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THIRTY-NINTH SESSION
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GENERAL COMMITTEE
1st meeting
held on
Wednesday, 19 September 1984
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

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

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ORGANIZATION OF THE THIRTY-NINTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THIRTY-NINTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/BUR/39/1 and Corr.1)

Section II. Organization of the session

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to section II of document A/BUR/39/1 relating to the organization of the session. By its decision 34/401, reproduced as annex VI to its rules of procedure, the General Assembly had adopted a number of provisions aimed at rationalizing its procedures and organization. Many of those provisions had already been implemented at the thirty-fourth to thirty-eighth sessions and were therefore not referred to in document A/BUR/39/1. The Committee might, however, wish to draw the General Assembly's attention to those provisions which had not yet been or had been only partly implemented.

Paragraph 4 (General Committee)

2. The Committee took note of paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraphs 5 to 7 (Schedule of meetings)

3. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, which concerned the schedule of meetings and promptness in starting meetings. In that connection, he suggested that the Committee might also wish to draw the General Assembly's attention to rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure, whereby the President of the General Assembly might declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the members were present, and the Chairman of a Main Committee might declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one quarter of the members were present. In that regard, he endorsed the practical suggestion made at the preceding four sessions that each delegation should designate someone to be present at the scheduled time, thereby avoiding the problem of a quorum. Some progress had been reported, but there was still considerable room for improvement.

4. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 3 of decision 34/401.

5. The CHAIRMAN, drawing attention to paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, said that the Assembly would once again be confronted with a critical situation during the general debate: it had become physically impossible to accommodate all the speakers inscribed within the period of three weeks assigned for that purpose.

6. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that, as decided the previous year, during the period of the general debate morning plenary meetings should begin at 10 a.m. instead of 10.30 a.m.

7. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that delegations should be reminded of the importance of punctuality in the interest of ensuring an effective and orderly organization of work and achieving economies for the United Nations.

Paragraphs 8 to 10 (General debate)

8. The CHAIRMAN urged representatives to take the floor in the order in which they appeared on the list of speakers, in view of the large number of speakers already inscribed. Those who were unable to speak at the scheduled time would be put at the end of the list for the following day.

9. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the suggestions in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

10. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, which quoted paragraph 5 of General Assembly decision 34/401 calling on delegations to refrain from expressing their congratulations in the General Assembly Hall after a speech had been delivered. Unfortunately, that practice had persisted and the Committee might wish to take a firmer stand to eliminate it by recommending that such congratulations should be prohibited in the General Assembly Hall. Furthermore, the Committee might wish to recommend that that decision should also apply during the debate on all other items of the agenda.

11. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the suggestions in paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraph 11 (Explanations of vote)

12. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 7 of decision 34/401.

Paragraph 12 (Closing date of the session)

13. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the suggestion in paragraph 12 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraph 13 (Records of the Main Committees)

14. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the suggestions in paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraph 15 (Election of the chairmen of the Main Committees)

15. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraphs 18 and 19 of decision 34/401, reproduced in paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, and to the need to implement them.

Paragraph 16 (Concluding statements)

16. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to the need for the full implementation of paragraph 17 of decision 34/401.

Paragraphs 17 and 18 (Questions related to the programme budget)

17. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraphs 17 and 18 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraphs 19 and 20 (Documentation)

18. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 28 of decision 34/401 and to recommend that the Assembly should urge all Member States and subsidiary organs to follow the suggestion in paragraph 20 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraph 21 (Resolutions)

19. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 32 of decision 34/401.

Paragraph 22 (Special conferences)

20. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 22 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraph 23 (Meetings of subsidiary organs)

21. The CHAIRMAN said that the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences had recommended in documents A/39/482 and Add.1 that nine subsidiary organs should be allowed to meet during the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

22. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should authorize the nine subsidiary bodies of the Assembly listed in documents A/39/482 and Add.1 to meet during the thirty-ninth session.

Paragraph 24 (Question of smoking in conference rooms)

23. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 24 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

24. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its consideration of section II of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Section III. Adoption of the agenda

25. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with rule 40 of the rules of procedure, the Committee was not considering the substance of any item except in so far as

(The Chairman)

it bore on the question of whether or not to recommend the inclusion of that item in the agenda. The draft agenda consisted of 142 items, 139 of which appeared in the provisional agenda (A/39/150), one in the supplementary list (A/39/200) and two of which were additional items (A/39/241, A/39/242).

Paragraph 26

26. The Committee took note of paragraph 26 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraph 27

27. The Committee took note of paragraph 27 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Inclusion of items

Items 1 to 6

28. The CHAIRMAN said that items 1 to 6 had already been considered; he would therefore take it that there were no comments on their inclusion in the agenda.

Items 7 to 19

29. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include items 7 to 19 in the agenda.

Item 30

30. Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation firmly opposed the inclusion in the agenda of the so-called question of the situation in Kampuchea. The repeated attempts to involve the United Nations in considering matters which were within the exclusive competence of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, against the clearly expressed wishes of its legitimate Government, constituted inadmissible interference in the internal affairs of that sovereign State Member of the United Nations and a violation of the Charter. Agitation about the so-called "Kampuchean question" in the United Nations reflected the desire of certain States to impose on the Kampuchean people, under the guise of the so-called "coalition government", the criminal Pol Pot régime which it had rejected. Consideration of the so-called "Kampuchean question" at previous sessions had led to the adoption of resolutions which were devoid of political realism, had placed obstacles in the path of normalizing the situation in the region, and served only the interests of those forces which were trying to exacerbate the situation in South-East Asia. It was the duty of the United Nations to contribute to the development of good-neighbourly relations among the States of South-East Asia, the normalization of the situation in the region and the conversion of the region into a zone of peace, stability and co-operation; exclusion of the item from the Assembly's agenda would be in line with that duty.

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31. Mr. ZAIN (Malaysia) observed that the question of Kampuchea came up repeatedly in the General Assembly because that country had been invaded by foreign forces and continued to be occupied by them, in violation of its independence and territorial integrity. That was the situation that the General Assembly was discussing, not Kampuchea's internal affairs. Furthermore, the continuing situation in Kampuchea was creating security problems for its neighbours, especially Thailand, and tremendous human-rights problems for thousands of refugees and civilians, and was preventing a return to stability and harmony in South-East Asia.

32. The invasion and occupation of Kampuchea represented a flagrant violation of the principles of independence, territorial integrity and the right of self-determination, and the vast majority of Member States believed therefore that the Kampuchean question should be considered by the General Assembly. Numerous resolutions adopted by the overwhelming majority of Member States had condemned the situation in Kampuchea and proposed solutions based on the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from that country. As long as those resolutions remained unimplemented, the General Assembly must continue to consider the question and work to put an end to the violation of Kampuchea's independence and territorial integrity.

33. Mr. ORAMAS-OLIVA (Cuba) said that his delegation opposed the inclusion of the item in the agenda, for that would be blatant interference in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Consideration of that item would simply create further obstacles to the normalization of the situation in Kampuchea, which was reflected in a number of recent initiatives. He appealed to Member States, in accordance with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, to allow the Kampuchean people to deal with their problems on their own.

34. Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation opposed in principle the inclusion of the item. As a result of the manoeuvres of certain forces, the General Assembly had become embroiled in a fruitless debate which violated the Charter and constituted a blatant intervention in the internal affairs of Kampuchea. The situation in that country was a matter for its own people and its legitimate Government to discuss. The continuing process of normalization in Kampuchea showed that foreign forces had been unable to impose their strategic objectives on that country and the attention focused on Kampuchea by those forces was only designed to divert attention from other dangerous situations in the world. What Kampuchea needed was peace, tranquility and good relations with its neighbours, as was demonstrated by the recent peace initiatives in Indo-China, and the United Nations must not allow certain forces to exploit the situation in that country for their own ends.

35. Mr. LIANG Yufan (China) said that, in accordance with the Charter, the United Nations must uphold the principles of justice, State sovereignty, national independence and international peace and security. Five years had elapsed since the peaceful Kampuchean people had been invaded and occupied by the Vietnamese aggressor, and the General Assembly had a duty to discuss that flagrant breach of the Charter and of the norms governing international relations. The question of Kampuchea had been discussed repeatedly and numerous resolutions had been adopted

(Mr. Liang Yufan, China)

calling for the withdrawal of all foreign forces in order to permit the holding of free elections; however, the Vietnamese authorities refused to implement those resolutions and instead had subjected the Kampuchean people to repeated military offensives and oppression and had violated the territory and sovereignty of Thailand, thereby exacerbating tensions in South-East Asia. In view of that situation, the General Assembly must once again consider that item at its thirty-ninth session.

36. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 20 in the agenda.

Items 21 to 24

37. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include items 21 to 24 in the agenda.

Item 25

38. Mr. FAJARDO-MALDONADO (Guatemala) said that inclusion of the item in the agenda would be inappropriate and contrary to the United Nations Charter. Efforts were being made by the Central American countries themselves to find a solution to the problems they faced, and any interference that did not contribute to the achievement of a negotiated political solution should be rejected. Guatemala continued to support the negotiations being conducted within the framework of the Contadora Group, where progress had already been made.

39. Mr. ORAMAS-OLIVA (Cuba) said it was important that the item should be included in the agenda. Commendable efforts had been made by the Contadora Group but, in view of the worsening situation in Central America, those efforts needed to be supported by the international community as a whole. Any measures designed to promote peace in the region would also contribute to world peace; active consideration should be given to such measures by the Assembly.

40. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 25 in the agenda.

Item 26

41. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 26 in the agenda.

Item 27

42. MR. de La BARRE de NANTEUIL (France) said that it would be regrettable for the General Assembly to have to consider the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte again at its thirty-ninth session. Mayotte was a territory under French sovereignty and consideration of the item by the General Assembly would be in violation of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter. His Government would continue

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(Mr. de La Barre de Nanteuil, France)

to foster the development of economic, social and cultural relations between the Island of Mayotte and the Comoros and to encourage further rapprochement among the islands of the archipelago.

43. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 27 in the agenda.

Item 28

44. The CHAIRMAN said that the representatives of Afghanistan and Pakistan had asked to participate in the discussion of the item; if there was no objection, he would invite them to take places at the Committee table.

45. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Zarif (Afghanistan) and Mr. Fareed (Pakistan) took places at the Committee table.

46. Mr. ZARIF (Afghanistan) said that, at meetings of the Committee during the previous four years, his delegation had strongly objected to the inclusion in the agenda of the item on the situation in Afghanistan. It had stated in detail why it was not prepared to discuss its country's internal affairs in any international forum. As was evident from the title of item 28, it was the situation within Afghanistan that would be under discussion. That would be contrary to Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter. Nevertheless, as the experience of the past four sessions clearly showed, the sponsors of the item were determined to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

47. It had become obvious that the imperialist and hegemonist forces had done their utmost to exploit issues like the situation concerning Afghanistan in order to divert attention from the real problems for which they themselves were responsible, such as the explosive situation in the Israeli-occupied territories and the plight of the Palestinians, the brutal repression in Namibia and South Africa and the apartheid régime's repeated aggression against neighbouring countries, particularly Angola, United States occupation of Grenada and interference in the internal affairs of Central American and other Caribbean countries, the drastic expansion of the imperialist military build-up throughout the world and the increasing danger of a nuclear holocaust, plots against sovereign independent States, the denial of the right of peoples to self-determination and independence, and the critical economic situation in the developing countries, which was a direct result of unjust international economic relations. Contrary to their stated intentions, the sponsors of the item were not interested in solving the real problems; instead, they missed no opportunity to put obstacles in the way of political solutions.

48. On 14 May 1980 and on 24 August 1981, his Government had put forward two proposals, which constituted the most realistic basis for a comprehensive solution of the outstanding issues between Afghanistan and its neighbours. As a result of the personal efforts of the Secretary-General and his special representative, Afghanistan and Pakistan had been negotiating since June 1982 to overcome the

'Mr. Zarif, Afghanistan)

difficulties which impeded normal relations between them. His Government was satisfied with the outcome of the Geneva talks and looked forward to future negotiations. With sincere political will on all sides, it would be possible to create the right political climate for direct bilateral negotiations. Only through such negotiations would it be possible to consider the various aspects of the difficulties and pave the way for the normalization of relations and the promotion of peace and stability in the region.

49. His Government continued to believe that a hasty debate on the question of Afghanistan would make a solution of the problem even more difficult. Under no circumstances would Afghanistan submit to pressure from any quarter. The outcome of any discussion on item 28 would not be acceptable to or binding on his Government. The people of Afghanistan consistently rallied around their Government in resisting external pressure. They did not expect the General Assembly to be used as an instrument of interference and pressure. The Assembly's best course of action would be to avoid a harmful, propagandistic discussion.

50. Mr. FAREED (Pakistan) said that his delegation strongly supported the inclusion in the agenda of item 28, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/29. Since the adoption of that resolution, the situation surrounding Afghanistan had not changed and it was essential to consider the implications for neighbouring States. The vast refugee problem still remained: there were almost three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan alone. His delegation believed that, until the refugees had the opportunity to return to their country in peace and honour, the whole issue must continue to be a concern of the General Assembly.

51. The argument advanced by the previous speaker that discussion of the issue in an international forum would be an obstacle to any political solution was untenable. The real obstacle was the continued presence of foreign troops in the country. In addition, the Charter should not be interpreted merely to accommodate the designs of one particular Member State; it had to respond to the needs of the international community as a whole.

52. He was grateful to the Secretary-General and his special representative for their personal efforts in pursuing consultations with his Government and Afghanistan. Those efforts should be continued and, for that purpose, the General Assembly needed to provide the appropriate mandate. The issue had been before the Assembly for four years, and it was time for the Organization to take decisive action.

53. Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation supported Afghanistan's contention that item 28 should not be included in the agenda. Consideration of the item by the General Assembly would constitute interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and would thus be contrary to the Charter. All the commotion regarding the item only served the interests of those who were waging an undeclared war against Afghanistan, hindering the normalization of the situation in South-East Asia and seeking pretexts for fostering confrontation and tension. It was obvious that exaggeration of the issue

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

in the General Assembly and the adoption of resolutions lacking political realism were being used by certain quarters as a smokescreen for efforts to obstruct the search for a political solution on matters relating to the external aspect of the Afghanistan problem. That was particularly inadmissible at a time when it was important to provide the right atmosphere for the negotiations being conducted between Afghanistan and Pakistan through the Secretary-General's special representative.

54. His delegation believed that the interests of normalizing the situation concerning Afghanistan would be served by discontinuing the discussion of the matter in the General Assembly.

55. Mr. LIANG Yufan (China) noted that the General Assembly had on several occasions discussed the armed invasion of Afghanistan and had overwhelmingly adopted resolutions calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops. Those resolutions, however, had still not been implemented. The foreign troops had not only refused to withdraw, but had even intensified their armed suppression of the Afghan resistance forces and the civilian population, thus posing a serious threat to peace and security throughout the region. His delegation maintained that, in order to uphold the Charter, the General Assembly should continue, at its thirty-ninth session, to consider the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

56. Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation opposed the inclusion of item 28. Its consideration by the General Assembly would constitute direct interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State and would be contrary to the Charter. It was clear that Afghanistan posed no threat to peace and security; instead, the Afghan people were the victims of an undeclared war and repeated acts of terrorism. The legal Government had expressed its sincere wish to achieve a just settlement by political means. The sponsors of item 28, however, were seeking to draw the General Assembly into a fruitless discussion and divert its attention from really urgent problems. That approach could not promote normalization in Afghanistan and would be likely to worsen the situation in South-East Asia as a whole.

57. Mr. WASIUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that his delegation favoured the inclusion of item 28. The whole situation had arisen because of the invasion of Afghanistan by foreign troops, and their continued presence meant that the issue involved was more than an internal problem. He felt that previous discussions by the General Assembly had indeed been fruitful in bringing about a dialogue among the parties concerned and that further consideration of the matter at the thirty-ninth session would be worthwhile.

58. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 28 in the agenda.

59. Mr. Zarif (Afghanistan) and Mr. Fareed (Pakistan) withdrew.

Items 29 to 77

60. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include items 29 to 77 in the agenda.

Item 78

61. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Madagascar 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.

62. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Rabetafika (Madagascar) took a place at the Committee table.

63. Mr. RABETAFIKA (Madagascar) said that, with regard to the question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India, the two interested parties - France and Madagascar - had held their first high-level meeting, at the request of the Malagasy Government, in September 1984 in Paris. A preliminary exchange of views had been held on matters of procedure and certain aspects of the problem. An appraisal of the results would enable the two Governments to make progress towards the goals set forth in United Nations resolutions on the question. Meanwhile, his delegation wished the item to be retained on the agenda in accordance with General Assembly decision 38/422.

64. Mr. de La BARRE de NANTEUIL (France) regretted that the General Committee should have to consider the question of including item 78 in the agenda. His delegation continued to feel that the inclusion of such an item would be in violation of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter. His Government was itself continuing to maintain a dialogue with the Malagasy authorities.

65. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 78 in the agenda.

66. Mr. Rabetafika (Madagascar) withdrew.

Items 79 to 107

67. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include items 79 to 107 in the agenda.

Item 108

68. Mr. HELGASON (Iceland) drew attention to document A/39/361, in which the Secretary-General stated that contacts established between Indonesia and Portugal in July 1983 had been held in New York at regular intervals and that both parties had expressed their willingness to continue efforts to reach a settlement. Accordingly, he proposed that the Committee should recommend that the General Assembly should defer consideration of the item until the fortieth session.

69. MR. WASIUDDIN (Bangladesh) seconded that proposal, adding that a similar decision had been taken by the Committee at the previous session.

70. The Committee decided to recommend that consideration of item 108 should be deferred until the fortieth session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

Items 109 to 138

71. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include items 109 to 138 in the agenda.

Item 139

72. The CHAIRMAN said that the inclusion of item 139 had been requested by Mongolia (A/39/141). The representative of Mongolia had asked to participate in the discussion of the item in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

73. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Nyamdoo (Mongolia) took a place at the Committee table.

74. Mr. NYAMDOO (Mongolia) said that Mongolia had proposed the inclusion of an item entitled "Right of peoples to peace" because it was the common aspiration of all peoples to maintain international peace and security, particularly in view of the growing interdependence of States and the increasing danger of nuclear war.

75. The right of peoples to a peaceful life was implicitly recognized in the Charter. The time had now come for the General Assembly to issue an explicit declaration that would serve as a political and legal basis for actions to preserve peace throughout the world. Such a declaration should stipulate that the right to peace was inalienable and that all States had a fundamental obligation to work to implement that right; it should specify the fundamental obligations of States in that regard, namely, that national policies, particularly of States possessing nuclear weapons, should aim at eliminating the nuclear threat and averting a nuclear war; and that all States should adopt practical measures in the areas of disarmament, renunciation of the use of force in international relations and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. His delegation had annexed to document A/39/141 a draft declaration containing the main ideas which it believed should be reflected in the General Assembly declaration on the right of peoples to peace.

76. Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation supported the Mongolian proposal, which had been inspired by the peace-loving humanism that was so important when the world was threatened by nuclear war. It was appropriate for the General Assembly to focus the attention of States on that catastrophic possibility and the need to ensure peace. The inclusion of item 139 would highlight the need to put the maintenance of peace at the centre of the political activity of all States and would enhance the standing of the United Nations as an instrument of peace.

77. Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation supported the inclusion of item 139. To guarantee peace and eliminate the threat of war was of the highest priority. The General Assembly, by resolutely reaffirming the right of peoples to prevent war and preserve peace, would be taking a basic step in that direction. Such a resolution would promote the common cause of all peoples.

78. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 139 in the agenda.

79. Mr. Nyamdoo (Mongolia) withdrew.

Item 140

80. The CHAIRMAN said that the inclusion of item 140 had been requested by the Economic and Social Council in decision 1984/188, as indicated in document A/39/100.

81. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 140 in the agenda.

Item 141

82. The CHAIRMAN said that the inclusion of item 141 had been requested by Antigua and Barbuda (A/39/241). The representative of Antigua and Barbuda had asked to participate in the discussion of the item in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

83. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Jacobs (Antigua and Barbuda) took a place at the Committee table.

84. Mr. JACOBS (Antigua and Barbuda) said that his delegation had proposed the inclusion of an item entitled "Celebration of the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the emancipation of slaves in the British Empire" as a way of according recognition and restoring a measure of pride to millions of people who had been humiliated in servitude to feed the ambitions and avarice of a few.

85. The Act of 1 August 1834 emancipating the slaves in the former British possessions had ended a two-centuries-old cycle of pain, brutality and indignity, during which the flower of African youth had been forcibly deprived of legal and human rights and defined as conveyable property. It was small wonder that Africa had remained underdeveloped for so long a time, robbed as it had been of its able-bodied people for close to 200 years.

86. It remained one of history's great injustices that at the time of emancipation the slave owners had been compensated for losing their right to exploit, while the exploited had received no restitution for the ills done to them. The Caribbean had still not recovered from the economic and human exploitation under slavery.

87. If African slavery was the most extreme form of servitude, however, it was not the only one. Indentured Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Scottish and Irish

(Mr. Jacobs, Antigua and Barbuda)

labourers, living under conditions that closely approximated slavery, had faced degradation in South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius and the Caribbean; indeed, slavery still existed in many parts of the world. Its most revolting modern-day form was apartheid in South Africa, based on the doctrine of black inferiority and the economic rationale of securing pools of cheap labour for the European minority. Recently, the United Nations had received reports of six separate cases of slavery in the United States, and had learned of conditions in certain countries where it was estimated that 40 per cent of the population still lived in slavery.

88. Those were shocking realities that painted a terrible picture of man's continuing inhumanity to man,. It behoved the international community to redress such wrongs in the one-hundred-and-fiftieth year of the abolition of slavery in the former British possessions - a measure which had resulted from the work of courageous men such as England's William Wilberforce and had presaged abolition in other parts of the world. His delegation proposed that the General Assembly should, under item 141, issue a declaration recognizing the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary, acknowledging the work of men such as Wilberforce and authorizing an appropriate ceremony.

89. Mr. ORAMAS-OLIVA (Cuba) asked whether the intention of including the item was to condemn the Empire which had introduced slavery to the West Indies or the crime itself of slavery.

90. Mr. JACOBS (Antigua and Barbuda) said he wished to refer all delegations to document A/39/241, in which his country had clearly set forth its objectives.

91. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 141 in the agenda.

92. Mr. Jacobs (Antigua and Barbuda) withdrew.

Item 142

93. The CHAIRMAN said that the inclusion of item 142 had been requested by Senegal (A/39/242). The representative of Senegal had asked to participate in the discussion of the item in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

94. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Sarré (Senegal) took a place at the Committee table.

95. Mr. SARRE (Senegal) said that Senegal, on behalf of the countries which had attended the Ministerial Conference on Desertification recently held at Dakar, had requested the inclusion of the item entitled "Countries stricken by desertification and drought". The United Nations had made great efforts on behalf of those countries and they had received substantial bilateral aid from a number of Governments, for which they were grateful. The countries stricken by desertification and drought were, however, in a tragic situation in which food production had dropped and pastures had been critically reduced. The desert might

(Mr. Sarré, Senegal)

encroach on four fifths of their territories by the end of the century, with the result that the countries might simply disappear from the map. The inclusion of item 142 was intended to underscore the international community's support for the efforts of the countries themselves to alleviate the crisis, and also to encourage the international community to continue its development aid under emergency programmes.

96. Mr. DIALLO (Guinea) said that his delegation strongly supported inclusion of the item. The General Assembly should give the item the priority it demanded.

97. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include item 142 in the agenda.

98. Mr. Sarré (Senegal) withdrew.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.