## **UNITED NATIONS**



# FIFTY-FIRST SESSION Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE

2nd meeting
held on
Friday, 20 September 1996
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico)

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## The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

#### STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

- 1. The CHAIRMAN paid tribute to Mr. Ugyen Tshering, Permanent Representative of Bhutan, for the skill with which he had conducted the Committee's work during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly; she also paid tribute to the other officers.
- 2. There were only 13 items on the Committee's agenda, but their complexity would pose a real challenge to delegations. The latter would have to consider the same number of items as before in a shorter period of time, since the Committee would be meeting for only six and a half weeks. It was therefore important to start meetings on time. She asked delegations to restrict their statements to seven minutes, or 15 minutes for statements made on behalf of a group. She had requested the representatives of United Nations bodies to introduce orally the reports to be submitted to the General Assembly, to keep their statements as short as possible, not exceeding seven minutes, and to include in them, as far as possible, ideas which were not contained in the reports. Some flexibility would be shown, but solely in the case of officials presenting oral reports.
- 3. If the Committee was to be able to complete its work in the time allotted, it would be necessary for delegations to make their statements on the first day of the general debate on each agenda item, to enable the Committee to make the best use of its resources. She hoped that the Committee's work would not be seriously affected by the delays which had been noted in the distribution of documents.
- 4. As for the process of negotiating the great number of draft resolutions which the Committee usually adopted, she asked delegations intending to introduce draft resolutions to begin their informal consultations as soon as possible. While some texts admittedly called for lengthy negotiations, the holding of prior consultations and the prompt distribution of texts could only make the Committee's work easier. In response to requests from many delegations for the establishment of mechanisms to make negotiations more transparent, the Secretariat had proposed to help prepare of a list of delegations which would be sponsoring any given draft resolution. Delegations should provide the necessary information to the Secretariat.
- 5. As for substantive matters, the Committee had an extremely complex agenda. In the previous year, the General Assembly had adopted the agreements produced at the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. The results of those important conferences constituted the framework in which the United Nations would carry on its future actions for social development and for the advancement of women. In 1996, the Commission on Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council had taken important steps as a follow-up to those conferences that would enable them to carry out their mandates effectively, pursuant to the agreements adopted. The Committee should provide guidelines for those activities.

- 6. The item concerning international drug control was of particular importance at a time when improved international cooperation was essential to solve the increasingly serious problem of drug abuse. There was no doubt that the results of the discussion in the Economic and Social Council during the high-level segment and the substantive sessions would be particularly useful to the Committee in its consideration of the item. Also, the item concerning crime prevention and criminal justice was particularly important for strengthening measures to curb the serious threat to society from crime.
- 7. As it had done in the past, the Committee would devote a considerable part of the allotted time to consideration of the cluster of items concerning the promotion and protection of human rights. It would consider measures to be taken to combat racism and racial discrimination and promote the rights of children and indigenous people. It would also examine the problems facing the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in its efforts to respond to the increasing needs of millions of refugees and displaced persons. The Committee would also consider the following matters: the right of peoples to self-determination, implementation of human rights instruments, alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of those rights, and human rights situations.
- 8. She was convinced that the Committee would consider those highly important questions in a spirit of constructive cooperation, thereby making a real contribution to the cause of human rights. In addition to the aforementioned items, the General Assembly, at its plenary meeting that morning, had decided to refer to the Committee the item entitled "Question of elaboration of an international convention against organized transnational crime".

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 9. <u>The CHAIRMAN</u> said that the Group of African States and the Group of Asian States had nominated Mr. Tessema (Ethiopia) and Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan) for the offices of Vice-Chairmen.
- 10. Mr. Tessema (Ethiopia) and Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.
- 11. <u>The CHAIRMAN</u> said that the Group of Western European and Other States had nominated Ms. Sandru (Romania) for the office of Rapporteur.
- 12. Ms. Sandru (Romania) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/51/250; A/C.3/51/L.1 and Add.1)

13. The CHAIRMAN invited delegations to give careful consideration to the action taken by the General Assembly based on the recommendations contained in the report of the General Committee relating to the organization of the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees (A/51/250). The degree to which the Committee would be able to implement those decisions would establish how well it would discharge its work programme.

- 14. The Secretariat had distributed the draft of a letter from the President of the General Assembly containing the list of agenda items allocated to the Committee, to be published as document A/C.3/51/1.
- 15. The General Assembly had decided to consider agenda item 45, on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, directly in plenary meetings. The General Assembly would also take action on that item at a plenary meeting. It had also decided to include in its agenda the item entitled "Question of elaboration of an international convention against organized transnational crime" and to allocate it to the Third Committee. She proposed that the new item should be considered together with items 101 (Crime prevention and criminal justice) and 102 (International drug control).

## 16. It was so decided.

- 17. The General Assembly had set Friday, 29 November as the target date for conclusion of the work of the Main Committees, and cooperation would be needed from members to enable the Committee to meet that deadline.
- 18. She announced that the meeting would be suspended to enable members of the Committee to consider the provisional programme of work.

## The meeting was suspended at 3.30 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.

- 19. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in order to make the best use of the services available to the Committee, it should respect as much as possible the timetable to be adopted. It was of particular importance that draft resolutions which generally involved lengthy negotiations should be drafted by the main sponsors as early as possible.
- 20. In accordance with several requests from members of the Committee, she asked that delegations wishing to present proposals concerning questions requiring action by the Committee should so inform the Secretariat, to enable it to announce those initiatives for the benefit of all delegations wishing to support and participate in the work of the primary sponsors.
- 21. She invited the Committee to adopt as a whole the programme of work contained in document A/C.3/51/L.1, on the understanding that the necessary flexibility would be shown in its execution.
- 22. The programme of work (A/C.3/51/L.1) was adopted.
- 23. The CHAIRMAN suggested that a time limit of seven minutes should be adopted for individual statements and those of the Secretariat, and 15 minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of delegations or a delegation speaking on several items.

# 24. It was so decided.

- 25. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with established practice, the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation should be limited to two per agenda item; the first right of reply should not exceed five minutes, and the second, three minutes. Delegations should exercise their right of reply at the end of the day when two meetings on that day had been devoted to the consideration of the same item.
- 26. Delegations were required to bring at least 20 copies of any statement to be delivered for distribution to the interpreters, précis-writers and Department of Public Information staff. As for statements made from handwritten notes, delegations should provide copies, even if they were rough notes, to the précis-writers.
- 27. Delegations were requested to put their names down as early as possible on the list of speakers for all of the items on the agenda; that would avoid having the majority of delegations added to the list on the last day of the consideration of a given item, which would be likely to obstruct the work of the Committee. Delegations should make their statements at the meeting and in the order in which they were listed to speak. It would be desirable for the target date for the conclusion of the Committee's work, which was 29 November, to be brought forward to 27 November.
- 28. If there were no objections, she would take it that the Committee wished to invite the various Rapporteurs and Special Representatives to present their reports to the Committee during the current session.
- 29. <u>It was so decided</u>.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.