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General Assembly
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION
Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Thursday, 5 October 1989
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The CHAIRMAN thanked the members of the Committee for his election, which was also a tribute to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. He invited the Committee to elect its two Vice-Chairmen and its Rapporteur, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.
2. Mr. EGBARA (Nigeria) nominated Mr. Choo (Malaysia) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
3. Mr. PAPPALARDO (Paraguay) nominated Mr. Fleming (Saint Lucia) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
4. The CHAIRMAN, noting that there were only two nominations for the two offices of Vice-Chairman, suggested that the Committee should not proceed to a secret ballot.
5. Mr. Choo (Malaysia) and Mr. Fleming (Saint Lucia) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.
6. Mrs. ZIKMUNDOVA (Belgium) nominated Miss Dapul (Philippines) for the office of Rapporteur.
7. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the absence of other nominations, the Committee should not proceed to a secret ballot.
8. Miss Dapul (Philippines) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.
9. Mr. FORAJEWSKI (Poland), speaking on behalf of the Polish delegation, one of whose members had presided over the work of the Committee at its forty-third session, congratulated the Chairman and the other officers on their election.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/44/1, A/SPC/44/L.1)

10. The CHAIRMAN said that the current session of the General Assembly was taking place at a time of positive changes in the international political system. Reassuring progress was being made in the talks on disarmament, especially with respect to the goal of a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons and to the banning of nuclear testing and chemical weapons. However, as the Secretary-General had observed in his annual report on the work of the Organization, "agreement among the major Powers must carry with it the support of a majority of Member States if it is to make the desired impact on the world situation". Several acute problems remained and threatened to destroy the present delicate structure of the contemporary interdependent world. Despite efforts to end them, regional conflicts remained the main source of concern. More than ever before, the Member States realized the importance of the mission of the United

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Nations in promoting the idea of the interdependence of national aspirations and the common good of mankind and encouraging nations to behave responsibly in a spirit of goodwill and tolerance for the sake of saving human civilization.

11. He was certain that the members of the Committee were aware of their great responsibility, would go about their work in a calm, business-like manner and would refrain from all ideological disputes.

12. He drew attention to the recommendations concerning the organization and rationalization of the work contained in the report of the General Committee (A/44/250 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1 and 2). In view of the financial problems still being faced by the United Nations, the current process of renewal and reform and the practice followed at previous sessions, the Assembly had decided that for the time being no closing date for the forty-fourth session should be set and that every effort should be made to curtail the duration of the session.

13. As had been stressed by the Assembly, punctuality was of the utmost importance. The Committee was scheduled to meet a maximum of seven times per week. According to information provided by the Secretariat, the Special Political Committee had, during the last session, lost more than 42 hours or the equivalent of 14 meetings. It was therefore essential that all the representatives should be punctual so that the Committee could begin its work on time. The Committee should note the decision adopted by the General Assembly to waive, during the present session, the application of rule 108 of the rules of procedure regarding the quorum. It was understood that such a waiver did not in any way imply a permanent change in the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure and that, in accordance with those rules, the presence of a majority of members was required for any decision to be taken.

14. With respect to meetings, any extension of more than 30 minutes should be requested 24 hours before the meeting, and any additional meetings required would probably have to be held on Saturdays.

15. In accordance with the recommendation in annex V of the rules of procedure, he intended to close the list of speakers on each item when one third of the meetings allocated to the item had been held. Members wishing to make statements should place their names on the list kept by the Secretariat and would be called on to speak in that order. Once the list had been closed, any changes in the order could be made only by mutual consent between two delegations which had agreed to exchange places on the list. Otherwise, any representative not ready to speak when his turn came would be placed at the end of the list. In accordance with the practice established by the Committee and the recommendation approved by the General Assembly, representatives wishing to exercise the right of reply should inform the Secretariat, which would keep a list of replies to be heard by the Committee. If the same item was discussed at two meetings on the same day, delegations would exercise their right of reply at the end of the second meeting. Explanations of vote should be limited to 10 minutes in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly. When the same draft resolution was considered in a Main Committee and in

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plenary meeting, delegations should, as far as possible, explain their vote only once, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless their vote in plenary meeting was different from their vote in the Committee.

16. The General Assembly had drawn attention to regulation 4.9 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, which stipulated: "No Council, Commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving either a change in the programme budget approved by the General Assembly or the possible requirement of expenditure unless it has received and taken account of a report from the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the proposal". The Assembly had noted that it was imperative that Main Committees should allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by ACABQ and the Fifth Committee. The General Assembly had imposed a deadline of 1 December (which would be adjusted in the event of a change in the closing date of the forty-fourth session) for submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions having financial implications, and had decided that a minimum period of 48 hours should elapse between the submission of and the voting on any proposal involving expenditure, in order to allow the Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications. Delegations were urged to keep those decisions in mind.

17. With respect to the very expensive item of documentation, and in light of the decisions of the General Assembly, he appealed to the delegations to limit as much as possible their requests for additional documents and duplicate copies of material already distributed. Similarly, they should bear in mind that, owing to financial constraints, overnight processing of documents was not always possible.

18. As in the past, the Special Political Committee would have summary records. Moreover, the General Assembly had approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Special Political Committee should be authorized to receive, on specific request, transcriptions of the debates of some of its meetings, or portions thereof. Those transcriptions, which were not part of the official records of the Committee, did not entail any extrabudgetary expense as they were prepared by verbatim reporters and typists from the tapes when the staff concerned were not otherwise occupied. Consequently, they appeared at a later stage than the summary records. The requirement that summary records should be distributed simultaneously in all the official languages had often led to delays in their distribution. Because of financial constraints, such delays were still liable to occur. It was therefore proposed to distribute summary records in the language in which they had originally been prepared, namely, English, French or Spanish, as soon as they were available. The other languages would follow immediately after they had been translated.

19. Delegations were asked to submit the names of their representatives so that a list of members of the Committee could be issued and to bear in mind the General Assembly's decision, taken at its thirty-eighth session, to prohibit smoking in small conference rooms, such as rooms 5 to 10 and A to E and to discourage smoking in large conference rooms, such as rooms 1 to 4.

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20. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that proposal.

21. It was so decided.

22. The CHAIRMAN, speaking with reference to the organization of work, drew attention to a document dated 22 September 1989 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Committee regarding the allocation of agenda items (A/SPC/44/1). He also drew attention to document A/SPC/44/L.1, which contained a tentative timetable for the work of the Committee. That timetable would have to be interpreted with appropriate flexibility so that the Committee's work could be co-ordinated with that of the plenary Assembly and other bodies. In particular, the Special Political Committee would continue the close co-ordination of the previous two sessions with the Fourth Committee whose purpose had been to avoid concurrent meetings wherever possible. Such co-ordination would have to be flexible to enable both Committees to complete their work on schedule.

23. In drawing up the Committee's programme of work, account had been taken of the documentation currently available and of the time when other basic reports were expected to be issued. No basic documents were expected for items 80 and 81. Under item 74 (Effects of atomic radiation), the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation would be issued shortly as document A/44/587. Item 150 (Protection and security of small States) was a new item which had been requested for inclusion by the representative of Maldives (A/44/192). In regard to item 76 (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East), the Commissioner-General's report (A/44/13 and Add.1) would be issued shortly. The report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had been issued as document A/44/497. The reports of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolutions 43/57 D, F, G, H, I and J had been issued as documents A/44/505, A/44/506, A/44/507, A/44/431, A/44/508 and A/44/474 respectively. The report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 43/57 E and the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA would be available before the Committee commenced its consideration of the item. In connection with item 78 (Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects), the report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had been issued as document A/44/301. Under item 79 (Questions relating to information), the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 43/60 A would be issued before the Committee commenced its consideration of the item. The comments of the Secretary-General on the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit would be issued as documents A/44/329/Add.1 and A/44/433/Add.1. In connection with item 75 (International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space), the two relevant reports (A/44/20 and A/44/469) had been issued. Under item 77, the Secretariat would make every effort to process as quickly as possible the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/44/599), which had just been received from Geneva. The reports of the Secretary-General in pursuance of resolutions 43/160 B, C, D, E and G would be issued shortly as documents A/44/562 to 566. The report of the Secretary-General

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pursuant to resolution 43/58 F would be available before the Committee commenced its consideration of the item.

24. He invited the members of the Committee to comment on the programme of work.

25. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan) asked whether it would be possible to allocate more meetings to the consideration of items 76 and 77, bearing in mind the importance of the work of UNRWA and the serious situation in the occupied territories.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that the proposed timetable would be followed with appropriate flexibility and modified in accordance with needs.

27. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee approved the proposed timetable.

28. It was so decided.

HEARINGS ON APARTHEID

29. The CHAIRMAN recalled, in connection with item 28 (Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa), which was to be considered directly in plenary meeting, that the General Assembly had decided that organizations and individuals having a special interest in the question would be permitted to be heard by the Special Political Committee. Two meetings would be devoted to such hearings on 2 and 3 November. Organizations or individuals wishing to be heard by the Committee should submit their requests in writing to the Chairman no later than Tuesday, 24 October. Communications concerning requests for hearings would be circulated as Committee documents and considered by the Committee at a subsequent meeting prior to the hearings. Organizations and individuals approved by the Committee would be informed by the Secretariat of the date of the meeting.

30. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that procedure.

31. It was so decided.

Working Group on Questions Relating to Information

32. The CHAIRMAN said that, in order to expedite the work, he would propose that, as at previous sessions, the Committee should establish a Working Group open to all interested members and chaired by one of the Vice-Chairmen, to prepare the draft resolution on item 79 (Questions relating to information).

33. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee approved that proposal.

34. It was so decided.

Working Group on International Co-Operation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

35. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, as at previous sessions, the Committee should establish a working group, open to all interested members and chaired by the delegation of Austria, in order to prepare the draft resolution on item 75 (International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space).

36. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee approved that proposal.

37. It was so decided.

38. The CHAIRMAN invited the delegations preparing a draft resolution on item 74 (Effects of atomic radiation) to submit their text to the Secretariat before 10 a.m. on Monday, 16 October, when the Committee would take up the item. The speakers' list for the item was open and would be closed at the end of the meeting on Monday, 16 October.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.