



Friday, 24 October 1952, at 11.15 a.m.

Headquarters, New York

CONTENTS

	Page
Measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly: memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/2206) (<i>continued</i>)	151

President: Mr. Lester B. PEARSON (Canada).

Measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly: memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/2206) (*continued*)

[Agenda item 50]

1. Mr. ROBERTS (Union of South Africa): The delegation of the Union of South Africa would like to add its voice to the chorus of appreciation of the efforts of the Secretary-General and of the sponsors of this movement to increase the effectiveness of our procedures so as to make better use of the time considered reasonable for the regular sessions of the General Assembly. The greatest problem with which we are faced in that endeavour is to bridge the startling difference in procedural approach between different groups of nations. This difference was very forcibly brought home to us by the vehement declaration of the representative of Uruguay [387th meeting]. If I understood him correctly, his country would never tolerate the giving of discretionary powers to a chairman which might result in any limitation of the absolute freedom of speech of representatives of sovereign and independent States.

2. To us who have grown up with the acceptance of the need of discipline in debates and of obedience to and respect for the chairman of a meeting, the granting of discretionary powers and the strict observance of rules of procedure are taken for granted. We believe that this system produces quicker results with less friction and ensures, at least, an equal opportunity for all legitimate discussion. This procedure is one of the foundation stones of the democratic parliamentary system. But we shall never secure the effective use of time in our deliberations by means of the rules of procedure alone. We must have goodwill and co-operation. There must be give and take. Above all, we must exercise self-discipline; we must respect and uphold the decisions of the presiding officers. Nevertheless, we support in principle the suggestions of the Secretary-General.

3. The representative of Israel named six reasons for the undue length of previous sessions. There is a seventh reason, as was pointed out by the representative of New Zealand: lack of punctuality. In 1950, I

spent some forty-six hours waiting in committee rooms between the scheduled period for the opening of a meeting and the actual commencement, that is to say, about the equivalent of a whole week and a half of meetings. Now we have reason to believe that things will be better this time. But there is still a sad lack of self-discipline. We have already started a meeting nineteen minutes late, and at the opening of the meeting few more than about half the number of members or representatives are in their seats, which is certainly not fair to a speaker who has an important speech to make at the beginning of a meeting.

4. We cannot, at this stage, discuss details, but we do wish to make one or two general remarks about the memorandum of the Secretary-General [A/2206]. The segmentation of debates is, in our view, one of the greatest evils. There has undoubtedly been a gross abuse of procedural discussions on points of order and explanations of votes. I was present at one meeting when the whole of a Saturday morning was devoted to a discussion of whether the meeting had been properly convened. But, if there is to be a limitation of speeches, we feel that, where a nation is vitally and peculiarly interested, it is in any event entitled to be fully heard, and we think that safeguards ought to be inserted in any arbitrary limitation of speeches to make sure of the exercise of that right.

5. Much time might be saved if the number of interventions by the same representative in the same debate were limited. There appears to be no limitation of the number of times that a person can speak on the same matter. It would certainly, in our view, be advantageous if proposals were handed in earlier in the debate, and we feel that there is no danger, because the sponsor would always have the right to withdraw and substitute.

6. The general trend of the documents and of this debate has satisfied my delegation that we are all striving for the same results. It is delightful to see such unanimity. We all accept the same fundamental truths and, as time goes on, I believe that we shall learn to understand each other better and to understand each other's procedure better; and I believe that we shall then develop our own procedural techniques which will

so oil the wheels of this great machine that there will be no more clashing of gears or seizing of brakes.

7. Mr. TORRILLO (Guatemala) (*translated from Spanish*): The delegation of Guatemala and the other delegations of Central America, that is, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and also Panama, on whose behalf I have the honour to speak, have given careful study to the Secretary-General's interesting memorandum on measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly. They have also listened with the greatest interest to the various views expressed by delegations on that document. Those views fall into two categories: those favouring acceptance of all the points in the memorandum, including the changes in the Assembly's rules of procedure, and those which, without minimizing the importance of the sound considerations invoked by the Secretary-General on some of the points in the report, hold that many of the changes of a legal nature proposed in the report conflict with the democratic principles of freedom of expression laid down in the United Nations Charter and in our national constitutions.

8. The countries on whose behalf I am speaking share the latter view; they feel that some of the legal changes proposed infringe freedom of expression and therefore cannot accept them as they stand. That does not mean that freedom of expression implies that there should be an abuse of that freedom. It is granted to all delegations and is among the basic principles of the Charter. For we believe that delegations have no right in any way to thwart the solution of problems of vital importance to mankind or to the logical and efficient functioning of other organs. I refer specifically to those delegations which have tried, on various occasions, both at previous sessions and at this one, to impede the study and solution of problems vital to mankind.

9. For that reason, the countries of Central America, and Panama, wish to place on record their view that the amendment submitted yesterday [387th meeting] by Greece, which would refer the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2206) to the Sixth Committee, should be supplemented by the suggestion, which we are moving as an amendment, that it should be referred to the Sixth Committee urgently, and that the Committee should report back to the General Assembly as soon as possible during the current session. We feel that the memorandum should be referred to the Sixth Committee because the basic aspects of the proposed changes are of a purely legal character; the question is so important that the Sixth Committee should, as soon as possible, report back to the Assembly, so that the latter, on the basis of that report, may arrive at a solution at its current session.

10. Mr. BARTOS (Yugoslavia) (*translated from French*): The Yugoslav delegation, like all other delegations, has given special attention to the Secretary-General's memorandum on measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly. After a thorough study, the Yugoslav delegation has reached the conclusion that the measures suggested by the Secretariat have been conceived primarily after considering the technical aspect of the problem, without attempting to draw a comparison between the operation of the Assembly and that of national legislatures.

11. Every measure to make the work of our Assembly more orderly necessarily and directly affects the relations among the Member States. With that as its basic premise, the Yugoslav delegation feels that before taking a decision on any of the measures suggested in the memorandum, the General Assembly must find a way out of a dilemma. That dilemma arises because it must seek, on the one hand, to satisfy the unanimous desire to avoid lengthy sessions, which arouse general dissatisfaction, and, on the other hand, to provide enough latitude to guarantee freedom of action as well as the *de jure* and *de facto* equality of Member States.

12. It is true that prolonging the sessions is prejudicial to the interests both of the United Nations and of the Member States. The latter are thereby deprived for a considerable period—for the duration of the session—of the regular services of statesmen, members of national legislatures, trade-union leaders and members of the teaching profession. Moreover, the Member States and the United Nations itself must bear heavy costs when sessions are prolonged.

13. On the other side of the picture, the speeding-up of the General Assembly's work might be harmful to the prestige of the United Nations and to the good sense and justice of our decisions. Decisions taken in haste might, for example, reduce the opportunity and even the freedom of Member States to intervene in order to protect their interests and to fulfil their task in an orderly and satisfactory manner. That task is to facilitate the proper functioning of this Organization to which the world looks for the maintenance of peace and the improvement of international relations in all fields.

14. The Yugoslav delegation does not dispute the fact that many of the suggestions in the Secretary-General's memorandum are likely to improve the functioning of the United Nations and bring about procedural economies in our work. It fears, however, that the authors of the memorandum gave primary emphasis to the procedural aspect of those measures. It is perfectly understandable that the members of the Secretariat have not found it easy to put themselves in the position of the representatives and to assess accurately the significance of each measure as it affects the safeguards which must be enjoyed by Member States in the Assembly.

15. The Yugoslav delegation does not intend, in this brief intervention, to indicate all the proposed measures which might prove to be double-edged swords. It will contribute its findings to the discussion in the Sixth Committee. We wish to emphasize now, however, that fair rules of procedure must be elastic, adaptable to the needs arising from political circumstances.

16. For example, let us consider the proposal that the debate should be considered closed *de jure* if, at a given moment, there are no other speakers. That proposal obviously indicates a lack of political understanding. The practice followed at the current session clearly demonstrates that the general debate had to be divided into two parts and that political circumstances made it necessary to allow States not to take part in that debate at the beginning of the session. Similarly, it is very often in the political interests of the United Nations to introduce some flexibility in this matter, notwithstanding the fact that the debate may be pro-

longed. Thus, in order to appraise the Assembly's work constructively, it is not fair to pick out of the reports of the Councils and of other organs the passages which, at first glance, appear to require a formal decision. Freedom of action, the right to take the initiative and to criticize, make it necessary for States to be able to speak not only on the report, but also in connexion with questions dealt with in the report, without resorting to the lengthy procedure of having each subject placed on the agenda as a separate item.

17. We do not propose, in this statement, to explain our views in detail. We shall conclude by saying that this question should be carefully examined in the Main Committees of the Assembly. The representatives of the Member States should be able to state their views regarding the significance of the proposed measures with a view to reconciling the need for economy in regard to procedure with the need to preserve the safeguards required for the conduct of the debate, in which representatives of sovereign States should enjoy full freedom to present and defend the views of those States.

18. Consequently, even taking the most generous view of the Secretary-General's memorandum, we are convinced that it should be given detailed and thorough study in the Sixth Committee, without which the General Assembly cannot be expected to arrive at any just solutions.

19. Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia) (*translated from French*): As several earlier speakers have remarked here, this is not the first time that the General Assembly has considered measures to limit the duration of its sessions; debates on appropriate measures to limit that duration have taken place at previous sessions. So far a series of rules have been adopted for the purpose of limiting the length of speeches in the general debate and the number of speeches relating to items on the agenda, whether dealt with in committee or at plenary meetings. A glance at the rules of procedure which now govern the proceedings of the General Assembly and its committees suffices to show that these rules already contain many provisions limiting or designed to limit the exercise of the fundamental rights which are indisputably vested in the representatives of governments and countries who participate in the debates of an international organization such as the United Nations. But not only do these rules limit the fundamental rights of representatives, they also limit their power to discharge the responsibilities assumed towards their governments and towards the peoples whom they represent in this Organization.

20. The Czechoslovak delegation does not believe that we can continue indefinitely adopting measures designed not only to limit the rights of delegations to the General Assembly, but also to prevent those delegations from performing their duty—which would, in fact, amount to preventing the United Nations from discharging its duty.

21. After hearing the various proposals made in the past on the question of limiting the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly, after attentively following the debates on the subject, after carefully considering the proposals which are before the General Assembly today, the Czechoslovak delegation cannot avoid the impression that the authors of these proposals

are more concerned with the time factor, that is to say, with making the sessions as short as possible, than with the function and purposes of the General Assembly's sessions. We cannot help feeling that the authors of these proposals are anxious that the various items on the agenda should be disposed of as promptly as possible, regardless of whether the debates and the draft resolutions relating to them bring us any nearer to the purpose envisaged when a particular item was placed on the agenda of the particular session.

22. My delegation cannot countenance the adoption, whether intentionally or as a result of ignorance, of slogans such as "time is money", in an international organization such as the United Nations. The Assembly is asked to discuss and settle complex and varied questions and problems; if it should happen that, for the sake of saving a few minutes, some problem is dealt with superficially, the result will be a subsequent loss of time, involving weeks and even months. My delegation thinks that it would be an affront to the General Assembly to grudge it the time it needs to carry out the functions which it must perform if it is to attain the purposes laid down for the United Nations by the Charter, for these purposes and functions are the *raison d'être* of the Organization.

23. Allow me to add two further comments which follow from these general considerations. My first comment relates to the fact that questions and items not within the competence of the United Nations are often placed on the agenda of the General Assembly. My second comment relates to the preparation and distribution of documents by the Secretariat.

24. As regards the first, it is generally known that the General Assembly has more than once dwelt at length on problems entirely beyond its competence. The inclusion of the Austrian question in the agenda of the present session is a recent case in point. The session could have been considerably shortened had the General Assembly refrained from taking up questions which have nothing to do with the United Nations, did it not devote its time to the consideration of proposals and resolutions which conflict with the principles of the Charter, and did it not have to discuss and to set up various committees, commissions and other illegal organs wholly out of keeping with the provisions of the Charter.

25. As regards the preparation and distribution of documents by the Secretariat, we all know that in most cases those documents are distributed very late; delegations to nearly all United Nations organs have complained of that fact; not only translations of documents, but often even the original basic documents, are not distributed in good time. There can be no doubt that an improvement in this state of affairs would help to shorten the sessions of the General Assembly.

26. In the course of the debate held yesterday [387th meeting] and today, we have heard many comments on the proposals contained in document A/2206. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to offer certain comments on the Secretariat's suggestions for limiting the duration of the General Assembly. At this stage in our debate, we are concerned only with principles. My delegation reserves the right to state in detail its opinions and its attitude towards the various para-

graphs at the time when those proposals, together with the suggested amendments to certain of our rules of procedure, are debated, either in committee or at a plenary meeting.

27. At this point my delegation feels bound to state that it cannot agree to the establishment of any *ad hoc* committee whose function would be, between sessions of the General Assembly, to consider items and problems which, under the Charter, should be dealt with by the General Assembly alone. The establishment of such a committee, even if all Members of the United Nations were represented on it, would be a violation of the Charter and involve a circumvention of the General Assembly's competence.

28. The second proposal to which we wish to object is the proposal for amending rules 72 and 112 of the rules of procedure, relating to points of order. The Czechoslovak delegation thinks that the considerations and definitions set forth in the Secretariat's memorandum on this point bear no relation to the true scope and significance of points of order, or to the needs of the General Assembly and its committees. We think that the conclusions put forward by the Secretariat in its report are mistaken and that, accordingly, the proposal for an additional clause in articles 72 and 112 is likewise misconceived. As I have already said, my delegation is against that proposal.

29. My delegation wishes also to make reservations concerning the attitude adopted by the Secretariat and its conclusions on the subject of debate in committee, limitation of debate and the list of speakers; we reserve, however, our right to state our position when the various proposals before us come up for discussion in detail.

30. Mr. ZEINEDDINE (Syria): The memorandum before us on the limitation of the duration of the sessions of the General Assembly, though dealing solely with a question of procedure, is of importance and can have great practical consequences. It is, indeed, very difficult to draw a clear line between questions of procedure and questions of substance. The present memorandum, while dealing with procedure, cannot but influence the functioning of the General Assembly and can also influence the competency and the attributes of the General Assembly. The most careful consideration is therefore necessitated.

31. My delegation would like to join the several delegations which have declared themselves in support of the general part of the memorandum which we have before us. Indeed, practically all the observations made form a useful guide and are very helpful in the consideration of these questions, particularly where the memorandum states that "measures which of themselves would automatically limit appreciably the duration of the regular sessions are not difficult to devise", but are "damaging and even self-defeating unless they achieve an economy of time through an improvement in methods and practices" [paragraph 4].

32. As to the specific suggestions contained in the memorandum, especially those relating to the agenda and to the closing of the session on a fixed date, I should like to state that the specific suggestions made in the memorandum are at variance with the principles contained in the general part at the beginning.

33. One of the methods suggested in the memorandum is explained in paragraphs 14 and 15, to the effect that some of the items on the agenda could be discarded and, therefore, not discussed. This suggestion might create the impression that the General Assembly is tired of taking up some of the questions which are of real interest to the world, and I believe that such a method would be very difficult to put into practice. It implies a choice as to the items which should be on the agenda, and a choice calls for criteria, and we know from experience the difficulty of getting the members of the General Assembly to agree on criteria that might be adopted, or as to whether an item which is controversial should be retained on or deleted from the agenda. A certain item might, in the opinion of some delegations, be of great urgency, while other delegations would have a different viewpoint as to its importance. Such differing opinions would have to be discussed in the General Assembly, and before a decision could be reached concerning the various items there would have to be a great deal of consideration, which would lead to a discussion of the substance of the different matters.

34. It has been found from experience, especially during the last few days, that an attempt to establish a priority as to the timing of the consideration of items is in itself a matter which consumes a great deal of time. Would the same situation not arise if it were a question of retaining an item on the agenda or deleting it? In such a situation the discussion would be still more lengthy and much more animated.

35. It is common knowledge that the number of questions which are brought before the General Assembly is increasing all the time. We no longer limit our deliberations to matters of general international tension. Questions of national liberation and self-determination are being given the attention of the General Assembly to an increasing extent. Questions of economic, social and other forms of international co-operation are pushing their way into the foreground. We should not hesitate to hail with joy the fact that these matters are being brought before the General Assembly. Of course, at times we cannot but feel disturbed because of the insistence of these problems, but if a problem exists it should be brought before the General Assembly in order that the latter may fulfil its purpose as a harmonizing centre for international action. If, in one way or another, we attempt to close the door to these problems, or, having opened the door, to throw them out of the window, then we are not serving the purpose for which the United Nations was created.

36. Another matter that arouses our interest is that of the simultaneous meeting of five committees. Possibly some of the large delegations are sufficiently staffed to follow such a procedure, but the tempo of our activity should be more in accord with the ability of the small delegations to cope with that procedure. Representatives must consult with each other and often with their governments and with different delegations. It is not true that the number of meetings determines the amount of productive work. On the contrary, very often the number of meetings held is in inverse proportion to the amount of productive work done. It is sometimes preferable to postpone a meeting than to hold it if it is felt that discussion would not produce

any fruitful results. One might have the impression that in trying to achieve a great deal in a short time, we are attempting not only to overstrain our possibilities but, at the same time, to take hasty decisions.

37. Finally, I should like to call the attention of the General Assembly to the question of closing the sessions at a given time, a day shortly before Christmas, especially when the session was opened some time in October. This matter is mentioned in paragraph 49 of the memorandum. Of course, we should all like to see the General Assembly sessions take less time than they do. We should all like to co-operate in trying to improve upon the procedure—but not by the limitation of speeches, or by means of points of order and an attempt to give them a connotation which, in our view, they do not have. It is through the goodwill and helpful attitude of Members that such things can best be done. They cannot be achieved by the Assembly fixing a date for the end of its session so that, while the problems of the world wait, representatives just say “good-bye” to those problems and disperse on the pretext that some of the leading statesmen have to go home. We fully realise that some of the leading statesmen who come here would want to go home, but it has to be remembered that in any case most of them do not stay for two months and would not be prepared to remain until the very end of the session. That is not important, in fact, because most of the main problems are decided upon—or, at least, general lines of action are arrived at—while those leading statesmen are still with us. Or, if that is not the case, the discussion can be carried on by other statesmen who, although not leading statesmen, might remain behind.

38. If we add those three facts: first, the limitation of the agenda through the discarding of certain items which, however, might be regarded as urgent by many of us, and whose absence from the agenda might create considerable ill feeling and doubt as to the efficacy and even, I venture to say, the good intentions of certain delegations concerning them; secondly, that, within the limited time at our disposal, we have to try to finish the work of the committees—committees meeting in rapid sequence as if there were some kind of stampede, although that is not, of course, what is intended in the proposal; and, thirdly, that we have to finish in eight weeks, then we have the main feature of this memorandum. In our view this main feature is exceedingly unacceptable, and although we do not wish to try to put forward any constructive suggestions at the present moment, we shall try to do everything we can in that way in the Sixth Committee. But, as things stand, in a general discussion such as we are now having, we would say that, while this memorandum is very commendable in its general thought, it would, on the whole, be very dangerous to accept the specific suggestions which it contains.

39. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): The USSR delegation considers that the document submitted to the General Assembly by the United Nations Secretariat under the heading “Measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly” is contrary to the spirit of the United Nations Charter and is directed towards limiting the powers which the Charter confers upon the representatives of governments

taking part in the Assembly's work. This document contains a number of proposals which, under the guise of measures for reducing the length of sessions, in effect are obviously designed to limit the rights of the General Assembly, not to mention the fact that the participation of representatives of sovereign States in the discussion of items on the agenda of the General Assembly is to be restricted in a manner which is incompatible with the democratic principle that there should be free discussion of such questions.

40. The delegation of the Soviet Union first wishes to draw the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 14 of that document, which contains the Secretariat's recommendation that the General Assembly should examine carefully the items on its agenda “with a view to selecting those with which it can profitably deal during a given session”.

41. This recommendation can be interpreted only as an attempt to divide the items which the various governments submit for discussion into those which, in somebody's opinion, can be dealt with profitably during a given session and those which, again in somebody's opinion, cannot be settled satisfactorily and should therefore be deleted from the agenda. But who is going to decide in advance on the possibility of settling a given problem satisfactorily? Indeed, is it possible to take such a decision before the substance of the item has been discussed?

42. This proposal seems to be contrary to Article 10 of the United Nations Charter, which expressly states: “The General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter . . .”. The view has already been expressed here—at yesterday's [387th] meeting of the General Assembly—that such a recommendation is not in conformity with Article 10 of the Charter. The USSR delegation considers that this recommendation constitutes a direct contravention of Article 10 of the Charter and that its obvious purpose is to limit the rights of the General Assembly and of the States which may wish, and which are entitled under the Charter, to submit questions for discussion in the General Assembly whenever they consider it important that the Assembly should discuss them. If this recommendation were to be put into effect, it would only mean the limitation of the rights both of the General Assembly and of the States which are interested in the discussion of a given question.

43. The USSR delegation also wishes to draw attention to paragraph 23 of the document submitted, in which a recommendation is made to the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council “to continue the practice of indicating in their annual reports those matters on which they desire that the Assembly should take action”. The authors of the document go on to say in paragraph 23 that such a recommendation “has the advantage of providing Members with more precise information on what questions in the economic, social and trusteeship fields would be the subject of debate during a session of the General Assembly”. Thus the authors of the recommendation apparently consider that it is not for the General Assembly to decide which of the questions submitted

by the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council should be considered, but that such decisions should be taken by those organs themselves, despite the fact that, as we know, one of them comprises representatives of only eighteen, and the other of only twelve States. Does this not constitute a limitation of the rights of the General Assembly in favour of smaller organs, which are, moreover, subsidiary to the General Assembly? It is stated in paragraph 23 that such a rule would not prejudice the right of the Assembly "to debate any aspect of the reports", but that does not improve matters, since the Assembly has the right to discuss not only any aspect of the reports of its Councils, which are subsidiary to the Assembly but the reports as a whole. The Soviet Union delegation considers that this recommendation is also contrary to the United Nations Charter and that its purpose is to limit the rights of the General Assembly.

44. Furthermore, in paragraph 46 of the document, the Secretariat makes a somewhat vague proposal that *ad hoc* committees composed of all the members of the General Assembly should be set up to consider, between sessions, items postponed from one session to another. The Secretariat further suggests "that the reports prepared by *ad hoc* committees of full membership meeting between sessions should . . . be dealt with by the Assembly without reference to a Main Committee".

45. What does this proposal mean? Obviously this is a new form of the so-called Interim Committee, or "Little Assembly", which was set up [resolution 111 (II)] on the initiative of the United States delegation and which was intended to replace the General Assembly and the Security Council, in patent contravention of the United Nations Charter. At that time, the USSR delegation strongly objected to the establishment of such illegal organs, and the lamentable experience of the activities of the so-called Interim Committee has fully justified the position it took on that question.

46. The Secretariat is now trying again to by-pass the United Nations Charter and to set up some kind of *ad hoc* committees which would operate between sessions and would consider questions which certain delegations might find it inconvenient to discuss at sessions of the General Assembly. It is therefore quite obvious that fresh attempts are being made to set up new illegal organs in contravention of the Charter; moreover, all this is being proposed in a veiled form, so that it may not immediately be realized that all this is a repetition of the proposal concerning the so-called Interim Committee which has already failed. Thus the situation may be described by the Russian proverb: "the same old soup, but watered down".

47. These are some of the proposals which, as I have just shown, are obviously contrary to the United Nations Charter and are intended to limit the rights of the General Assembly and of Member States.

48. We can only express surprise that such proposals are submitted by the United Nations Secretariat, whose primary duty is the strict and unwavering observance of the United Nations Charter, the fundamental law of the whole Organization.

49. But perhaps the Secretariat has already ceased to regard the Charter as the fundamental law governing its activities, and is now obedient to other laws? If this is so, it should inform us of the fact.

50. The document submitted by the Secretariat contains, however, a number of proposals which amount to a revision of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and relate to the questions of limiting the time allowed to speakers, limiting discussions and so forth. The purpose of all these proposals is to limit the sovereign right of every State to give the General Assembly a full explanation of its position on all the items on the agenda, and, primarily, to limit the rights of the minority in the General Assembly. The USSR delegation also wishes to say that the proposed revision of the rules of procedure is absolutely unnecessary, since a strict observance of the existing rules already enables the President of the Assembly and the chairmen of the committees to use the time available during discussions as economically as possible, both in the General Assembly and in the committees. Of course, the President and the chairmen have to combine such saving of time with respect for the rights of delegations and must observe the necessary objectivity and justice with regard to the interests of all Members of the United Nations. Apparently, however, the Secretariat is not satisfied with this, and proposes a number of changes in the rules of procedure, some of which, on closer examination, are strikingly unfounded.

51. It is enough to mention some of these proposals. For instance, the Secretariat proposes the revision of rule 73, which reads: "The General Assembly may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on any question. When debate is limited and a representative has spoken his allotted time, the President shall call him to order without delay." That is what rule 73 states, as now worded. How does the Secretariat propose to revise this rule of procedure, which is absolutely reasonable and has already been justified by experience? It proposes to replace the words "The General Assembly may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker" by the words "The President (Chairman) or any representative may move the limitation of the time to be allowed to each speaker".

52. It is clear from this proposal that, in the first place, the Secretariat does not seem to trust the General Assembly itself and places more confidence in its President, by leaving it to him to propose a time limit. In the second place, what can the purpose of the Secretariat's amendment be, when, even without this amendment, either the President or any representative can at any time, under the existing rules of procedure, submit a proposal for limiting the time allowed to each speaker? The rules of procedure which are now in force do not prohibit it. Why, then, does the Secretariat make such a proposal? Is it because it no longer has any confidence in the good sense of the members of the General Assembly, which have hitherto decided for themselves the question of limiting the time allowed to speakers, or is it because it wants to limit discussion in general in the Assembly? Such questions involuntarily spring to mind during a perusal of nearly all the proposed revisions of the rules of procedure. All these amendments are characterized by the fact that they propose to give additional rights to the Presi-

dent of the General Assembly and the chairmen of the committees and to curtail the rights of the Assembly and the committees themselves. This is hardly democratic.

53. Thus, either the Secretariat's proposals concerning the rules of procedure are harmful or else they serve no purpose at all, since they are already covered by the existing rules of procedure.

54. All this certainly does not mean that the USSR delegation is generally opposed to measures for limiting the duration of the Assembly and for regulating its work. It will support any proposals to that end which are in accordance with the Charter and which guarantee to all States represented in the General Assembly the full observance of all the rights assigned to them by the Charter.

55. As for the document which has been submitted to us, the USSR delegation considers it to be harmful in its entirety, since its purpose is to limit the rights of the representatives of States participating in the discussion of questions in the General Assembly and to limit the rights of the Assembly itself and of its committees, and also because it is contrary to the fundamental provisions of the Charter.

56. The view has been expressed here that this document should be considered in greater detail by one or two of the Assembly committees. The USSR delegation cannot see that any useful purpose would be served by such consideration. The point is not that specific amendments or improvements should be made in this document; the document as a whole is unacceptable, since it is incompatible with the fundamental provisions of the Charter and can only prejudice the further development of the United Nations. The delegation of the Soviet Union therefore objects to the proposal that this document should be referred to an Assembly committee for detailed consideration and considers the document as a whole to be unacceptable.

57. Mr. ROY (Philippines): In the absence of General Rómulo, Chairman of the Philippines delegation, who is in the President's country today as his guest speaker on United Nations Day, I should like to express, in a general way, the views of my delegation on the paper before us regarding measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly.

58. On the basis of the experience he has had as Chairman of two Main Committees and as President of the General Assembly, General Rómulo has asked me to convey the view that there is room for a continuing study of the procedures of the General Assembly to the end that maximum efficiency with a minimum waste of time may be achieved in our deliberations. Relying on the rich fund of experience which the Chairman of the Philippine delegation has had in this matter, we are in general sympathy with the initiative which the Secretary-General has taken in this field at the behest of the General Assembly. My delegation believes that, apart from what delegations individually may think of the specific proposals for amendments to the rules of procedure, we must continue the search for ways and means of saving the time of the General Assembly without injury to the principle of full and free discussion of all important questions.

59. We must endeavour to do this for a number of reasons. First, the number of serious questions brought to the door of the United Nations is not likely to diminish in the coming years. The broad powers conferred by the Charter on the General Assembly virtually make it certain that there will be the risk of unduly protracting discussions and extending sessions unless intelligent and reasonable measures are taken to refine or streamline our procedures.

60. Secondly, there are considerations which make excessively long sessions impractical and unwise. Most representatives at the regular sessions are high government officials of Member States who could not afford to be absent too long from their respective countries. It is obvious, on the other hand, that the presence of top-ranking representatives of governments at the General Assembly sessions facilitates not only intra-delegation decisions but also such high level consultations among delegations as might lead to compromise or agreement on vital questions.

61. Thirdly, unless we constantly try to improve our procedures to keep pace with the increasing workload of the General Assembly, we run the further risk of continually postponing problems which, though important and urgent, happen to be placed at the bottom of our agenda. Already this has begun to happen more and more frequently. Accepting this necessity which we all recognize, we must at once grant the validity of the argument that those provisions in our rules of procedure should be retained which, if not retained, would threaten the sovereign rights of Member States to express their views on important questions fully and adequately. Having these considerations in mind, my delegation would favour referring the proposals for amending the rules of procedure to the Sixth Committee and the financial implications thereof to the Fifth Committee.

62. My delegation notes with satisfaction the observation in the memorandum of the Secretary-General to the effect that some of the suggestions are drastic and must be seriously scrutinized. Without, therefore, committing itself to the specific texts of the proposed amendments to the rules, my delegation wishes to commend the studies undertaken by the Secretary-General, at the behest of the General Assembly, and to express the hope that they will receive the most careful consideration.

63. Mr. LACHS (Poland): The item under discussion, though modest in title, concerns issues which touch very essentially upon the ways and means our Organization is to pursue its work. From the very day our Organization came into being, it has been obvious that the work of the principal organs of the United Nations should be arranged so as to enable them to fulfil the purpose and aims for which the Organization was established. We are, as it has been frequently pointed out and raised even during this debate, an organization of sovereign States built on the principle of the sovereign equality of all Members. We are to serve the purpose of the friendly co-operation of nations and the preservation of peace. We are now an organization comprising sixty Member States, each of which has a right to be represented on the many organs, principal and subordinate, established in accordance with the Charter.

64. The framework, as it were, of the United Nations was obviously meant to serve the aims—the purposes for which this Organization exists—and here I touch upon a very basic, though preliminary, question. This Organization has to fulfil certain tasks. These tasks are clearly defined and enumerated in the Charter. The machinery established and the many formal rules we have adopted are only the means. They are instruments which should facilitate the attainment of the purpose.

65. One can never look upon the rules of procedure or upon the various provisions concerning the technical side of our work as an end in itself. One must never lose sight of the objective for which the United Nations was established and the elements on which it is built. The rules of procedure, I submit, are mere servants of this Organization. For some time, however, some have attempted to create the impression that, if this Organization has not been fulfilling its task, if it has fallen short of the duties it was intended to perform and has not fulfilled the hopes of the people of the world, this was due to technical deficiencies, to the inadequate working of some parts of the machinery we had established. It was held by some that, if the General Assembly did not work properly, it was the result of deficient rules of procedure. I submit that one can hardly over-emphasize the fallacy of this argument. I need not go into detail.

66. Is it not obviously clear that, if the United Nations has not performed the tasks imposed upon it, this was and is due to political reasons, to reasons of substance, to the fact that the principles of the Charter have not been obeyed and to the fact that solemn agreements have not been kept and that attempts have been made to use it as an instrument in the hands of one Power, the United States? I think that we should face the issue squarely. This Organization could—and can—fulfil its task with the rules set up earlier, if the will existed on the part of some Member States to honour these solemn pledges contained in the Charter. Indeed, it is not the fault of the rules of procedure that issues have been brought before the General Assembly which are not within its competence, such as the question of Germany and the issue of Austria. It is not the fault of the rules of procedure that other issues, which had been within the province of the competence of the General Assembly, have been kept outside the General Assembly. It is not the fault of the rules of procedure that attempts have been made to weaken the authority and position of the Security Council or to create bodies and organs contrary to the Charter. I say all this to place the issue before us in its proper perspective. Our delegation reserves for itself the right to present detailed considerations in committee.

67. What I wish to stress here is that an attempt to divert attention from the very basic issues of this Organization to rules of procedure is facing the Assembly on the item which is before us. The document prepared by the Secretariat and submitted to the General Assembly recommends measures which would limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly. Its aim is therefore to shorten our debates and to make the session go on for a much shorter period than it has hitherto, and in this light certain recom-

mendations are contained in the memorandum and submitted for our approval.

68. It is obvious that this objective, considered as an end in itself, can do more harm than good. If the General Assembly has in the past taken days and weeks to consider particular items placed before it, this has obviously been the result of political considerations. It has been the result of issues of substance. If it has taken months to complete the agenda, it was due to the elements I referred to earlier. Any attempt to shorten or limit the duration of the sessions of the General Assembly must take as its starting point the substance of the issue which is before the Organization; and there is no use in finding an easy formula and including it in the rules of procedure, as this would definitely defeat the very purpose for which we are assembled here. The Secretariat has tried to work out something which, in the view of the Polish delegation, would in fact limit the right of Member States in the General Assembly and would be contrary to the principles of democratic and constructive discussion. This has already been pointed out in our debates of yesterday and today, and the element of democratic discussion was very rightly stressed yesterday by the representative of Uruguay.

69. May I remind the General Assembly on this occasion that we have been in existence for only seven years and yet, in this brief spell of time, the rules of procedure have been altered almost every year. On 11 January 1946 [2nd meeting], at the first session of the General Assembly, we adopted provisional rules of procedure. Hardly several months had passed when, at the second part of the same first session of the Assembly, on 15 December 1946, a resolution [102(I)] was adopted with the aim of limiting the duration of the General Assembly. A committee was established and it submitted, to the second session of the General Assembly, a report [A/388] with several changes contained therein. The second session, in 1947, adopted new rules of procedure on 17 November 1947 [resolution 173(II)]. A year later the same issue was again brought before the General Assembly, and during the second part of the third session, in 1949, a special committee was set up [resolution 271(III)] to investigate the methods and procedures of the Assembly. Its report [A/937], presented to the plenary meeting of the General Assembly, was discussed and resulted in the adoption of new amendments, on 22 October 1949 [resolution 362(IV)]. At the fifth session, a year later, a new amendment was added to the rules of procedure [resolution 475(V)]; a similar issue came up during the sixth session of the General Assembly [373rd meeting].

70. This brief survey indicates that, year in and year out, problems concerning rules of procedure have been discussed in the General Assembly. The balance sheet indicates a very dangerous tendency. Many of the changes already introduced have limited the democratic right of discussion in the Assembly. They have limited the rights of Members to take full and effective part in the work of the United Nations. The proposals submitted to us at this session aim again at curtailing the debates and depriving Member States of their inherent rights to present their views, to have them heard and to have them discussed.

71. I shall now devote only a few minutes to some of the essential recommendations contained in the document submitted by the Secretariat from the point of view of advisability and constitutionality. The general tendency is to strengthen the powers of the President of the Assembly and the chairmen, and to put into their hands certain rights by which they could make decisions or put forward suggestions. It has been an established practice of international gatherings and organizations to regard a chairman or a president as a person who conducts the debate, facilitates its progress and keeps it in proper order. Chairmen of international conferences and organizations have themselves always stressed the fact that they are rather servants and not masters of gatherings over which they preside. It has always been stressed that they do not and should not in any case touch upon the sovereign rights of States represented, and that final decisions rest with the body as a whole.

72. Recently, however, we have witnessed a tendency to expand the rights of chairmen and presidents, to invest them with much more power than they had hitherto. This is indeed the essence of one of the proposals of the Secretariat. It suggests that the President should be given more rights and more power. I fear, and my delegation seriously fears, that instead of strengthening the position of the President, it would weaken him; it would weaken his prestige and would put him in a position which most likely would create conflicts between him and the General Assembly. This would also be harmful, because some members might refrain from opposing the chairman, not wanting to challenge his authority, while others, having challenged his authority and won the case, might seriously affect his prestige. We must always remember that the chairman or the president has, as his only duty, the obligation of conducting the deliberations in a proper way and fulfilling the wishes of the committee or the Assembly. He should be the leader of the committee or the Assembly. He should be leading it and not driving it. What is suggested in the report of the Secretariat is that the chairman or the President will be driving the committee and driving the Assembly.

73. Another point about which my delegation has very serious doubts is a suggested definition concerning the so-called "points of order". It attempts to define the institution of what we call "points of order". It is well known that there is need on many occasions for raising points of order, and there are complicated procedural situations in which the point of order offers the representative the possibility of having himself heard and his suggestion or claim considered. A point of order is therefore a matter which concerns not only the rights of the presiding officer, but also the rights of the body in which it is raised. I submit that one cannot limit the raising of points of order without seriously affecting the position of the representatives in any gathering. The right to raise points of order is one of the democratic elements lying at the very basis of a democratic discussion. It may happen that the point raised concerns the right and authority of the Assembly, or of a committee, and therefore the limitation which is contained in the suggested definition is very dangerous. I would go even further. I submit that all attempts hitherto made at international conferences and at meetings of international organizations to de-

fine points of order have failed. They have failed because it has obviously been felt that the matter should be left to the good sense of representatives of governments who deal with the issue in a given situation as that situation may require. My delegation therefore feels that, by introducing such a definition, we shall certainly do more harm than good.

74. Another item among those submitted in the report of the Secretariat concerns limitations on the time to be allowed to each speaker and on the number of times each representative may speak on a given question. Here, again, we find an attack on the possibility of the free exchange of views. Authorities on international conferences have emphasized time and again that limiting the time of speakers is a very difficult matter to apply when the parties in question are representatives of sovereign States. It is for that reason that, at many international conferences and meetings of international organizations, the practice of having a first and second reading of documents have been followed. This has also been the practice of the conferences of American States—to take only one example, the Eighth International Conference of American States. Any device to limit absolutely the discussion must not get to the point of suppressing it. By over-emphasizing the problem of limitation of the debate, one is again defeating the objective of the debate in the General Assembly. There are important issues, as is well known, which require long and elaborate discussion if they are to lead to constructive results. The alternative, of course, is to suppress discussion to such a degree that it will become completely useless.

75. The right to speak is a right which should be preserved, since it is an important element of any international organization. It is the essential element of any meeting, of any discussion, of any reasoning—and it really creates what we call "conferring". Without the right of speech, you have no conference. One can easily draw an analogy with parliamentary procedure in many countries, which recognizes this right—although I am bound to stress the point that in parliaments one finds representatives of groups of the population within the boundaries of one State, while here we have representatives of equal and independent nations.

76. There is, finally, a visible tendency to restrict the agenda of the General Assembly by suggesting the possibility of selecting items for consideration. It is suggested that careful examination should be made of the items with a view to selecting those with which the General Assembly could profitably deal. This is a dangerous suggestion indeed. The right to present a case which comes within the province of the United Nations and is within the competence of the General Assembly is inherent in every Member of the Organization. It is the duty of the Organization to discuss, to deliberate and to pass resolutions on these issues. The provisions of the Charter are clear and within them there is no room for selection. It cannot be left to the haphazard will of the majority to decide whether an item which complies with the Charter and which is considered vital by the delegation in question is to be included or is not to be included in the agenda of the session. I venture to say that this suggestion goes much further than a rule of procedure. It is actually an attempt to revise the Charter of the United Nations.

77. These are, in general, the preliminary observations that my delegation wishes to make at this juncture. My delegation feels that the right of every delegation to speak, like the right to vote, is basic for the United Nations. Therefore, we cannot concur in any attempt to extend unduly the rights of the presiding officer, to limit the time of speeches, wrongly to define points of order and to restrict the possibility of having items placed on the agenda. All members of the United Nations must be equally protected. We must not allow this Organization—and we must resist any attempt in this direction—to become a playground for haphazard or deliberate majority decisions. The rules of procedure must protect all of us and each of us.

78. That is why the Polish delegation considers the suggested changes to be harmful. We oppose them, and we oppose the report as a whole which has been submitted to us. We shall present detailed views on the problem of procedure and issues connected with procedure if the matter should be discussed further.

79. Mr. BARANOVSKY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*translated from Russian*): Of late, it has become a habit to try at each regular session of the General Assembly to amend either the Charter, or the General Assembly's rules of procedure, or both. At this session the attempt is made by none other than the United Nations Secretariat itself. A memorandum bearing the beguiling title "Measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly" has been submitted by the Secretariat for the consideration of the seventh session of the General Assembly. A careful study of this document, however, leaves no doubt at all that the United Nations Secretariat has taken advantage of the decision adopted by the General Assembly at its last session, on the initiative of the Fifth Committee, and, instead of preparing proposals for limiting the duration of sessions on financial and technical grounds—which the Fifth Committee doubtless had in mind, considering its terms of reference—has misrepresented that decision, by submitting to the General Assembly a plan for yet another radical revision of the rules of procedure, based, moreover, on a fresh violation of the Charter.

80. In order to conceal the purport of this proposal, the Secretariat has distorted the facts. It explains that the basic reason for the excessive lengthening of the sessions, as the report puts it, is that the General Assembly's present rules of procedure are faulty. It is not difficult to disprove this assertion, which does not bear scrutiny. Of course, the Organization's shortcomings have to some extent affected the smooth working of the sessions and have, in isolated cases, retarded it. The length of each session, however, is dependent first and foremost on the nature and substance of the items submitted for consideration. Regular sessions could, of course, have been considerably shortened if the group of countries belonging to the North Atlantic bloc, which forms an aggressive core in the United Nations, had refrained from foisting on the General Assembly empty and senseless items which have no connexion with the purposes of the United Nations and which have prevented the General Assembly from settling really vital and urgent issues concerning the strengthening of peace and the security of the peoples.

81. Among these questions, which, incidentally, lower the Organization's status and upon which much time

has been wasted, were the item on collective measures and a variety of calumnious complaints, such as the Kuomintang's complaint against the Soviet Union, an item which was finally buried only last year after the United Nations had devoted four sessions to its discussion. In this connexion, it is worth recalling an unprecedented case: the United States delegation grossly violated the rules of procedure and the General Assembly's decisions by forcing the fifth session to sit for an entire year, instead of the prescribed eleven weeks, simply to justify, with the help of the delegations which obey the United States, that country's aggression in Korea, and to declare the People's Republic of China the aggressor. The Secretariat did not consider the duration of that session excessive, because it suited the purposes of the United States which was at that time lording it in the United Nations.

82. The Soviet delegations are naturally opposed to any unjustifiable prolongation of sessions. They have repeatedly put forward proposals or supported proposals submitted by other delegations to improve the organization of the work of the session, to reduce unnecessary expenses connected with the conduct of sessions and the maintenance of the over-elaborate machinery of the Secretariat, and to make a better use of the working time. One cannot, of course, take exception to the reasonable demand for an orderly and efficient conduct of business. We agree with the delegations which pointed out that sessions should be kept within reasonable bounds. We do not base this view simply on the fact that responsible statesmen and members of legislative organs, who are to be found in most delegations, cannot be absent from their duties at home beyond a reasonable period of time. Some questions, if considered in an atmosphere of goodwill, with understanding and a sincere desire to reach agreed decisions, would warrant these distinguished persons prolonging their stay at the General Assembly for a week or two beyond the appointed time.

83. We believe that the General Assembly's existing rules of procedure give the President of the Assembly and the chairmen of committees full power, without violating the Charter or resorting to trickery in order to by-pass these rules, to take all the necessary steps to ensure that the sessions of the General Assembly operate in a rational and effective manner. If this is to be achieved, however, the agenda should not be unduly burdened with all kinds of rubbish which have no relation to the aims of the United Nations or are clearly contrary to these aims and to the Charter. Furthermore, the President of the Assembly and the committee chairmen should display a certain impartiality; they should respect the sovereign rights of all the countries represented at the General Assembly and should avoid being influenced by particular delegations which, at the expense of others, endeavour to impose their own political aims on the United Nations.

84. The Secretariat's memorandum and the proposals contained therein do not meet these requirements. The memorandum has one main purpose: to limit and curtail the sovereign rights of Member States of the United Nations. The whole attempt to revise the rules of procedure has been made merely to cloak the Secretariat's real aim. One is therefore bound to agree with the representative of Uruguay that attempts to amend the rules of procedure adopted by the General

Assembly have always been made with one specific purpose in view: to curtail the sovereign rights of States represented at the General Assembly. This is how the United States and the United Nations Secretariat, which is obedient to it, have always behaved when they have found the rules of procedure or the Articles of the Charter irksome.

85. The Secretariat is attempting at this session to push through a fresh curtailment of the sovereign rights of States. We are asked to limit the time allowed to speakers. To that end, an attempt is being made to apply the provisions of rule 23 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, which deal only with debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, to cover all other items discussed in the General Assembly. This proposal would make it difficult for representatives freely to state their position on every item of the agenda, and to defend that position, and is quite obviously directed against the minority at sessions of the General Assembly. We categorically object to any such proposal. We also consider unacceptable that part of the Secretariat's memorandum which proposes that the General Assembly should consider only parts of the reports of the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council, although it is perfectly clear that such a limitation would preclude a full and detailed consideration of the reports of these key bodies of the United Nations and the adoption of considered decisions thereon.

86. The proposals contained in paragraph 46 of the Secretariat's report merit special attention. The representative of the Soviet Union and the representatives of certain other countries have dealt with them in some detail. I shall therefore set forth briefly the position of the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR on this matter. The purpose of these proposals is clearly to weaken the Security Council and to substitute for the General Assembly a committee composed of all the Members of the United Nations, the prototype of which was the Interim Committee, which was set up illegally, some time ago, in violation of the Charter.

87. The Secretariat's memorandum contains many other proposals, all with the same tendency—to infringe the sovereign rights of Member States of the United Nations. Thus it may be seen that every one of the amendments to the General Assembly's rules of procedure proposed in the United Nations Secretariat's memorandum on "Measures to limit the duration of regular sessions of the General Assembly" are either worthless or harmful and contrary to the interests of sovereign States and the United Nations; moreover, they constitute a violation of the Charter. We naturally categorically reject these proposals.

88. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR shares the views of the USSR delegation and those of the delegations of other countries which support that position, and considers that the Secretariat's memorandum should be rejected; it further considers that there is no need to refer it to the Sixth Committee for consideration.

89. The PRESIDENT: Before we come to a decision on this question, I call upon the Secretary-General to make a short statement.

90. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I feel it my duty to clarify, for the sake of the records, some of

the points mentioned during this discussion. In the first place, I think the timing of the discussion was wrong. There are many new representatives here, and it is too early in the session for them to feel the pressure which is put on their shoulders during a session of the General Assembly. Perhaps December, when we are reaching the final date, would have been the right time to discuss this question.

91. I have listened with great interest, and sometimes with surprise, to the debate. May I first state a fact: if I had not prepared this memorandum, I should not have fulfilled my duty. I was requested by two resolutions to place on the agenda of this General Assembly a memorandum concerning the question of the limitation of the duration of the regular session of the General Assembly. Thus the near-accusations which were made against me and against the Secretariat are quite unfounded; they represent a trend of political accusations against which I have to protest.

92. I note here that many members have expressed general approval of the suggestions contained in my memorandum. Other members, while supporting some of the suggestions, have expressed reservations and, in some cases, disagreement with the suggestions, and some representatives are against almost all the suggestions.

93. I feel that I should make it quite clear that the memorandum which I have circulated to the Assembly does not represent my own personal views as to the steps which would most effectively shorten sessions of the Assembly. My own proposals, had I thought it useful to make them, would have been more far-reaching and would have touched on some of the issues which relate to the basic difficulties with which the Assembly has to deal.

94. However, in the preparation of the working paper I was faced with the obvious dilemma to which many speakers have already referred—by that I mean the concern of members of the Assembly to restrict the duration of the session and so reduce the heavy budgetary consequences of prolonged sessions on the one hand and, on the other hand, the reluctance of the Assembly to adopt measures which would limit its individual members in the free exercise of their rights of expression and full participation in the debates of the Assembly. Faced with this dilemma, I felt that the most useful contribution I could make to the Assembly's consideration of this matter was to present to the Assembly a reasonable and realistic memorandum that sought to bring together, on as large a common ground as possible, the divergent trends of thought which are represented in the General Assembly. To do this, I and my staff engaged in many consultations with governments of Member States and with individual members of delegations. In the memorandum, the conflicting views which were expressed to me during these consultations have been moderated in their scope so as to provide a basis for acceptable compromise.

95. My memorandum, therefore, represents what I felt was the greatest degree of possible agreement in the Assembly. It is now for the Assembly to decide whether this modest approach to the problem will contribute to the work of the Assembly.

96. May I just quote a Norwegian slogan: "Don't shoot at the pianist. He is playing his best." In this

case I am the pianist and, if the music is bad, it is because the composers—that is to say, you—have produced very bad melodies.

97. The PRESIDENT: At the beginning of this discussion a proposal was put forward in the shape of certain suggestions for dealing with this matter. These suggestions have been objected to by some delegations; therefore, I shall now put them before the Assembly for decision.

98. The proposal was that the Assembly should adjourn further consideration of this item now and refer to the Sixth Committee the memorandum of the Secretary-General and the amendments to the rules of procedure proposed therein, and that, in that reference, the Sixth Committee should be instructed to consider and report back at the earliest possible date, to the plenary Assembly, on those amendments and on any other amendments to the rules of procedure proposed

by members of the Sixth Committee. The proposal further suggested that the Assembly should refer to the Fifth Committee the consideration of the budgetary considerations of paragraph 47 of the memorandum, in order that the Assembly might have before it, when it resumed consideration of this item at a later date, a statement from the Fifth Committee in regard to these budgetary implications. That is the proposal for dealing with this item which I shall now put to the vote.

The proposal was adopted by 42 votes to 5, with 1 abstention.

99. The PRESIDENT: Since the proposal has been adopted, the procedure embodied therein will be adopted and this item will ultimately be referred back to the Assembly for final decision.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.