

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 196th
MEETING**

Thursday, 10 November 1960,
at 11 a.m.



NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Carlet R. AUGUSTE (Haiti).

AGENDA ITEM 23

Question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council (A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1-4, A/SPC/L.52 and Add.1-3) (continued)

1. Mr. AW (Mali) said that the implication that the supporters of the two draft resolutions (A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1-4 and A/SPC/L.52 and Add.1-3) were readier to defend the interests of the African and Asian countries than those who intended to vote against them was an over-simplified view of the problem. It reflected the cold-war division of the world into mutually antagonistic camps, and was at variance with his country's concept of neutralism as an attitude which could be either passive or dynamic. If a particular question did not directly affect a neutralist country's interests and the arguments on both sides seemed equally convincing, abstention when a vote was taken was appropriate. But if it felt obliged to vote, it could not be content merely to associate itself with one side or the other but should do everything in its power to bring about a reconciliation between them before coming down on that side of the question which appeared to it to be correct. That in turn meant trying to understand each side's point of view. In the present instance it meant that an effort should be made to understand why certain countries insisted that there was a connexion between the item under discussion and the question of the representation of China. The factor in common to the two questions was the desire to see right and justice prevail in the matter of representation. In point of fact, the connexion between the two questions was implicitly acknowledged in the contention that ratification by China meant ratification by the Taiwan régime. The logical neutral view would be to admit a connexion between the two issues, and then to ask the countries concerned not to let that stand in the way of action designed to benefit countries which were themselves anxious to see justice done in the case of China. Meanwhile, the discussion would have served to awaken many to the realization that the absence of the People's Republic of China was an injustice that should be remedied.

2. Yet even if the expansion of the Councils were thus made possible, it would still only be a partial solution, for it was not an end in itself but rather a means of helping to establish the proper balance so

that the United Nations could work more effectively. In addition to expansion, there should be a considerable redistribution of the seats on the two Councils, including the seats of the permanent members of the Security Council. The five States occupying the permanent seats had been accorded that privilege on the basis of two considerations: first, that they were great military Powers which had borne the brunt of the war effort in the conflict immediately preceding the founding of the United Nations, and second, that some of them had had major responsibilities as colonial Powers. The changes which had taken place in the world since then had rendered the idea of responsibility based on colonial power obsolete. Some of the permanent members of the Security Council had been considered great Powers in 1945 by virtue of the extent of the territories on behalf of which they spoke, but those territories had since become independent and now had their own representatives in the United Nations. In the light of those considerations it was obviously not irrelevant, as some maintained, to call for a redistribution as well as an increase in the number of seats on the Councils. It would be unfair to ask only one side to make concessions; the advocates on both sides should therefore try to reconcile their views. A committee should be set up, as suggested by India, to find a basis for a compromise which would be acceptable to all and would allow for both the expansion of the Councils and an equitable redistribution of the existing seats. The extent of the increases was a matter for careful study and should be determined by considerations of efficiency; hence the figures need not be arbitrarily fixed at two in the case of the Security Council and six in the case of the Economic and Social Council.

3. Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus) said that the composition of the principal organs of the United Nations had been fair and reasonable at the time when it had been decided upon, but with the accession of so many new Members it was now obsolete. Not only had many formerly subject countries become independent but some countries which had once been minor Powers were growing in importance, while in others the trend was in the opposite direction. Thus his delegation could not share the view that existing rights within the two Councils were sacrosanct. Change was inevitable and the United Nations must be adaptable if it was to maintain its effectiveness. His delegation was co-sponsoring the two draft resolutions before the Committee because the increases for which they provided would in themselves make the Councils more representative. At the same time he wished to make it clear that his delegation was in favour of a more equitable distribution of the seats in the Councils and would give careful consideration to any other draft resolution calculated to bring that about.

4. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) said that the operation of the two Councils in the years since the San Francisco Conference combined with the

spectacular increase in the membership of the Organization clearly indicated the need for a change in their structure. That was the purpose of the two draft resolutions before the Committee. In introducing them, the representative of El Salvador had expressed views that were shared by nearly all the Latin American delegations, including that of Uruguay.

5. The General Assembly was open and would remain open to all Members of the United Nations and there were no limits to its expansion. On the other hand, the structure of the other principal organs, with the notable exception of the Trusteeship Council, had remained unchanged since the adoption of the Charter. The arrangements governing the membership of the Councils, including the special status accorded to the five permanent members of the Security Council, reflected the world situation at the end of the Second World War. The provisions of the Charter had not been intended to perpetuate the old colonial systems or to encourage new ones; their essential purpose was to guide the world along the path of progress. The first act of the new sovereign States emerging into the international community was to apply for membership in the United Nations, which set the seal, as it were, upon their independence. They were now entitled to play a full part in the work of the Organization.

6. The draft resolution recommending an increase in the membership of the Economic and Social Council (A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1-4) now had forty-five sponsors. The topics which came before the Economic and Social Council were not those which received the most publicity, but they were of tremendous significance for the well-being of mankind, and particularly for the new Asian and African nations.

7. The main argument raised against the two draft resolutions entirely missed the mark. The USSR delegation's opposition to any amendment of the Charter so long as the problem of the representation of China remained unsolved was not directed against the purpose of the amendments but was based on purely political considerations. The question of the representation of China was a valid and serious one, but the progress of the whole Organization should not be held up pending its solution. After all, if the draft resolutions were adopted, the amendments to the Charter would not enter into force at once but only when it became possible to ratify them.

8. Other solutions had been mooted in the past, and new proposals were apparently under consideration. The Uruguayan delegation would give careful consideration to any such proposals, and in the meantime had co-sponsored the two draft resolutions before the Committee.

9. Mr. AKAKPO (Togo) recalled that the San Francisco conference had fixed the size of the two Councils in proportion to the membership of the United Nations, in which Africa and Asia were hardly represented at all. The enlargement of the Councils was the logical consequence of the expansion of the United Nations.

10. Africa and Asia were under-developed because foreign domination had impoverished them and held up their development. They were now fighting for their freedom and trying to make up the time lost through colonialism.

11. The problems of Africa and Asia could not be solved by the United Nations without the participation of Africans and Asians in the work of the Economic and Social Council, which should have at least four African members. Whatever the procedural difficulties might be, an amendment of the Charter was the only way in which the just claim of the African and Asian countries could be met. Only then could they make their full contribution to the work of the United Nations.

12. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had concluded its general debate on the item, and would now proceed to the consideration of draft resolutions A/SPC/L.51 and Add.1-4 and A/SPC/L.52 and Add.1-3.

13. Mr. DA MOTA (Brazil) said that the enlargement of the Councils, which the Brazilian delegation had advocated as a wholesome functional arrangement, was now justly demanded as a right by the independent African States. New Members of the United Nations should have all the rights and responsibilities of membership. The sponsors of the two draft resolutions had no hidden motives and did not want to put pressure on anyone by means of a mechanical majority. Incidentally, it should be noted that they provided for a time-limit of three years, and within that time the soundness or otherwise of the proposed measures would become apparent.

14. It was unjust to subordinate the question to that of the representation of China, which did not concern the Committee. The suggestion for a redistribution of existing seats was unsatisfactory; it could only make matters worse, because no country would be satisfied.

15. Mr. JANTUAH (Ghana) proposed that the Committee should adjourn until the afternoon, when the sub-committee of the African-Asian group hoped to submit a new draft resolution which would accommodate all views.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.