items could be dealt with systematically before 21 December. There were accordingly two alternative courses open to the General Assembly. On the one hand, all items outstanding could be referred to a resumed session. On the other hand, in view of the request of the President of the United Nations Council for Namibia that, bearing in mind recent developments in the

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Territory, the draft resolutions under item 27 should be adopted without further delay, the General Assembly might waive rule 153 of the rules of procedure and adopt the draft resolutions, leaving the approval of their financial implications to be considered subsequently by ACABQ and the Fifth Committee.

7. In either case, the General Assembly could complete its work in the following two days, except for the report of the Second Committee on agenda item 58 and its administrative and financial implications, the administrative and financial implications of proposals under items 70 and 88, and further consideration of item 100. The procedure with regard to items 27 and 32 would, of course, also have to be resolved.

8. Mr. MWANGAGUHUNGA (Uganda), speaking as Chairman of the Second Committee, said that that Committee would have completed its work on 18 December had all the necessary documents been available to it. With regard to agenda item 58, only subitem (b) still had to be completed. The complete documentation on item 58 (b) had become available only the previous evening. The Economic and Social Council had not taken up the corresponding item of its agenda until the previous day and had decided, as some of the documents necessary for a thorough consideration of the Secretary-General's report on restructuring (A/33/410 and Corr.1 and 2) were not available, to refer the report to the General Assembly and to ask the Secretary-General to submit the addendum to the report (concerning the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation) directly to the General Assembly at the current session. The Council had expressed the hope that, in the circumstances, restructuring issues would be given full consideration by the General Assembly. The addendum in question (A/33/410/Add.1) had finally become available the previous evening and the Second Committee had had an exchange of views on the subject. The Chairman of the Group of 77 had, however, requested that the Group should be given at least two weeks to study the documents on the item. He doubted, therefore, whether, given the time constraints imposed on the work of the Assembly, the documents could be given the necessary full consideration at the current session. He hoped that the Second Committee would decide by consensus to consider item 58 (b) only when Member States had considered the documents just submitted by the Economic and Social Council, in other words probably at a resumed session.

9. With regard to the question of Namibia (item 27), he believed that action should be taken on the draft resolutions under that item as a matter of priority, taking into account the views of the Fifth Committee.

10. The SECRETARY-GENERAL said that the possibility of holding a resumed session had already been discussed with him. The resumed session could begin in mid-January, and no more than 7 to 10 days would be required to complete the consideration of outstanding items. That arrangement would also give ACABQ time to consider the financial implications of any items outstanding. The resumed session would clash with a number of other meetings to be held in the second half of January, however, and further discussion was therefore required on that point.

11. Mr. FALL (Senegal) said that it was clear that the Assembly's work could not be concluded in the following two days. With regard to the question of Namibia, he was rather surprised that the resolutions under that item were not ready for

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(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

consideration by the General Assembly. That was due simply to the fact that their financial implications were not yet available, although the draft resolutions had been submitted as early as 8 December, so that there had in fact been sufficient time for ACABQ and the Fifth Committee to discuss them. He agreed with the suggestion that the General Assembly should be asked to waive rule 153 and to adopt the draft resolutions on Namibia without delay, on the understanding that ACABQ and the Fifth Committee would consider their financial implications at a resumed session.

12. His delegation agreed in principle with the suggestion to resume the session on 15 January, provided that ACABQ and the Fifth Committee were able to start work promptly and deal with all outstanding items as quickly as possible.

13. Mr. KOBINA SEKYI (Ghana), speaking as Chairman of the Fifth Committee, agreed with the representative of Senegal that a resumed session was inevitable. The Fifth Committee still had several items to complete, and it clearly could not dispose of them before 21 December, especially since some necessary documents were not yet available. His delegation could agree to 15 January as the starting date for the resumed session, on the understanding that ACABQ would recommence its work on or around 8 January.

14. During his consultations with the Chairman of the Second Committee the previous day concerning the status of that Committee's work, he had expressed the hope that the Fifth Committee would not be forced to resume its work without the necessary documents. It could begin its discussions on 15 January only if ACABQ had by then completed its work. That in turn depended on the Second Committee's finishing its work by early January at the latest so that the necessary documents would be available to ACABQ in good time.

15. Consideration of the question of Namibia would already have been completed had the necessary documents been available to ACABQ and the Fifth Committee.

16. He had informed the Secretariat of the Fifth Committee's view that, as from 1 January 1979, expenditures relating to the resolutions on Namibia could in fact be incurred if necessary, pending the Fifth Committee's final decision on their financial implications. Item 27 had substantial financial implications, and the proposed resolutions on Namibia could be properly implemented only if their implications were discussed fully at a resumed session.

17. Mr. BARTON (Canada), speaking on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, said that it was most regrettable that the General Assembly would not complete its work by 21 December. That situation had been caused by a combination of problems, but in particular by the Assembly's out-of-date working methods. The General Assembly should adjourn as soon as possible and reconvene on 15 January.

18. Items 27 and 32 had substantial financial implications which required thorough consideration. The Group of Western European and other States would therefore prefer the Assembly to follow its usual procedure in considering the draft resolutions under those items, because a dangerous precedent would be created by waiving rule 153. They did not believe that a delay in adopting those resolutions would be politically detrimental. The resumed session should, of course, deal only with outstanding items, namely item 58 (b) and the items outstanding in the Fifth Committee.

19. Mr. GAYAMA (Congo), speaking as Chairman of the African Group, said that the Group was concerned about item 27 and its political implications. Given the recent events in Namibia, any resolution which the General Assembly adopted on that question would have an impact on international public opinion and on the South African régime. As matters stood, the question of Namibia was before both the Security Council and the General Assembly, and the Assembly should at least take a decision on the question so that the Security Council had a basis on which to work.

20. He recognized that there was a problem with regard to the financial implications of the draft resolutions on the item and that the General Assembly had a duty to consider those implications, but it could do so without waiting for a final decision by the Fifth Committee. The draft resolutions on Namibia referred to certain sums required to finance their implementation. The General Assembly could decide to appropriate those sums, and defer its decision on the balance of the financial implications of the resolutions until the resumed session.

21. The draft resolutions on Namibia were ready for consideration by the Assembly, as there was a statement of financial implications in document A/C.5/33/104. While he acknowledged that there had been some justification for the delay in considering the financial implications of those draft resolutions in the Fifth Committee, given the recent staff action, he did think that the Assembly could take a decision on item 27 by 21 December. The African Group was prepared to accept postponement of item 32, but not of item 27. Action had to be taken on Namibia as soon as possible, in order to preserve credibility of the United Nations in the eyes of world opinion. He was confident that some way could be found of resolving the issue of the financial implications of the draft resolutions on Namibia without waiving rule 153.

22. Mr. URQUIA (El Salvador), speaking as Chairman of the Latin American Group, said that force majeure had made it impossible to conclude the session before the holidays and thereby required the session to be suspended until the following year. The Assembly could work until the end of the following day and should conclude its work on the items listed in the Journal for that day, even if it had to hold a night meeting. The position of the Latin American Group was flexible with regard to the date for the resumed session; it had originally suggested that the session might be resumed in the first week of February 1979, but would yield to the will of the majority.

23. One reason why the session could not be concluded was that the Fifth Committee's reports on approved draft resolutions were not ready. The Latin American Group considered that the rules and regulations governing the work of an international organization should be respected and was therefore not in favour of waiving rule 153. Accordingly, the statements of financial implications should be ready for consideration at the resumed session. In short, the Latin American Group was in favour of working the following day and referring all outstanding matters to a resumed session, to begin on 15 January 1979.

24. Mr. MAKOBERO (Burundi) agreed with those delegations which favoured resuming the session on 15 January. However, work on the item entitled "Question of Namibia",

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(Mr. Makobero, Burundi)

which was especially important because of the role of the United Nations in Namibia's independence, was still incomplete. That item should be dealt with in the time remaining before the session was suspended, and, to that end, consideration of the financial implications of the draft resolutions under that item and the item on apartheid (item 32) should, in his delegation's view, be postponed, so as to enable the draft resolutions to achieve their purpose of compelling the administering Power to execute the plans of the United Nations.

25. Mr. KOBINA SEKYI (Ghana), speaking as Chairman of the Fifth Committee, said that one problem that had plagued the Fifth Committee in recent weeks was lack of a quorum. It was important that delegations should realize how difficult it was for the Fifth Committee to make headway in its work in such circumstances.

26. He suggested that, provided document A/C.5/33/104, on the statement of the financial implications of the draft resolutions under item 27 could be made available to the Fifth Committee at its afternoon meeting, that Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that the financial implications should not exceed the amount indicated by the Secretary-General in that document, that the Fifth Committee should be asked to examine the financial implications in January, and that the Assembly should appropriate forthwith the amount indicated by the Secretary-General so that work in implementation of the resolutions in question could start on 1 January. On the basis of that proposal the Assembly could take a decision on the question of Namibia the following day.

27. The SECRETARY-GENERAL said that, if the proposal of the Chairman of the Fifth Committee was adopted, the Secretariat would take the necessary action to implement the decision. With regard to the proposed resumed session, he pointed out that several meetings were listed on the calendar of conferences for January and February, but the Department of Conference Services had undertaken to make every effort to accommodate a resumed session. The Group of 77 was currently meeting to decide on rearranging its meetings schedule. Consideration would have to be given to postponing the session of the Committee established under General Assembly resolution 32/174.

28. Since the representative of the African Group had raised the matter of the servicing of the General Assembly by the staff, he felt bound to say that the staff action had not made it impossible to hold meetings in the usual way. However, there had been real concern among the staff regarding a draft decision and a draft resolution considered by the Fifth Committee. The Staff Union had asked him to inform the Assembly that there had not been adequate joint consultations with it in accordance with Staff Regulation 8.2 and that it was therefore requesting that any decision on draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.32/Rev.2 should be postponed, a step that would prevent further staff action.

29. Mr. AL-BAKUSH (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Assembly should be requested to vote on the draft resolutions on the question of Namibia in view of events there. With regard to the financial implications, his delegation would support the waiving of rule 153. He urged the Committee to adopt the proposal of the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

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(Mr. Al-Bakush, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

30. Agenda item 58 (b), which was before the Second Committee, was of great importance. The request of the Group of 77 for two weeks in which to consider a possible decision of that Committee on the item made a resumed session unavoidable. His delegation supported the proposal on resuming the session in mid-January. He wished to comment, however, on the general conditions in which the Assembly had worked during the thirty-third session. In order to avoid a recurrence of a situation such as that which had arisen in the recent past, he proposed that the Secretary-General should draw up a report, to be submitted at the thirty-fourth session, containing detailed information on the circumstances in which the events had occurred and suggestions on ways of avoiding any recurrence.

31. Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland) said that his delegation regretted having to discuss a resumption of the session; such a step set a bad precedent. He did not accept the explanation that the situation was beyond the Main Committee's control; the deficiencies of Member States and of the Secretariat could not be ignored. An in-depth study should be made of the functioning of the General Assembly. Another reason mentioned had been the problem of documentation, and he agreed that many items - for example, that on Namibia - could have been dealt with had the documents been available on time. The documentation situation was repeated year after year because no measures were taken to correct it and it was becoming intolerable.

32. One solution would be not to close the session until the work was finished, which was what his delegation preferred. Other alternatives were to leave all unfinished business until the thirty-fourth session or to resume the session some time in January or February. As a last resort, his delegation would go along with a resumption either in mid-January or in early February. Before deciding on the date, it was important to be sure that the documentation would be ready in time and that the Advisory Committee would have finished its work, so that the Assembly could conclude its work rapidly. In his delegation's opinion, the date of closure of the resumed session should also be decided on by the General Committee; the session should not last longer than three or four days if the preparatory work was satisfactory.

33. His delegation was very hesitant about waiving rules and regulations. It believed that outstanding items could still be dealt with without bypassing existing rules.

34. His delegation regretted the fact that a draft resolution approved by the Fifth Committee should have been discussed in the General Committee, which was not competent to discuss such matters and should not be subjected to any pressure of that kind. If a draft resolution was approved by a Main Committee, it was up to the plenary of the Assembly to take action on it. However, since the question had been raised, he urged that it should be impressed upon the staff that working at the United Nations was not like working for an ordinary employer. The staff was in the service of the international community and should have a high sense of duty and dedication. Decisions should be taken by organs which represented Member States and should not be influenced by decisions made elsewhere.

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35. The SECRETARY-GENERAL said that he had mentioned the matter only in response to comments by the Chairman of the Group of African States regarding the delay in the work of the Assembly. The Staff Union resolution had been adopted by 615 votes and consequently could not be ignored. If he had not sacrificed his week-end, the staff action might still be continuing and the Committee might not be meeting. He was not defending the staff action, but had considered it his duty to inform the Committee of it in connexion with the delay in the Assembly's work.

36. Mr. RICHARD (United Kingdom) said that the Secretary-General had done his best to solve a difficult situation. The Assembly could obviously not finish its work by the end of the week, and he therefore suggested that the session should be resumed in mid-January. The resumed session should be as short as possible and should deal only with matters that could not be completed before the end of the year.

37. With regard to the item on Namibia, it was clear that many delegations wished the draft resolutions to be dealt with before the suspension and, as he understood it, the Fifth Committee could take up the question immediately and report on the financial implications to the Assembly without waiving rule 153. The three draft resolutions on Namibia could then be considered on the following day by the Assembly. His delegation was reluctant to waive rule 153 until the Fifth Committee had had an opportunity to consider the question.

38. Mr. MAINA (Kenya) said that ways had to be found to avoid a recurrence of the existing situation, and the reasons why it had occurred had to be determined. He agreed with the representatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Poland that the Committee had to make sure that it did not happen again. While his delegation had no objection to the suspension of the session the problem could not be postponed indefinitely. No specific proposals had been made with regard to changing the methods of work of the Assembly. He understood, for example, that decisions had been delayed deliberately with a view to achieving consensus by the end of the session, and that might become a precedent.

39. Mr. DOLGUCHITS (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Poland.

40. The Secretariat might be over-optimistic in suggesting mid-January 1979 as a possible date for the resumed session. In view of what had been said by the Chairmen of the Fifth and Second Committees, it would be more realistic to secure agreement on a definite date, rather than an approximate time, so that members of the Assembly could be certain that documents would be ready in time.

41. Mr. GAYAHIA (Congo), speaking as Chairman of the Group of African States, said that he supported the stand taken by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. The fears expressed by delegations with regard to waiving rule 153 were unfounded, since the document on the financial implications of the draft resolutions on Namibia (A/C.5/33/104) was ready. Everything possible should be done to minimize any financial difficulties associated with consideration of that question, which was of great political importance. In order to enable the United Nations Council for Namibia to pursue its activities, the Group of African States was prepared to compromise. When the time came to vote, those States would be willing to vote on

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(Mr. Gayama, Congo)

part of the financial implications and leave the rest until a later date. That suggestion should be regarded as a concession and as a formal statement with a view to expediting the General Assembly's proceedings.

42. The draft resolution on personnel questions (A/C.5/33/L.32/Rev.2) concerned the Organization itself and procedural questions, and it required dispassionate consideration. If it was not dealt with the Organization might find itself in a very awkward position later. The problem of staff unrest could be considered by the General Assembly and perhaps be partially resolved. The Group of African States did not feel that there were any problems that could not be overcome. That question could be considered early in the following session, when some goodwill on the part of delegations might be displayed. In view of the practical difficulties with which the Administration had had to cope, he felt that the Assembly could at least agree on a basic position, without prejudice to consideration of organizational and procedural matters.

43. Mr. LEPRETTE (France) said that it seemed that a decision was likely to be reached to suspend the session. It was important to establish the reasons for such a suspension. The fact that the Assembly had not completed its work satisfactorily was a serious development. It was an organizational problem, and what had happened could happen again. The work of the General Assembly needed to be completed within a definite period, because the prestige and credibility of the United Nations were at stake. Delegations should avoid doing anything that might lead to a worsening of the situation and should consider what measures needed to be taken to prevent the United Nations from being discredited. One decision that could be taken by the Committee was to specify the objectives and duration of the proposed resumed session.

44. Mr. BARTON (Canada) said that he supported the view expressed by previous speakers that, if the General Assembly did not take action, the same problem would arise the following year. The necessary decisions would, however, have to be made in the intersessional period, because they would involve a great deal of work and certain sacrifices on points to which delegations attached great importance. He proposed that the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General should have consultations prior to the resumed session and draft a proposal for appointing a small, representative working group to study the problem and submit a report to the General Committee or any other appropriate body at the beginning of the following session, so that action could be taken at that point.

45. Moreover, although his delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's problems with regard to staff action and was prepared to be flexible in connexion with draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.32/Rev.2, on personnel questions, it believed that it would be difficult to improve on that resolution and that the General Assembly should therefore deal with it, subject to any agreement that might be reached in the course of the day regarding possible compromises.

46. Mr. URQUIA (El Salvador), speaking as Chairman of the Group of Latin American States, observed that there had been a great deal of discussion about who was to blame for the fact that the closure of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly was being delayed. With regard to the fears expressed by some delegations that the resumption of the session would set a precedent, he pointed out that precedents already existed. The Group of Latin American States fully

(Mr. Urquia, El Salvador)

supported the Secretary-General and felt that he was the very last person to blame for the situation. It had been said, with reference to the fact that the staff had made certain demands on the Secretary-General and taken a number of grievances to him, that those who worked at the United Nations should devote themselves fully to their task and should not in any circumstances interrupt the work of the General Assembly. He held that, just as there was labour law within States, there was what could be called international labour law in international organizations. The staff of the United Nations and other international organizations had rights, and while the Secretary-General might or might not make concessions to the staff, staff members could not be denied the right to put forward their grievances. If the delays in completing the General Assembly's work were partly due to the staff having made its grievances known, that was because the staff had exercised a right.

47. The Group of Latin American States had proposed that the session should be resumed on 1 February 1979 in the belief that in the intervening time the necessary negotiations and consultations regarding draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.32/Rev.2 could be carried out. It was clear that there was wide resistance to deferring action on the question until the following session, and the Group of Latin American States therefore felt that by February the Secretary-General might have had enough time to consult the staff and delegations and suggest a compromise.

48. Speaking as one of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, he said that his delegation believed that the staff was right to demand that it should be given a chance to express its views concerning draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.32/Rev.2 in the Fifth Committee. The staff should be treated with respect if only for humanitarian reasons.

49. The Group of Latin American States agreed with the view expressed by the Group of African States and others that action on the question of Namibia should not be postponed until the resumed session. If the Fifth Committee made a special effort and had the necessary documents at its disposal, and if a final decision could be reached on that question the following day, the Group of Latin American States would be happy to agree to the action proposed by other States.

50. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Saudi Arabia had asked to participate in the discussion; if there was no objection, he would invite him to take a place at the Committee table.

51. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Baroody (Saudi Arabia) took a place at the Committee table.

52. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) thanked the Committee for giving him the opportunity to speak. He first of all wished to second the observation made by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the Secretary-General and the staff.

53. With regard to the question of suspension of the session, there had been a precedent in 1951 in Paris. On that occasion, the device had not worked well because a number of representatives who had become familiar with the questions under consideration had not returned for the resumed session and because the

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(Mr. Baroody, Saudi Arabia)

deliberations at that resumed session had been protracted. There were far more delegations attending the Assembly in 1978, and the existence of the regional groups had made the process of reaching a decision more complex. A resumed session lasting 15, 20 or 30 days might not be long enough, and progress would not necessarily be achieved by any resumed session.

54. It was still possible, in his view, to complete work on two or three items that had been considered in the Second and Fifth Committees and to complete consideration of the question of Namibia. However, to neglect the question of the staff would be impractical. The General Service staff were the people who processed the work of the United Nations, and they had always performed their work well: they were the wheels of the Organization and they were equal to anyone in worth and dignity. The General Assembly should complete its consideration of personnel questions before adjourning the session.

55. Activism was becoming more pronounced with the years, but it was possible to prevail on others to be reasonable. Since the Staff Union would still be able to paralyse the General Assembly's work, whether the session was resumed or not, members had to face facts. If it proved impossible to complete consideration of other questions that still remained unresolved after several days' work following the Christmas or New Year holidays, consideration of those questions could be given top priority at the following session of the General Assembly.

56. Mr. FALL (Senegal) endorsed the proposals to take up the draft resolutions on Namibia at once and to convene a resumed session on 15 January. He proposed therefore that the question of Namibia should be referred to the General Assembly for action either at the meeting later in the day or the following morning, in the light of information forthcoming from the Fifth Committee.

57. He totally disagreed with the comments of the representative of Saudi Arabia concerning the resumption of the session. The session should, in his view, be resumed as soon as possible, preferably on 15 January, and an immediate decision should be taken on that resumption, on the understanding that the resumed session would discuss only outstanding items referred to it by the current session.

58. With regard to the recent problems with the staff, the General Assembly should not provoke a confrontation with the staff. Member States had a duty to defend the interests not only of the United Nations but of the United Nations staff, who after all were nationals of Member States. Machinery for consulting employees existed in every Member State, and there was no reason why the United Nations should be an exception. He suggested that a committee, under the chairmanship of either the Secretary-General or the President of the General Assembly, might be established to make contact with the staff in order to find a mutually acceptable solution to their problems. Justice must be done to the staff.

59. Mr. BUFFUM (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs) said that he interpreted the suggestions made by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee to mean that the draft resolutions on the question of Namibia could be expedited in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and without waiving rule 153.

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60. Mr. KOBINA SEKYI (Ghana) said that the problems with the staff were extremely serious. However, if the General Committee decided not to waive the application of rule 153 to the item on Namibia, it should likewise not approve waiving the Staff Rules, which established procedures for consulting the staff. Moreover, if delegations were so interested in the work done by the Fifth Committee in relation to personnel questions, they should make sure that their representatives attended that Committee in sufficient numbers to form a quorum.

61. The request that the adoption of the Fifth Committee's report on personnel questions should be postponed had serious implications. The Fifth Committee had established a working group on personnel questions in October 1978, and considerable research had been undertaken by that group. Draft resolution A/C.5/33/L.32/Rev.2 represented a compromise solution, and the fact that there had been no consensus on it was evidence of the wide divergence of views in the Committee. The representatives of Canada and Saudi Arabia had already warned against postponing action on that draft resolution. Besides, there were some indications that the section of the draft resolution to which the staff had objected could be amended to enable the Secretary-General to continue his dialogue with the staff. Postponement of the draft resolution would not achieve the desired results.

62. Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan) agreed that the session should be resumed on 15 January, and that priority should be given at the forthcoming plenary meeting to adopting the draft resolutions on Namibia. With regard to the working methods of the General Assembly and current problems with the staff, he urged that the Secretary-General should, if possible, prepare a comprehensive report on the subject for discussion at the resumed session, so that similar problems could be avoided at future sessions. He did believe, however, that action should be taken on any draft resolutions on personnel questions which were already before the General Assembly.

63. Mr. LEONARD (United States of America) said that there appeared to be a clear consensus on all the issues which needed to be resolved at the current meeting. In other words, there was agreement that the session should be adjourned on 21 December and resumed on 15 January, at which time the Assembly would consider only those items not completed at the current session. There was also agreement that the General Assembly should do all it could to complete by 21 December its consideration of the items still before it. Those included the item on Namibia, which the Assembly should resolve in the light of the suggestions made by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee and without waiving rule 153.

64. With regard to the delays in the work of the current session, the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the regional groups should hold consultations early in 1979 to determine ways of preventing such a situation from recurring.

65. The CHAIRMAN said that it might be of interest to those delegations which regarded the resumed session as a dangerous precedent to learn that nine previous sessions of the General Assembly had been suspended and resumed. He had himself done everything he could to ensure that the session completed its work on time, but

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a number of circumstances, including the recent action by the staff, had made that impossible. However, the principal cause of the failure to complete the work of the session on time was undoubtedly the inadequate decision-making process of the United Nations, which had not changed since the days when the membership of the Organization had been about a third of the current figure, and the number of items on its agenda about 75 per cent smaller. Short-comings in the decision-making process had gradually led to a general demand for urgent consideration to be given to devising new General Assembly machinery for decision-making.

66. The Committee appeared to have reached consensus on several matters, and he accordingly invited members to agree to recommend to the General Assembly (a) that the thirty-third session should be extended by one day until Thursday, 21 December 1978; (b) that the session should be resumed on 15 January 1979 for a period of one week to 10 days solely to conclude the consideration of the remaining items on the agenda of the current session; and (c) that the Committee on Conferences should be authorized to make the necessary changes in the calendar of meetings of the other organs which were scheduled to meet during the said period.

67. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 2.05 p.m.