

PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Fourth Session

TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at Flushing Meadow, New York, on Tuesday, 20 September 1949, at 11.25 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. Norman J. O. MAKIN (Australia).

President: General Carlos P. RÓMULO (Philippines).

Opening of the fourth session of the General Assembly

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT opened the first meeting of the fourth session of the General Assembly.

MESSAGE FROM MR. H. V. EVATT, PRESIDENT OF
THE THIRD SESSION

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said that, as leader of the Australian delegation, he represented the retiring President of the Assembly, Mr. H. V. Evatt, in opening the fourth session. He read a message from Mr. Evatt in which the latter expressed regret at his inability to be present and affirmed that the continuing progress and development of the United Nations would always be of the deepest concern to him.

3. As retiring President of the General Assembly, Mr. Evatt wished to pay a special tribute to Mr. Trygve Lie, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Among the Secretary-General's staff he specially mentioned Mr. Andrew Cordier, with whom, as President, he had worked most closely. Just as the United Nations had accepted growing responsibilities in its four years of life, so the Secretary-General and his staff had shouldered growing obligations and discharged them ably, fearlessly, and impartially.

4. After surmounting many difficulties, the United Nations now occupied an established position in the sphere of international relations. In Palestine, in Greece, in Indonesia, in Korea and in Kashmir, United Nations commissions had grappled with acute political problems, sometimes with marked success. The intervention of the United Nations had saved many thousands of precious lives. Its economic and social objectives were being pursued by its specialized agencies and commissions, although valuable preliminary work would have to be followed up by more energetic and decisive action. The United Nations was the primary centre of international co-operation — the supreme Organization which struggled for peace and justice on a world basis.

5. As a result, the Assembly, as the first principal organ of the United Nations, was assuming an ever-increasing role and responsibility. The opening day of the Assembly each year was becoming the most important date on the international calendar. After the free and open debates of the Assembly, its final decisions and recommendations should represent the fair judgments of the peoples of the world. Those democratic decisions and the democratic procedure which preceded them were themselves potent instru-

ments for the maintenance of the basic objectives of the Charter.

6. Much, however, depended on the extent to which representatives of Governments truly reflected public opinion in their own countries. The Assembly became a world forum only so far as each delegation maintained independence of thought and action. Justice required that decisions should be arrived at after independent investigation and analysis of every problem.

7. Sooner or later, to become a true world forum, the United Nations must increase its membership. On many occasions the objective of universality of membership had been stressed; the Assembly, by its resolution 197 (III) A of 8 December 1948, had adopted the principle, and during the current year the Secretary-General had again referred to it with great force. Many States which had applied for admission could make a valuable contribution to the work of the United Nations if they were not precluded by the Security Council procedures, for one reason or another, from exercising the rights and discharging the responsibilities of membership. Mr. Evatt sincerely hoped that increase of membership would soon become an accomplished fact.

8. The General Assembly, at its fourth session, had a unique opportunity to assume leadership in the face of urgent economic problems of an international character.

9. Through the programme of technical assistance to economically under-developed areas, the United Nations could help to remove many of the great disparities in living standards and economic opportunities which separated its Members. So great an enterprise exemplified the kind of international action foreseen at San Francisco, namely, joint action for the promotion of conditions of economic and social progress and development.

10. There were, however, crucial international economic problems whose solutions lay as much in domestic as in international action. For instance, the great conception of raising the level of economic life in the less developed areas would come to nothing unless the more advanced economic Powers succeeded in giving their own peoples the right of full employment with a progressive expansion of consumption and improving living standards.

11. Improved economic conditions for the world as a whole rested on the willingness and ability of each country to carry out the economic obligations which the United Nations Charter imposed.

As a result of recent signs of instability in the level of world employment and incomes, the Australian delegation was proposing that the General Assembly should deliberate upon the observance and implementation of Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter, particularly the objectives of full employment and higher standards of living. The General Assembly, by appropriate action, could gradually ensure the carrying out of the economic obligations embodied in Article 56 of the Charter, by which all Members pledged themselves "to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the organization for the achievement of the purposes set forth in Article 55", one of which was "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development". In that connexion two factors should be borne in mind: first, that the welfare of the peoples of Asia, Latin America and other important zones must be safeguarded as well as the welfare of the peoples of Europe; secondly, that mere currency difficulties should not be allowed to prevent the flow of essential supplies to all those who were in desperate need.

12. Mr. Evatt specially recommended two practical steps: the continuance of the International Children's Emergency Fund, whose noble endeavour had been crowned with notable success, and the early ratification of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

13. Courage and imagination had always been evident whenever the General Assembly had dealt with economic and political questions causing international friction or interference with living standards. The world did not need a restatement of the principles which should govern international conduct in either economic or political affairs.

14. The fundamental principles had already been worked out and embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and other international agreements associated with it. What was essential was that those principles should be implemented by practical and day-by-day application.

15. If the test of conformity with the Charter were applied to each problem and to the measures brought forward to deal with it, just and lasting solutions would certainly be reached. Moreover, those solutions would greatly help the ordinary man and woman in every land to obtain, after all the sufferings and sacrifices of two world wars, what they were indubitably entitled to: first, enduring peace; secondly, a peace based on international justice and fair, frank dealings; and, finally, better standards of living for themselves and above all for their children.

16. Mr. Evatt concluded his message to the representatives to the Assembly by challenging them always to maintain firm, unwavering, and unflinching support of the United Nations.

Appointment of the Credentials Committee

In accordance with rule 24 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and on the proposal of the Temporary President, the representatives of the following countries were elected members of the Credentials Committee: Belgium,

Brazil, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Iran, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America and Uruguay.

Election of the President

17. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT recalled that, in accordance with the provisions of rule 84 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the election of the President would be held by secret ballot and without nominations.

At the invitation of the Temporary President, Rahim Bey (Egypt) and Mr. Viteri Lafronte (Ecuador) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot:

Number of votes cast, 59;

Invalid votes, 1;

Valid votes, 58;

Simple majority, 30.

Number of votes obtained:

General Rómulo (Philippines), 53;

Mr. Clementis (Czechoslovakia), 5.

General Rómulo (Philippines), having obtained the required simple majority of the Members present and voting, was elected President of the fourth session of the General Assembly, and took the Chair.

18. The PRESIDENT expressed his deep gratitude for the honour which the General Assembly had conferred upon him and his country.

19. The task of the Assembly was to carry forward the work of the United Nations. Its goal, defined by the Charter, was to make it possible for men to live better lives in larger freedom under a reign of peace founded on justice and universal respect for law.

20. The United Nations could not hope to achieve in four years the goal of many centuries of human effort, but with good will it could bring it a little nearer to realization. The fourth session of the Assembly would not have laboured in vain if it were able to help mankind to advance by so much as one step towards permanent peace. In his opinion, the Assembly had the opportunity to achieve that very aim. The opening session coincided with a turning-point in post-war international relations. Though there were still many formidable obstacles to world peace, the danger of a new war, which had overshadowed the deliberations of the Assembly during the first part of its third session, held in Paris the previous year, had greatly abated. That advantage should be pressed and the Assembly should move boldly forward in the spirit of its resolution 190 (III), introduced by Mexico and approved unanimously on 3 November 1948, which pledged the Powers to the peaceful settlement of their disputes.

21. The third session of the General Assembly had been distinguished by an outstanding achievement in the field of human rights, and for that reason it was sometimes known as the "Human Rights Assembly". He hoped that the fourth session would earn for itself the title of the "Peace Assembly".

22. Standing four-square by the Charter, the Assembly could help to fortify the United Nations for the momentous tasks that lay ahead. By unstinted efforts and with a modicum of good will, it could so arrange the conduct of its affairs that all might share the hope he held out to the

Assembly that its work might be completed within the limits set for the current session.

23. The President then proposed that the General Assembly should adjourn in order to enable the six Main Committees to elect their Chairmen,

who, together with the seven vice-Presidents and the President of the Assembly, would constitute the General Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.5 p.m.

TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at Flushing Meadow, New York, on Tuesday, 20 September 1949, at 3.40 p.m.

President: General Carlos P. RÓMULO (Philippines).

Chairmen of Main Committees

The PRESIDENT announced that the six Main Committees had duly elected their Chairmen, the results of the elections being as follows:

- First Committee: Mr. L. B. Pearson (Canada);
- Second Committee: Mr. H. Santa Cruz (Chile);
- Third Committee: Mr. C. E. Stolk (Venezuela);
- Fourth Committee: Mr. H. Lannung (Denmark);
- Fifth Committee: Mr. A. Kyrrou (Greece);
- Sixth Committee: Mr. M. Lachs (Poland).

Election of the Vice-Presidents

2. The PRESIDENT requested the General Assembly to proceed to the election of its seven Vice-Presidents. He recalled that, according to rule 27 of the rules of procedure, the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly should be chosen "on the basis of ensuring the representative character of the General Committee". The following countries, having already become members of the General Committee, would not be eligible: Canada, Chile, Denmark, Greece, Poland, Venezuela and, of course, the Philippines.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Viteri Lafrente (Ecuador) and Rahim Bey (Egypt) acted as tellers.

Number of votes cast, 58.

Abstentions, 1;

Invalid votes, none;

Valid votes; 57;

Simple majority, 29.

Number of votes obtained:

France, 51;

- United States of America, 51;
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 50;
- China, 49;
- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 46;
- Brazil, 42;
- Pakistan, 42;
- Egypt, 10;
- Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, 6;
- Ethiopia, 4;
- Haiti, 4;
- India, 4;
- Guatemala, 3;
- Luxembourg, 3;
- Norway, 3;
- Thailand, 3;
- Burma, 2;
- Lebanon, 2;
- Liberia, 2;
- Mexico, 2;
- Yugoslavia, 2;
- Argentina, 1;
- Australia, 1;
- Belgium, 1;
- Costa Rica, 1;
- Iceland, 1;
- Iran, 1;
- Iraq, 1;
- Israel, 1;
- New Zealand, 1;
- Turkey, 1;
- Uruguay, 1.

The representatives of the following countries, having received the required simple majority of the members present and voting, were elected as Vice-Presidents: France, United States of America, United Kingdom, China, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Brazil, and Pakistan.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.

TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at Flushing Meadow, New York, on Wednesday, 21 September 1949, at 11 a.m.

President: General Carlos P. RÓMULO (Philippines).

Opening of the general debate: speeches by Mr. de Freitas Valle (Brazil), Mr. Acheson (United States of America), Mr. Hevia (Cuba), Sir Benegal Rau (India), Fayez El-Khoury Bey (Syria)

1. Mr. DE FREITAS VALLE (Brazil) stated that his country's participation in the San Francisco Conference had been marked by a spirit of confident hope, so much so that, despite its earlier opposi-

tion to the institution of the veto, Brazil had been the first of the fifty States represented there to vote for the inclusion of the veto in the Charter, a fact which showed that Brazil had relied on the five great Powers to use the veto wisely. In London, the whole-hearted co-operation of the representatives of Brazil had been directed towards the task of the establishment of the United Nations by the implementation of the Charter. It had given earnest support to the deci-