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Summary record of the 2nd meeting

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Chair: Mr. Diallo (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Election of the Bureau

1. **The Chair** informed the Committee that the following candidates had been endorsed to serve as Vice-Chairs : Mr. Dhanapala (Sri Lanka), endorsed by the Group of Asia-Pacific States; Ms. Rebedea (Romania), endorsed by the Group of Eastern European States; and Ms. Brown (Jamaica), endorsed by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. For the office of Rapporteur, the candidacy of Ms. Hay (New Zealand) had been endorsed by the Group of Western European and other States.

2. *Mr. Waruna (Sri Lanka), Ms. Rebedea (Romania), and Ms. Brown (Jamaica) were elected Vice-Chairs and Ms. Hay was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

Statement by the Chair

3. **The Chair** informed the Committee on how responsibility for the various agenda items would be divided among the members of the Bureau.

4. Time had been set aside for six side events linked to the Committee's agenda items; one of those, a joint briefing on the implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, had been specifically requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [67/212](#). The other proposed events included a keynote address by Professor Chetty, Bloomberg Professor of Economics at Harvard University; a joint meeting of the Second Committee, the Economic and Social Council and the LINK Project on inequality, growth, and the global economic outlook; an event on strengthening the vulnerability resilience of small island developing states within the context of sustainable development; and two joint meetings of the Economic and Social Council and Second Committee — one on addressing sustainable development challenges and meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and one on "The Future of Employment". Interpretation services for the events would be on an "as available" basis.

5. Meetings would begin punctually at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. If few or no speakers were inscribed for a particular meeting, the time and conference services should be utilized either for negotiations or meetings of interest groups. In view of the limited time available, the Committee should function as efficiently as possible.

6. Inscription to the list of speakers for the general debate and all items in the programme of work was open. Delegations were requested to inscribe as soon as possible to enable the Committee to plan its work efficiently. If a delegation was not present when its turn came, it would be moved to the end of the list, unless it had made prior arrangements to change places with another delegation.

7. Recalling that the General Assembly had decided to maintain the current time limits of 7 minutes for individual Member States and 10 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States during the general debate (5 minutes and 7 minutes respectively during debates on individual agenda items), he advised speakers to prepare their statements accordingly. Attention was drawn to resolution [59/313](#), inviting Member States aligned with statements made by the Chair of a group of Member States to limit additional interventions made in their national capacity to points not adequately addressed in the statements of the group in question, bearing in mind the right of each Member State to express its national position. Speakers should confine themselves to the salient points of their statements and provide copies of the full texts for posting on the PaperSmart portal. Introductions by the Secretariat should be limited to 10 minutes and representatives of all agencies, funds and programmes should focus on selected issues of concern to them, and make copies of their statements available on PaperSmart. The Secretariat would post the list of speakers for each item on Quickplace a day before its consideration.

Organization of work

8. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to the organization of work as contained in document [A/C.2/68/L.1](#), and reminded delegations of some of the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly in its decision [65/530](#). As draft resolutions on agenda items would be negotiated and adopted by the Committee throughout the session, delegations should do their utmost to facilitate the adoption of draft proposals by the recommended deadlines. The Bureau would keep multiple mandatory deadlines for the submission of draft resolutions; no late submissions would be accepted. However, requests for extensions made prior to the expiration of the deadline would be considered on a case-by-case basis. As noted in the guidelines for the submission of draft resolutions, the Secretariat

required 48 hours to process and issue documents in all languages before the scheduled consideration of those draft proposals. Unless such modalities were respected, the Committee ran the risk of returning to its much-criticized past practice.

9. Pursuant to General Assembly decision 65/530, draft resolutions should be more concise and action-oriented, preambular paragraphs should be kept to a minimum, and references should be provided to the sources of language used.

10. He wished to remind the Committee of a number of General Committee recommendations, namely that resolutions requesting the discussion of an agenda item at a subsequent session should not call for the inclusion of a separate or new item, and efforts should be made to reduce the number of resolutions submitted to the General Assembly for adoption. Reports by the Secretary-General should be requested only when they would be indispensable to the implementation of resolutions, and resolutions should call for more integrated reports. Lastly, enhanced coordination in scheduling high-level meetings and thematic debates was necessary in order to optimize the number and timing of such events.

11. As informal “informal” consultations would be held early in the session, the appointment of facilitators and the tabling of draft proposals must be completed on time, and draft resolutions should likewise be submitted by the deadline.

12. The target date for the conclusion of the Committee’s work was 26 November. All draft proposals with financial implications should be submitted to the Fifth Committee no later than 1 December, and no resolution involving expenditure would be recommended by the Committee for approval by the Assembly unless it was accompanied by an estimate of expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General. Generally, more than the minimum period of 48 hours was required before action could be taken on a proposal as the Secretary-General needed time to review and prepare the financial implications of such proposals.

13. **The Chair** reminded delegations that the formal meetings of the Second Committee were being webcast, and would be available through the United Nations Web TV website.

14. **Ms. de Laurentis** (Secretary of the Committee) informed the Committee of some scheduling changes to the programme of work contained in document A/C.2/68/L.1.

15. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work contained in document A/C.2/68/L.1, as orally revised.

16. *It was so decided.*

17. **The Chair** drew attention to document A/C.2/68/L.1/Add.1, which provided information on the status of documentation.

18. **Ms. de Laurentis** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, as in previous years, the Committee would have at its disposal “QuickPlace”, a secure online shared workspace. Detailed instructions on the use of the tool with a registration form were being circulated.

Discussion on working methods

19. **The Chair** suggested that prior to starting its substantive work, it would be useful for the Committee to discuss its current working methods and how it could improve them, in line with resolution 67/297. He intended to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly next year. Delegations’ thoughts would be welcome, in particular, on some key issues highlighted by the reflections paper on improving working methods put together by the Bureau of the sixty-seventh session.

20. The reflections paper stressed the need to draft resolutions in accordance with recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions 57/270B, 58/126 and 60/286; observe deadlines for submission of draft resolutions; request submission deadline extensions before the deadline, should the need arise; inform the Bureau well ahead of time of the intention to submit new draft resolutions; keep preambular paragraphs to a minimum in draft proposals, highlighting new language in recurrent resolutions in bold text, and clearly indicate sources of existing language; and use standard format when referring to United Nations or other documents or Conventions. Other issues included re-organizing agenda items, especially after major United Nations conferences; making an effort to merge recurrent resolutions under related agenda items which had similar or identical contents; and biennializing or triennializing some yearly resolutions under related agenda items.

21. Lastly, regarding the negotiation process, facilitators should try to ensure a degree of consistency in their approach. The first reading should be used to introduce the draft resolution, after which a reasonable deadline should be set for amendments by other delegations to be included in a compilation text; subsequent readings should be devoted to agreeing on the new text as quickly as possible; and, lastly, a no-objection procedure with a reasonable deadline should be established to make sure that all Member States had a chance to assess the final text.

22. **Mr. Escalona Ojeda** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), referring to the recent negotiations on the declaration to be adopted by the special event on the MDGs, said that sufficient time must be allowed for intergovernmental negotiation prior to the adoption of proposals. Facilitators had an important role to play in that regard. His delegation had had to interrupt a no-objection procedure at the special event, owing to a lack of time for discussion between Member States after facilitators had presented the relevant documents. In future, facilitators and Member States should work together to ensure that such situations did not recur.

23. **Ms. Dedu** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union welcomed the chance to improve the Committee's working methods.

24. A number of steps could be taken to increase the effectiveness of the work of the Committee during the current session. Firstly, the Bureau should ensure that the Committee complied with existing rules and followed up recommendations made by the General Assembly, create a sense of urgency to ensure that deadlines were met and give facilitators clear guidelines on what to do if negotiations were not on schedule. Although special events contributed to the Committee's deliberations, their number should be limited. Secondly, in line with the recommendations of the General Committee, resolutions should be shorter and contain more focussed proposals. Thirdly, General Assembly mandates to rationalize the Committee's agenda should be implemented. In recent years the agenda had expanded, but there was a need for policy coherence in the Committee's work, and there were

practical reasons for streamlining the agenda. Fourthly, the practice of previous sessions that promoted a procedural nature for resolutions related to items on the agenda of upcoming United Nations conferences should be continued. Lastly, work should be continued to eliminate overlap between the work of the Second Committee and the Economic and Social Council.

25. **Mr. Rodríguez Hernández** (Cuba) expressed support to the Venezuelan delegation's statement on the crucial role of facilitators. His delegation disagreed with the proposals to biennialize or triennialize resolutions, as that would mean eliminating topics of great relevance. Economic issues, particularly sustainable development, were extremely important and pressing. Each delegation had the right to put forward whatever texts or proposals it considered pertinent, as frequently, and at whatever length, it deemed appropriate. With regard to the overlap of discussion with the Economic and Social Council, it was vital that the Second Committee retained its historic remit on development.

26. **Mr. Khalil** (Egypt) said that the current structure of the sustainable development cluster reflected mainly environmental issues, even though the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) emphasized integration of the three pillars of sustainable development and giving equal weight to each one. His delegation was currently preparing a concept note on restructuring the cluster, which it would shortly submit to the Bureau of the Second Committee.

27. **Ms. Kvalsøren** (Norway) said that while progress had been made in increasing the Committee's efficiency, time should be set aside to focus on improving working methods, consistent with the resolution on revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. The reflections paper on improving the working methods of the Second Committee, prepared by the Bureau of the previous session, contained many suggestions which could greatly improve working methods, such as ensuring that deadlines were met, biennializing or triennializing resolutions, merging resolutions in the same cluster and avoiding overlap with the work of the Economic and Social Council.

28. **Ms. Balkissou** (Cameroon) said that, during the current session,, Cameroon would express its opinion on the Convention on Biological Diversity, a particularly important issue for the Committee. It

would also contribute to the discussions on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and on agenda item 26 entitled “Towards global partnerships”.

29. **Mr. Neelam** (Australia) said that Australia welcomed the reflections paper’s suggestions on improving the Committee’s efficiency. In particular, his delegation appreciated the call to observe deadlines and adhere to a procedure for requesting deadline extensions, as well as some small changes, such as highlighting new language in resolutions, which would yield efficiency gains. Guidelines on standardization from the Bureau could be helpful in facilitating negotiations on resolutions, and avoiding duplication of work, in particular with the Economic and Social Council, was a goal worth pursuing. A follow-up decision on improving working methods under the agenda item on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly could catalyze the implementation of proposals which had consensus support. Improving working methods was the responsibility of the entire Committee. Australia would welcome a follow-up discussion later in the session on that important issue.

30. **Ms. Peterson** (Canada) said that her delegation appreciated the early focus on working methods. Deadlines for submitting resolutions should be met, both to allow the Committee to conclude its work on time and to distribute the workload more evenly over the session. Her delegation welcomed the helpful suggestions of the European Union to that end. Procedural resolutions, where appropriate, could help to reduce the Committee’s collective workload. Ensuring that all new language in resolutions was in bold, and that sources were clearly referenced, were important practical measures that could be taken. The use of QuickPlace was a step forward, and it would be helpful if all resolutions could be posted on it as soon as they became available. A standard approach to document filing on QuickPlace (perhaps by agenda item number) would be beneficial. The tool could also be used to disseminate other Committee documents and the recommendations of relevant General Assembly resolutions.

31. It was important to rationalize the Committee’s agenda. That could be achieved by eliminating overlap between resolutions, particularly in the macroeconomic cluster; considering a smaller number of resolutions each year; and closely examining overlap between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social

Council with a view to eliminating it. The Committee’s agenda would also benefit from reorganization, in light of the outcome document of Rio +20, which called for integration of the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainable development. Canada would welcome a follow-up discussion on working methods later in the session, possibly leading to a decision on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

32. **Ms. Messmer Mokhtar** (Switzerland) said that her delegation, too, supported further discussions on working methods later in the session. Four points that merited consideration were biennializing or triennializing resolutions, eliminating overlap between the work of the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee, standardizing the procedure for proposing resolutions, and, starting discussions on draft resolutions as early in the session as possible.

33. **Mr. Vasiliev** (Russian Federation) said that, while he welcomed the reflections paper prepared by the previous Bureau, many of the practical adjustments suggested could be implemented without further formal discussion. In addition, it was important to separate official, public documents from those of a technical nature regarding the Committee’s functioning.

34. It was important that all delegations had time to study and analyse changes that would be made to official documents, rather than merely having them orally corrected in their presence. During the current session, the Committee had adopted an amended programme, and it had been decided that agenda item 17 (b) on the international financial system and development would be considered alongside item 18 on follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development. Committee members who had participated in discussions of both agenda items appreciated the complexity of each, and while there might be some overlap, the discussions were important ones. In future, delegations should be given an opportunity to discuss proposed changes to the agenda.

35. **The Chair** said that all suggestions made would be compiled as a summary for use in further discussions.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.