



Fourteenth session
Agenda item 62

QUESTION OF THE CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF
EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION IN THE ELECTION OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Report of the Special Political Committee

Rapporteur: Dr. Leopoldo H. TETTAMANTI (Argentina)

1. In a letter dated 12 August 1959 (A/4182), Czechoslovakia requested the inclusion of the following item in the provisional agenda of the General Assembly: "The question of the consistent application of the principle of equitable geographical representation in the election of the President of the General Assembly". In the explanatory memorandum, it was stated that the principle of the equitable geographical representation, which was one of the fundamental functional principles on which the structure and the activities of the United Nations was based, had not been consistently applied in the elections to the office of the President of the General Assembly. Representatives of all geographical areas except Eastern Europe had several times held in turn the office of the President of the General Assembly. The shortcomings connected with the practice of filling the office of the President of the General Assembly had not been removed even after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1192 (XII) of 12 December 1957, on the composition of the General Committee. The attainment of an agreement on the correct application of the principle of equitable geographical representation in the election of the President of the General Assembly would remove the existing shortcomings and would contribute to a further development of co-operation and the strengthening of mutual confidence among the Member States in the General Assembly.

2. At its 803rd plenary meeting on 22 September 1959, the General Assembly decided to place the item on its agenda and to refer it to the Special Political Committee.
3. The Special Political Committee considered the item at its 163rd to 169th meetings held between 1 and 7 December 1959.
4. On 30 November 1959, a draft resolution sponsored by Czechoslovakia and Romania (A/SPC/L.39) was circulated. Under the second preambular paragraph, the General Assembly would refer to resolution 1192 (XII) of 12 December 1957 which, based on the principle of equitable geographical representation, determined the distribution of the membership of the General Committee of the General Assembly, while this distribution of membership was adjusted with regard to the region from which the President of the General Assembly was elected. According to the operative part, the Assembly would: (1) confirm that the principle of equitable representation of geographical regions should be applied consistently also in the election of the President of the General Assembly; (2) recommend that in the first four years following the adoption of the resolution the President of the General Assembly be elected successively from Eastern European States, Asian and African States, Western European States and other States and Latin American States.
5. At the 165th meeting on 3 December 1959, the representative of Mexico introduced an amendment (A/SPC/L.40) to the draft resolution. Sponsored jointly by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, the amendment would: (1) replace the second preambular paragraph by a paragraph recognizing the importance of ensuring that the President of the General Assembly possessed the highest personal qualifications for the performance of his duties, and also the desirability of taking into account in his election the principle of equitable geographical distribution; and (2) replace the two operative paragraphs by a paragraph according to which the General Assembly would recommend that in the election of the President of the General Assembly the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be upheld to the greatest possible extent, special attention being paid in the first place to the qualifications that the President of the General Assembly must possess in order to perform the important duties of his office.

6. At the 166th meeting on 3 December 1959, the following sub-amendments were submitted to the eleven-Power amendment (A/SPC/L.40):

(a) by France (A/SPC/L.41): to add the following at the end of paragraph 2: "and due account being taken of the prevailing circumstances";

(b) by Guinea (A/SPC/L.42): in paragraph 1, to delete the word "desirability" and insert the word "necessity"; and in paragraph 2, to delete the words "to the greatest possible extent" and the words "in the first place";

(c) by the United States of America (A/SPC/L.43): in paragraph 2, to delete the words "special attention being paid in the first instance" and replace them by the following words: "commensurate with the primary consideration which should be given".

7. At the 167th meeting on 4 December 1959, Guinea and the United Arab Republic submitted a revision (A/SPC/L.42/Rev.1) of the sub-amendment submitted by Guinea providing for (1) the deletion of the words "also the desirability" in the third line of the first paragraph; (2) the replacement, in the second paragraph, of the words from "the principle of" to the words "important duties of his office" by the words "special attention be paid to the qualifications that the President of the General Assembly must possess in order to perform the important duties of his office and as well as to the principle of equitable geographical representation".

8. At the 168th meeting on 4 December 1958, the representative of the United Arab Republic stated that the sponsors of the sub-amendment (A/SPC/L.42/Rev.1) would delete the words "as well as" from its second paragraph.

9. In reply to a question raised by the representative of Mexico, the representatives of the United Arab Republic and Guinea agreed to substitute the words "due regard be specially paid" for "special attention be paid" in their sub-amendment.

10. The representative of Italy orally proposed a sub-amendment to the sub-amendment of Guinea and the United Arab Republic (A/SPC/L.42/Rev.1) calling for the insertion of the words "to the greatest possible extent" between the words "office and" and "to the principle".

11. At the 168th meeting, the Committee proceeded to vote on the draft resolutions and amendments before it as follows:

The first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution submitted by Czechoslovakia and Romania (A/SPC/L.39) was adopted by 69 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The first sub-amendment of Guinea and the United Arab Republic (A/SPC/L.42/Rev.1) to delete the words "also the desirability" in the second preambular paragraph as set forth in the eleven-Power amendment (A/SPC/L.40) was adopted by 36 votes to 30, with 9 abstentions.

The second preambular paragraph contained in the eleven-Power amendment (A/SPC/L.40) as amended was adopted by 52 votes to none, with 23 abstentions.

The oral sub-amendment submitted by Italy to insert the words "to the greatest possible extent" in the operative paragraph set out in the second paragraph of the sub-amendment submitted by Guinea and the United Arab Republic (A/SPC/L.42/Rev.1) was rejected by 33 votes to 29, with 11 abstentions.

The sub-amendment of Guinea and the United Arab Republic (A/SPC/L.42/Rev.1) to the operative paragraph contained in the eleven-Power amendment (A/SPC/L.40) was adopted by a roll-call vote of 36 to 33, with 8 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Nepal, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Abstaining: Bolivia, Cuba, Israel, Laos, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Uruguay.

The French sub-amendment (A/SPC/L.41) to add the words "and due account being taken of the prevailing circumstances" to the end of the operative paragraph of the eleven-Power amendment (A/SPC/L.40) was rejected by a roll-call vote of 24 to 23, with 30 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Ecuador, Federation of Malaya, France, Greece, Guatemala, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Against: Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ceylon, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Liberia, Nepal, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Yugoslavia.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Burma, Cambodia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Finland, Iran, Ireland, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Union of South Africa, Uruguay, Yemen.

The operative paragraph of the eleven-Power amendment (A/SPC/L.40) as amended was adopted by a roll-call vote of 36 to 31, with 9 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Nepal, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Abstaining: Bolivia, Cuba, Finland, Guatemala, Israel, Laos, Pakistan, Philippines, Uruguay.

The draft resolution submitted by Czechoslovakia and Romania as a whole, as amended, was adopted by a roll-call vote of 36 to 32, with 8 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Nepal, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Abstaining: Bolivia, Finland, Guatemala, Israel, Laos, Pakistan, Philippines, Uruguay.

Recommendation of the Special Political Committee

12. The Special Political Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

QUESTION OF THE CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF
EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION IN THE ELECTION OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly,

In view of the spirit of the United Nations Charter and of the provisions of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly pertaining to the President of the General Assembly,

Recognizing the importance of ensuring that the President of the General Assembly possesses the highest personal qualifications for the performance of his duties, and of taking into account in his election the principle of equitable geographical representation,

Recommends that in the election of the President of the General Assembly due regard be specially paid to the qualifications that the President of the General Assembly must possess in order to perform the important duties of his office and to the principle of equitable geographical representation.
