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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 December 2009, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria)

Contents

Agenda item 171: Observer status in the General Assembly for the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly (*continued*)

Agenda item 169: Observer status for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean in the General Assembly (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda item 171: Observer status in the General Assembly for the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/64/235; A/C.6/64/1/Add.1; A/C.6/64/L.20)

1. **The Chairman** said that, at the Committee's previous meeting, several delegations had expressed the view that appropriate ways of utilizing the institutional memory and expertise of the former Presidents of the General Assembly for the benefit of the Organization, other than the granting of observer status in the General Assembly, deserved to be explored. In line with that suggestion, and following consultations, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.6/64/L.20 had indicated their willingness to withdraw the draft resolution. With the consent of the Committee, he would send a letter to the President of the General Assembly informing him of the formal outcome of the Committee's work, of the Committee's appreciation of the important contribution of the former Presidents of the General Assembly to the work of the Organization, and of suggestions that had been made with a view to identifying appropriate ways of making the unique expertise and institutional memory of the former Presidents of the General Assembly available to the Organization, so as to assist it in meeting new challenges faced by the international community. He took it that the Committee wished to proceed in that manner.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. **Mr. Al Nafisee** (Saudi Arabia) said he could confirm that the sponsors were willing to withdraw the draft resolution on the understanding that the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly would be given an advisory role with respect to the General Assembly.

4. *Draft resolution A/C.6/64/L.20 was withdrawn.*

Agenda item 169: Observer status for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean in the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/64/232; A/C.6/64/1/Add.1; A/C.6/64/L.19)

5. **The Chairman** recalled that, at its previous meeting, the Committee had decided to defer action on draft resolution A/C.6/64/L.19 in order to allow delegations more time to consult their capitals.

6. **Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the decision to include the item in the agenda of the current session had been taken at a very late stage, and he reiterated his delegation's view that consideration of it should be deferred to the next session. The Sixth Committee was uniquely qualified to consider the merits of requests for observer status; no one wanted to see its role reduced to rubber-stamping, especially as the criteria for the granting of observer status laid down in General Assembly decision 49/426 had already been blurred. The Committee should avoid setting a precedent by acting in a hasty manner.

7. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said it was encouraging that only procedural concerns had been raised by the previous speaker. His delegation agreed that the Committee's decisions should not be seen as a rubber stamp, and had always supported a consensual approach. The request to include the item in the agenda had actually been submitted two months previously; the delay had arisen in the General Committee's consideration of that request. Since most delegations were prepared to take action on the draft resolution, he hoped that the Iranian delegation would be able to go along with the majority view.

8. **Mr. Gouider** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) and **Ms. Gasri** (France) said that, since no substantive objections to the draft resolution had been raised, they also hoped that action could be taken on it.

9. **Ms. Negm** (Egypt) said that Egypt, as a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), supported the request for observer status and hoped that the procedural difficulties could be overcome.

10. **Mr. Ben Lagha** (Tunisia) and **Ms. Zuluaga** (Colombia) said that PAM met the requirements for the granting of observer status; there was therefore no reason to defer action on the draft resolution.

11. **Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation appreciated the Committee's efforts to accommodate his delegation's concerns thus far. However, the draft resolution had been introduced only a few days previously, and it was usual to allow at least a week before taking action. Moreover, although his delegation had thus far raised only procedural concerns, it was yet to be convinced that PAM qualified as an intergovernmental organization. The granting of observer status to the

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was not necessarily a valid precedent, since it was regarded as an exception to the criteria established in General Assembly decision 49/426. Moreover, resolution 57/32, in which the Assembly had invited IPU to participate in its work as an observer, recognized the organization's "unique status". The request for observer status for PAM should therefore be considered on its own merits; all delegations should be allowed adequate time for that purpose.

12. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that his delegation had previously explained that PAM was an intergovernmental organization which enjoyed close relations with the United Nations and which dealt with many issues relevant to the latter's work. Although PAM had originated from a process established under the auspices of IPU, it was a separate entity.

13. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

14. **Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in explanation of position, said that his delegation did not wish to request a vote but could not join the consensus on the draft resolution at the current stage. He asked the Secretariat to clarify the Committee's past practice with regard to draft resolutions on the granting of observer status.

15. **Mr. Mikulka** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, as far as he recalled, the Committee had in the past adopted draft resolutions on the granting of observer status without a vote. However, that had no bearing on the issue of consensus; delegations were entitled to dissociate themselves from any draft resolution that was adopted without a vote. If no delegation requested a vote on a draft resolution, the Chairman could proceed on the assumption that delegations were prepared to adopt it without a vote, without prejudice to their right to explain their position. That procedure had been duly followed with regard to the draft resolution currently before the Committee.

16. **Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the granting of observer status was an important issue, and related draft resolutions should be the subject of consensus. He requested a suspension of the meeting for the purpose of consultations.

17. **Mr. Muhumuza** (Uganda) said that the Committee should avoid singling out one member who expressed a particular view.

18. **Mr. Mukongo Ngay** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that the Committee could proceed on the basis of the explanation provided by the Secretary. However, his delegation was willing to suspend the meeting if necessary.

19. **Ms. Negm** (Egypt) agreed that the meeting should be suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 4.20 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.

20. *Draft resolution A/C.6/64/L.19 was adopted.*

21. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina), speaking in explanation of position, said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, even though PAM was not an intergovernmental organization in the strict sense. The granting of observer status to PAM was an exceptional case and should not be regarded as a precedent.

22. **Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in explanation of position, said that the fact that his delegation had not requested a vote on the draft resolution did not mean that it had joined the consensus. His delegation was not satisfied with the way in which the matter had been handled. It was regrettable that no means of accommodating his delegation's concerns had been found in order to enable it to join the consensus.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.