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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 7 October 2015, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Bowler (Malawi)

Contents

Organization of work

Requests for hearings

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Organization of work (A/70/250, A/C.4/70/L.1, A/C.4/70/1, A/C.4/70/INF/1, A/C.4/70/INF/4)

1. **The Chair** drew attention to the agenda items allocated to the Committee (A/C.4/70/1), and to the Committee's programme of work and proposed timetable (A/C.4/70/L.1). He then drew attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly regarding the work of the Main Committees, contained in the report of the General Committee (A/70/250) and in Assembly decision 34/401 and resolutions 58/126 and 58/316.

2. In order to make full use of the time and conference services that had been made available to the Committee, he would convene and adjourn meetings promptly and would convene them only when there were sufficient delegations inscribed on the list of speakers. All speakers, in particular the first three at a given meeting, should be present in the Committee room on time. The Assembly had decided to continue its practice of departing from the rule that one quarter of the members must be present for a Main Committee meeting to be declared open.

3. On questions of procedure and organization of work, the Committee would comply strictly with the relevant provisions of General Assembly decision 34/401. In line with the time limits for explanations of vote and rights of reply, statements on points of order should be limited to five minutes. He suggested that statements during the general debate should not exceed 10 minutes, or 15 minutes in the case of those speaking on behalf of groups of States.

4. The Secretariat required at least 48 hours to process draft resolutions, draft decisions and amendments in all languages. With regard to the programme budget implications of proposals and rule 153 of the rules of procedure, the General Assembly had drawn attention to paragraph 12 of its decision 34/401, which made it imperative for the Main Committees to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. The General Committee had in turn drawn the General Assembly's attention to the fact that the Secretary-General usually needed more than the 48 hours mandated in paragraph 13 (d) of decision 34/401 to review programme budget implications.

5. With reference to the Committee's agenda, item 120, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", had been allocated to the Committee, under resolution 58/316, for the purpose of adopting its provisional programme of work for the next session and, under resolution 69/321 — excerpts of which were contained in document A/C.4/70/INF/4 — for the purpose of considering ways of streamlining its agenda. Agenda item 135, entitled "Programme planning", had been allocated to all the Main Committees and to the plenary Assembly, in order to enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports.

6. The Committee would continue the practice of holding interactive dialogues under the agenda items relating to information, outer space, peacekeeping and the effects of atomic radiation, as well as to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Additionally, in accordance with Assembly decisions on revitalization, particularly in resolutions 56/509, 58/126 and 69/321, agenda item 5, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees", had been allocated to the Committee for the purpose of electing its officers approximately three months before the next General Assembly session.

7. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the programme of work and the timetable contained in document A/C.4/70/L.1.

8. *It was so decided.*

9. **The Chair** drew attention to document A/C.4/70/INF/1, which contained the list of documents before the Committee. Following the practice of the last few years, only limited quantities of previously issued reports would be available in the conference room, but additional copies would be available through the PaperSmart portal. Delegations wishing to circulate their statements electronically should, at least one hour in advance of delivery, send a copy of the statement to the dedicated PaperSmart e-mail address.

10. Also, as at previous sessions, the Committee would set up a working group of the whole to prepare draft resolutions for submission under agenda item 53, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space". The working group would be chaired by the delegation of Algeria. He took it that the Committee wished to establish the group.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. **The Chair** noted that, in approving its programme of work and timetable, the Committee had decided to hold one general debate covering all agenda items relating to decolonization, namely items 59 to 63, enabling members to speak on any or all of those agenda items at any meeting devoted to the topic.

Requests for hearings

13. **The Chair** informed the Committee that he had received 100 communications containing requests for hearings relating to the questions of Falkland Islands (Malvinas), French Polynesia, Gibraltar, Guam, New Caledonia and Western Sahara under item 63. He suggested that, in accordance with the usual practice, the communications should be circulated as Committee documents for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

14. *It was so decided.*

15. **The Chair** said that he had also received a communication from the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, the President of the Government of New Caledonia and the Governor of Guam, who wished to address the Committee under agenda item 63. Their statements would be scheduled accordingly.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.