



C O N T E N T S

	Page
Organization of the work of the General Assembly.....	27

Chairman: Mr. Eelco N. VAN KLEFFENS
(Netherlands).

Organization of the work of the General Assembly

1. The CHAIRMAN said that conversations which he had had with the Chairmen of the various Committees had led him to the conclusion that in view of the very heavy programme of work of several Committees and the progress achieved to date, the ninth session of the General Assembly would be unable to complete its work by 10 December. The decision taken on 25 September (478th plenary meeting) would therefore have to be amended.

2. Moreover, as a result of discussions with the Chairman of the First Committee and the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, he felt that as a means of lightening the agenda of the First Committee, items 70 and 71, which had originally been allocated to the First Committee, should be transferred to the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee.

3. He had prepared a draft resolution, which he submitted to the members of the General Committee for consideration purely as a working document.

4. The draft resolution read as follows:

Whereas the General Assembly, on 25 September 1954, fixed 10 December 1954 as the closing date for its ninth session,

Whereas the heavy programme of work of the session and the progress achieved to date require a reconsideration of that decision in the light of the present situation,

The General Assembly

"1. *Requests* the Committees to take all practicable measures to expedite consideration of the items remaining on their agenda and, if possible, to complete their work by the original closing date;

"2. *Resolves* to amend the decision of the General Assembly of 25 September in order that meetings may be continued beyond 10 December as necessary;

"3. *Decides* to transfer to the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee the following items originally allocated to the First Committee:

"Item 70. Complaint of acts of aggression against the People's Republic of China and responsibility of the United States Navy for those acts.

"Item 71. Complaint of violation of the freedom of navigation in the area of the China seas.

"4. *Decides* to close the ninth session at latest on 21 December 1954."

5. He asked the Chairmen of the Committees to make every effort to expedite the work of their Committees, for example, it might be well to hold a larger number of meetings each week, if necessary.

6. Mr. GARCIA AMADOR (Cuba), Chairman of the Sixth Committee, said he was in general agreement with the draft resolution, particularly in its reference to the adoption of practicable measures to expedite the consideration of items. The Sixth Committee had already taken all necessary measures to expedite its work, and was almost certain that it would be finished by 10 December.

7. As 21 December was a Tuesday, he asked whether the closing date for the ninth session might not be set for Saturday, 18 December.

8. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the date of 21 December had been arrived at arbitrarily, and he could see no objection to the Cuban representative's suggestion, if it met with general approval.

9. Mr. LODGE (United States of America) fully appreciated the reasons which had prompted the Chairman to propose his draft resolution.

10. It was certainly desirable in the interests of a more balanced distribution of the items on the Assembly's agenda to relieve the First Committee of items 70 and 71 by transferring them to the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee.

11. On the other hand, he felt that the second paragraph of the preamble of the draft resolution was somewhat premature. He believed that the Assembly could complete its work by the original closing date if the Committees made a real effort. Such an effort was necessary if the prestige of the United Nations was to be upheld.

12. He wished, therefore, to supplement the Chairman's proposals by the following suggestions: the General Assembly should recommend to the Chairmen of the Committees:

(1) To hold two meetings each working day and meetings on Saturday wherever possible;

(2) To declare the list of speakers closed two days after the opening of the general debate, subject to explanations of votes and to the right of reply;

(3) To limit the time for each speaker to fifteen minutes, except in the case of initial statements in the general debate.

13. Those suggestions were made in the same realistic spirit which had prompted the Chairman to submit his working document. He would not have considered recommending such a procedure at the beginning of the session, but the time had come to take systematic action

to ensure that the Assembly's work should be completed by 10 December.

14. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that even if two meetings were held each working day, together with meetings on Saturdays, some Committees would be unable to finish their work on time. Moreover, the General Assembly's principal concern should be to achieve satisfactory results no less than to complete its work at all costs by the appointed date.

15. Mr. NUTTING (United Kingdom) unreservedly supported the suggestions made by the United States representative. The measures recommended would certainly have appeared extreme at the beginning of the session, but at the present stage they were no more than judicious. If the Committees put them into effect they would undoubtedly be able to complete their work by the original closing date.

16. With regard to the draft resolution proposed by the Chairman, he suggested the deletion of the second paragraph of the preamble, of the end of paragraph 1 from the words "and, if possible..." and of paragraphs 2 and 4 in their entirety.

17. Mr. ASHA (Syria), Chairman of the Fourth Committee, said that he was prepared to give effect to the United States representative's proposals; his Committee, in any event, had decided to meet on Saturday, 27 November. He was, however, afraid that despite every effort and good will on the part of his Committee, it would be unable to complete consideration of all the items on its agenda by the original closing date. The items on its agenda were politically important and particularly delicate, and could not be settled hastily.

18. He would therefore support the draft resolution proposed by the Chairman.

19. Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia), Chairman of the First Committee, pointed out that his Committee, as was the case every year, had to deal with items of extreme complexity and would find it difficult to complete consideration of those items by 10 December. He did not believe that a decision of the General Committee could change the situation, for the General Committee proposed but the Main Committees disposed. It was for the delegations to submit specific proposals to the various Committees if they wished to change the procedure in operation.

20. The First Committee was determined to make every effort to expedite its work and had already decided, by a large majority, to meet on Saturday, 27 November.

21. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that in any decision on a matter such as the one at present before the General Committee, two considerations must be paramount: first, the session must not be unduly prolonged, and, secondly, every agenda item must be given all the attention which it deserved.

22. There was no doubt that the Committees would have to expedite their work and accordingly hold more meetings if necessary. However, there were limits to what they could do, and in that regard the suggestions by the United States and United Kingdom representatives were unrealistic. As, apart from Sundays, there remained only twelve days before 10 December, some Committees, however drastic the measures they adopted, would certainly be unable to complete their work by that date without running the risk of giving the world at large the impression that they had purposely cut short discussion on items that were of great importance to

international peace and security. To give such an impression would injure the prestige of the United Nations far more than the prolongation of the discussions, should that prove inevitable. In any event, there would be no point in the adoption of such decisions by the General Committee, as each Committee was free to decide its own procedure.

23. He approved the draft resolution proposed by the Chairman but felt that it should be made clear in operative paragraph 4 that all agenda items should be given the attention they deserved.

24. Mr. THORS (Iceland), Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, agreed that energetic action needed to be taken to expedite the Assembly's work. He doubted, however, whether the Committees, which determined their own procedure, would be willing to submit to the imposition of measures as drastic as closing the list of speakers two days after the opening of the general debate or limiting the time allowed to each speaker.

25. Although the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee had made good progress, several meetings had had to be cancelled owing to the fact that no speaker had been ready to take the floor even though the delegations had known for months ahead the items they would be called upon to discuss. The *Ad Hoc* Political Committee was optimistic of being able to finish its work on time; but if it was allocated the two controversial items 70 and 71, it was doubtful whether it would be able to finish before 18 December.

26. He felt that the best course would be to postpone for a few days any decision on the closing date of the ninth session; the General Committee would then have more information on which to base a decision. On the other hand, he saw no reason why the General Committee, if it considered it desirable to do so, should not decide forthwith to transfer items 70 and 71 to the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, for it would help the Committee to tell it as soon as possible what work it still had to do.

27. Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia), Chairman of the First Committee, felt that his Committee would be able to complete its work before 19 December if no further items were placed on its agenda. However, he had some doubts concerning the reservation which the USSR representative wished to have included in paragraph 4 of the operative part of the draft resolution.

28. Sir Douglas COPLAND (Australia), Chairman of the Second Committee, said it was unfortunate that the Assembly was obliged once more to consider the possibility of continuing to sit beyond the date originally fixed for the close of the session. While he agreed that the Committees were free to decide for themselves on the conduct of their debates, he refused to believe that they could not possibly speed up their work. Accordingly, he hoped that the General Committee would not be too hasty in deciding to postpone the closing date of the ninth session. If such a decision were not taken, the Committees would be compelled to take drastic measures to shorten their debates.

29. He supported most of the measures suggested by the United States representative but thought it would be difficult to place an arbitrary limit on the length of speeches. However, if each representative made a resolution to say what he had to say in half the time he had proposed to take, his speeches would gain not only in conciseness but in quality.

30. So far as the Second Committee was concerned, its work was well in hand, and would certainly be concluded by the appointed time. He realized that some other Committees were in a different position, as they had a heavier agenda and possibly more difficult questions to consider. Nevertheless, he agreed with the representative of Iceland that it would be better for the time being not to consider the possibility of prolonging the session.

31. The CHAIRMAN said that the statements heard so far had made it clear that at least three Committees would not have completed their work by 10 December.

32. Mr. NUTTING (United Kingdom) said he still believed that the Committees should be able to finish their work by 10 December if they took the measures recommended by the United States representative. The essential thing was not to yield to pessimism at the present stage.

33. Incidentally it should be noted that if the date for closure of the session were set for 21 December, European delegations would be faced with certain rather serious practical difficulties.

34. He was prepared to follow the representatives of Iceland and Australia and agree to the General Committee's taking no decision for the time being. If, however, the Chairman's resolution were put to the vote, he would press the Committee to vote also on his amendments.

35. Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia), Chairman of the Third Committee, said that after fifty-two meetings his Committee had reached only the third item on its agenda, and still had four items to consider. If his calculations were correct, the Committee would need sixteen more meetings to complete its work; it would therefore be quite impossible to do so before 10 December. The Chairman's draft resolution met the situation well, and he would support it.

36. Mr. LODGE (United States of America) pointed out that while it was a good thing to advocate realism, the highly valuable qualities of optimism, confidence and good will should not on that account be despised. He was still convinced that the General Assembly could complete its work by 10 December as arranged.

37. Mr. BOTHA (Union of South Africa) Chairman of the Fifth Committee, regretted that the General Assembly was unable to complete its work on time. So far as the Fifth Committee was concerned, it had decided to keep to the appointed date, and, doubtless owing to the different nature of the questions before it, would be able to do so. Whatever might be the position of the other Committees, he agreed that it would be premature to take a final decision on the date of closure of the session before ascertaining the effect of the measures taken to speed up the work.

38. The CHAIRMAN saw no reason why the General Committee's decision should not be deferred for some days, particularly since the General Assembly's next plenary meeting would not take place until Friday, 3 December. Accordingly, the General Committee could

meet before that date in order to take a decision on the organization of the Assembly's work and the transfer of items 70 and 71 of the agenda to the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee. The Chairman reserved the right in the interval to amend the working paper which he had submitted to the meeting in progress in accordance with the developments in the situation; he proposed in particular, to incorporate the United States representative's suggestions.

39. Mr. HOPPENOT (France) entirely agreed with the Chairman. He regretted, however, that the General Committee did not propose to adopt the United States representative's recommendations forthwith; their application would certainly help to hasten the completion of the Assembly's work.

40. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that each Committee was represented on the General Committee by its Chairman, and would be informed of the General Committee's deliberations.

41. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) doubted whether it would be desirable to incorporate the United States representative's suggestions in the draft resolution on which the General Committee would eventually be called upon to vote. Some of the proposals in question were already being applied and the others might be an invasion of the Committees' freedom of action. The Committees and their Chairmen fully understood the urgency of the situation, and there was no need for the General Committee to adopt a formal resolution specifying the measures needed to hasten the completion of their work.

42. Mr. ASHA (Syria), Chairman of the Fourth Committee, supported the USSR representative's last observation.

43. With regard to the United States representative's second suggestion that the list of speakers should be closed after a brief period of time, he said that on the basis of his own experience the best way of limiting the number of speakers was not to open a list.

44. The CHAIRMAN wished to repeat he was making no commitment concerning the content of the draft resolution which he might feel it necessary to submit to the General Committee at its next meeting.

45. Mr. URRUTIA (Colombia) formally proposed the adjournment of the meeting, on the understanding that the General Committee would hold its next meeting at a time which would not interfere with the work of the Committees.

46. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt that it should also be understood forthwith that items 70 and 71 of the General Assembly's agenda were to be transferred to the *AD Hoc* Political Committee, so that that Committee could make arrangements to ensure that the consideration of those questions would not be neglected owing to lack of time.

47. Mr. THORS (Iceland) said that he would conduct the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee's proceedings with that possibility in mind.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.