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## AGENDA ITEM 31

Effects of atomic radiation:

- (a) Report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation;
- (b) Report of the World Meteorological Organization

### REPORT OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE (A/5590)

*Mrs. Achard (Dahomey), Rapporteur of the Special Political Committee, presented the Committee's report.*

*Pursuant to rule 68 of the rules of procedure, it was decided not to discuss the report of the Special Political Committee.*

1. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): In accordance with the decision just taken by the Assembly, statements will be limited to explanations of vote. As there is no speaker on the list who wishes to give an explanation of vote, I submit to the General Assembly the draft resolution of the Special Political Committee [A/5590, para. 7]. Since the draft resolution was unanimously approved by the Committee, I shall take it, if there are no objections, that the General Assembly also adopts it unanimously.

*The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.*

## AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council (chapter III, section II)

### REPORT OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE (A/5587)

2. Mr. APPIAH (Ghana), Rapporteur of the Second Committee: I consider it a unique privilege to present

to this Assembly the report of the Second Committee on agenda item 12 [A/5587], entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council". This item was assigned to the Second Committee by the General Assembly on 20 September 1963.

3. One of the most important items in the report of the Economic and Social Council is the discussion by that Council on the work of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. As representatives will remember, the seventeenth session of the General Assembly gave due prominence and importance to all the discussions and the resultant resolution [1785 (XVII)] concerning the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Mr. President, your predecessor, Mr. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, in his brilliant assessment of the work of the seventeenth session [1202nd meeting], considered the agreement among all Member States to convene a world-wide trade conference as one of the most important decisions of the United Nations, and I have no doubt, Sir, that you also are of the same opinion.

4. The Second Committee appropriately decided to report separately on actions which have been taken this year on the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. There was general agreement in the Second Committee this year that our discussion on this vital subject should not go into matters which have been decided already either by the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development or by the Economic and Social Council.

5. The draft resolution, which was submitted by seventy-six countries in the Second Committee on this subject, was thoroughly discussed, as the records show. It is a measure of the importance which is attached to this subject that the draft resolution was adopted unanimously by the Second Committee.

6. Perhaps it is too early to forecast the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, due to convene in Geneva in March 1964; but, coming from a developing country, I can say even now that the hopes and aspirations of millions of people all over the world have been raised by the prospects of the forthcoming Conference. The outcome of this Conference will be a most important landmark on the road to economic advancement of two-thirds of the world's population.

7. Against this background it is my happy task to recommend to the General Assembly approval of the draft resolution and its annex which the Second Committee has adopted [A/5587, para. 9], in the hopeful expectation that the report of the Trade Conference and its final acts will come up for action by this Assembly at its next session.

*Pursuant to rule 68 of the rules of procedure, it was decided not to discuss the report of the Second Committee.*

8. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I would remind the Assembly that, according to the decision just taken, statements by representatives will be confined to explanations of vote, either before or after the voting.

9. Mr. KANO (Nigeria): If my delegation has requested the floor to speak at this time, it is only out of consideration for the importance of the subject, that is the approaching United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, of the report of the Second Committee [A/5587] which this Assembly is being called upon to adopt.

10. As is well known, great hopes have come to be placed by the developing countries on that Conference, based on the understanding that their problems of trade will be tackled in a definitive manner by the Conference, with a view to correcting the persistent unfavourable trend in their export trade in primary commodities—both in markets and in prices.

11. The draft resolution which the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly [A/5587, para. 9], is the result, first of all, of the initiative taken by seventy-five Member States, developing countries, on behalf of which I am again privileged to speak. These countries have attached so much importance to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development that, as was done at the closing of the second session of the Preparatory Committee in Geneva by their representatives, they feel that a joint declaration, setting out the principles, aims and objectives which should underlie the deliberations of the Conference, would represent a most important and significant contribution to the success of the Conference. That declaration is reproduced as an annex to the draft resolution.

12. Naturally, a short declaration of this nature cannot be expected to cover all the views of every country sponsoring it. You will therefore find that the joint declaration is but a short résumé of the views of the developing countries, outlining mainly those aspects of their trade problems which are of common concern and on which there is general agreement.

13. As you will see from paragraph 8 of the report [A/5587], the draft resolution which is being recommended to the General Assembly was adopted unanimously by the Second Committee. And my delegation wishes here again to place on record, on behalf of the developing countries, our appreciation for the spirit of understanding with which our efforts were received by the industrialized countries. The constructive proposals which were made by the delegation of the Soviet Union provided the basis on which the Committee could reach unanimous agreement. The co-operation and efforts of the representatives of the United Kingdom, the United States and France, as well as those of all other industrialized countries of the Western world, made possible the working-out of a compromise which indeed improved the original text of the developing countries. It is this demonstration of the spirit of understanding by our more fortunate brothers which, more than ever, encourages us to look forward with great expectation and confidence to the successful outcome of the approaching United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

14. I wish also to emphasize once again, in order to allay any continuing fears, that in sponsoring the joint declaration the developing countries have no intention whatsoever of precluding the discussion of

other important matters and proposals which will facilitate the work of the Conference and contribute to its expected success. We are very well aware that there are other documents and proposals which have to be taken into consideration. There is the question of free access to the sea and the transit rights of our "land-locked" brothers belonging to countries without a coast-line which will deserve our attention at the Conference. The Geneva Convention on the High Seas of 1958<sup>1/</sup> has already given some practical attention to this problem. There is also the important problem of the international financing of world trade which we hope will expand as a result of the conference.

15. The existing hindrances to the free flow and circulation of international financial resources will have to be examined in order to find appropriate solutions. In this connexion it is noted that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund are also already seized of this problem. There are yet other matters which should be considered: proposals for a definition of fundamental guiding principles for States in concluding economic and trade agreements based on mutual respect and national independence and sovereignty; the importance of long-term trade agreements for the stability and development of international trade; the importance of exchanges and credits which will enable countries to import heavy equipment which will remain their sole property, but payment for which will be made gradually on the basis of proportions of the output of industrial units created by such equipment. There is the question, which all are agreed is of overriding importance, of the conversion to peaceful uses of resources released by disarmament and its importance to the development of international trade. Finally, there is a proposal for the creation of a fully representative and permanent machinery or organ for the implementation of the decisions of the Conference. The possibility of the establishment of such institutional machinery is indeed mentioned in the joint declaration. Such machinery will present a forum where all countries would at any time bring their specific trade problems for expert advice and help on a continuing basis.

16. These are matters of importance to the success of the Conference on Trade and Development; and, if I have mentioned them, it is for the purpose of reassuring the advocates of these proposals that their absence from the joint declaration of the developing countries should not be construed as indicative of unawareness or nonchalance on their part.

17. May I also, on behalf of the developing countries, pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Prebisch, for his hard work and proficiency in the preparation, documentation and arrangements for the Conference. Coming from a developing country himself, it is a matter of great satisfaction to us all that he has demonstrated such great dedication to his work that we can now look forward to great achievements at the historic Conference. It is clear that without thorough preparation the success of the Conference would have been difficult, if not impossible, of achievement, and we wish to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his staff for their concrete contribution in facilitating these achievements.

<sup>1/</sup> United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, *Official Records*, vol. II, plenary meetings, annexes, (document A/CONF.13/L.53).

18. 1963 has certainly made history in international co-operation. It is the year in which for the first time the dark and ominous cloud of the threat of the nuclear annihilation of humanity as seriously begun to lift. It is also the year which since the end of the Second World War recalls best the spirit of the San Francisco Charter—the spirit of the founding fathers of the United Nations. There is this spirit in the air today for greater understanding and greater co-operation among all peoples in all fields for the promotion of true international peace and security. It is indeed significant, as was pointed out by my colleague from Yugoslavia the other day, that the draft resolution which is now before this Assembly was adopted unanimously by the Second Committee [905th meeting] on the very day of the eighteenth anniversary of the United Nations. Let us, then, be encouraged to go forward towards the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development determined to reach practical solutions designed to make this world of ours a better place for all peoples to live in. Let us give practical expression to our belief that the resources of this planet of ours should be equitably distributed among the whole of humanity. We from the developing countries are confident that there exists the necessary political will, especially among the more fortunate industrialized countries, on which lies great responsibility, for the achievement of our collective aims.

19. In conclusion, may I commend on behalf of the developing countries—seventy-five of them—the draft resolution contained in the report of the Second Committee [A/5587, para. 9] to the unanimous approval of this Assembly.

20. Mr. ARKADYEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Soviet Union delegation considers it necessary to make the following statement in connexion with the voting on the resolution proposed in the Committee's report [A/5587].

21. In the USSR delegation's view, the convening of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [resolution 1785 (XVII)] is an important international measure which can make a significant contribution towards placing trade on a footing and developing it on a basis of equal rights and mutual advantage. The purpose of the Conference should be to afford an opportunity, and to meet the prerequisites, for creating optimum conditions for the broadest and fullest possible development of equitable and mutually advantageous world trade so that international trade may really become the most important instrument of economic development.

22. This requires a sober and bold approach, free from selfish calculation, free from political short-sightedness which not only does nothing to promote the development of world trade but even impairs that development and, by so doing, damages the real economic interests of the countries of the world.

23. The Soviet delegation has already pointed out, at the very time when it first broached the idea of convening such a Conference, <sup>2/</sup> that it regards it as the principal task of the Conference to work out practical and effective recommendations and measures for the development of trade among all countries of the world without discrimination and without artificially created restrictions or obstacles. In the opinion

of the Soviet Union delegation, the most important aspects of the normalization of world trade are a drastic improvement in the terms of trade for the developing countries and the removal of artificially created obstacles to trade between East and West and to trade among other countries of the world.

24. We are deeply convinced—and this is an economic truism—that no real solution to the problem of improving the terms of external trade and promoting the economic development of any particular group of countries can be found in isolation from, and independently of, an improvement in the terms of world trade as a whole. The countries of the world do not exist in isolation, or in a vacuum. They are bound together in a tight network of commercial and economic relations, and their economic fortunes are largely interdependent.

25. It would be a great mistake to stray into a one-sided approach to international trade questions and to disregard this interdependence.

26. The most important tasks involved in placing international trade on a normal footing will entail drastic and co-ordinated action.

27. We are gratified at the acknowledgement by the developing countries themselves, in their declaration [A/5587, annex], that the expansion of trade between countries having different social, political and economic systems, at all levels of development, is a precondition of and a factor in the development of international trade as a whole.

28. We are preparing to seek and map out ways of improving and expanding commercial and economic relations among the countries of the world. We must approach the problem with full awareness of the fact that the prospects for expanding trade between the developing countries and the socialist countries depend on whether the socialist countries are given the chance to expand all their trade flows, especially that coming from East to West. To that end, all artificial obstacles, restrictions and embargoes affecting the external trade of the socialist countries with the Western and other countries of the world must be removed. Unfortunately, however, all these restrictions and obstacles persist to this day, and show a tendency to expand.

29. There are relations of interdependence both between countries and between flows of trade. Unless we face these facts objectively, we shall be unable to find ways to solve many problems with which the Conference on Trade and Development will have to deal.

30. We realize that the declaration submitted by the sponsors takes the form of a list of important considerations relating to the question of the trade and economic development of the developing countries, and that its contents will undoubtedly be examined during the discussion of the corresponding items relating to the problems of the developing countries' trade and development. Undoubtedly also, other important and valuable considerations and proposals may be prepared and submitted for examination by the forthcoming Conference, both in connexion with the questions raised in this declaration by the developing countries and in connexion with the other important international trade problems on the Conference agenda.

31. The declaration of the developing countries also raises, albeit in a timid and half-hearted way, the important question of setting up new international

<sup>2/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda items 12, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39 and 84, document A/5219.

machinery, in particular for implementing the decisions of the Conference. The Soviet delegation has already had occasion to state its position on this question: to be precise, at the seventeenth session of the General Assembly, at the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference, and at the thirty-sixth session of the Economic and Social Council.

32. In this connexion, we again draw the Assembly's attention, in particular, to the memorandum submitted by the USSR delegation on the question of setting up an international trade organization [A/C.2/219].

33. The Soviet delegation is profoundly convinced that the decisions of the forthcoming Conference, however valuable they may be, cannot be implemented effectively unless special international machinery is set up to deal with the questions of promoting the development of all flows of international trade—both the trade of the developing countries with all other countries of the world and trade among developed countries irrespective of their social or economic systems.

34. For this specific reason, the Soviet delegation has outlined in a special memorandum a series of considerations and proposals concerning the organizational principles on which such an international trade organization might be set up. We believe that these considerations and proposals will help the Conference to discuss and settle this important question on a down-to-earth basis. We urge all Members of the Assembly to give careful consideration to the memorandum of the Soviet Union delegation entitled "Preliminary considerations regarding the main provisions for an International Trade Organization". What does this memorandum say? Let me remind you of its main features.

35. The main purpose of an International Trade Organization should be to promote the development of international trade as an instrument of economic development in the interests of all the countries of the world. The International Trade Organization should ensure the implementation of decisions taken by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and of such other decisions as may be taken in the United Nations on questions of international trade.

36. The International Trade Organization could be established on the basis of the following main provisions:

37. The organization should have a wide field of competence in all matters of international trade, particularly with a view to ensuring a rational and equitable place in the international distribution of labour for all countries of the world, regardless of their social and economic systems and level of economic development;

38. The International Trade Organization should be an autonomous universal international organization, functioning under the auspices of the United Nations and collaborating closely with its specialized agencies;

39. ITO should become a centre for co-ordinating the activities of all subsidiary bodies of the United Nations, and of all other international organizations, in the field of world trade. Some of these existing organizations, if they so agreed, might be incorporated in ITO as committees or departments.

40. A specific system is proposed to govern the relations of ITO with other organizations dealing with questions of international trade.

41. The work of ITO should be based on the following principles:

(1) Universality, i.e. the organization should deal with all problems of world trade, and all countries which so desire should be eligible for membership, without any discrimination whatsoever;

(2) Equality and sovereignty of all member countries;

(3) Non-interference in the domestic affairs of member countries;

(4) Conformity between the principles and rules of international trade and the principles and requirements of economic development;

(5) Mutual advantage in trade relations between countries which are trading partners, with mutual respect for the requirements of trade and economic development;

(6) Application of the most-favoured-nation principle, with due regard for the special interests of the developing countries;

(7) Organization and development of trade without discrimination or artificially created obstacles and barriers.

42. The functions of ITO should include the study of ways and means of solving international trade problems and the preparation of recommendations and measures to promote the expansion of international trade and the unhampered economic development of all countries of the world, particularly the less developed countries.

43. The above-mentioned recommendations and measures should relate to the following matters in particular:

(1) The interrelationship between world trade and economic development;

(2) The abolition of discrimination, artificially created restrictions and obstacles in the way of trade in raw materials, semi-finished and finished products;

(3) The elimination of the adverse effects of the activities of closed economic groupings on the trade of third countries, particularly on the trade and economies of developing countries;

(4) The removal of obstacles of an economic and administrative character and those connected with commercial policy;

(5) The improvement of the terms of international trade, having regard to the requirements and needs of the different countries and regions of the world, by means of:

(a) The elimination of price fluctuations, which have undesirable effects on trade and the economy;

(b) The provision of opportunities for products from the developing countries, including industrial products, to find a stable and expanding outlet in the markets of the developed countries;

(c) The conclusion of multilateral trade agreements;

(d) The conclusion of long-term trade agreements and contracts;



(e) The reduction of customs tariffs and the abolition of quantitative restrictions, with due regard for the interests of the developing countries;

(6) An easing of the terms for the financing of international trade; the use of international credits in the interests of the development of trade between countries; allocation of credits for the supply of equipment to developing countries on terms favourable to those countries;

(7) The provision of assistance by the industrially developed countries to the developing countries in the establishment of independent national economies through the expansion of trade between the two types of countries by every possible means;

(8) The consideration of the commercial and economic consequences of a programme of general and complete disarmament and the study of the problems involved—in other words, the study and preparation of an economic programme for disarmament with a view to determining what resources will be available in the future for the world's economic development.

44. In addition, ITO could deal with such aspects of international trade as invisibles, transit trade, transport and freight, trade fairs, exhibitions, etc.

45. It could study, analyse and publish statistical data on international trade and related questions, and also prepare specific studies and surveys of the world trade situation.

46. Mention should also be made of another problem, which must be examined soberly and in the right light. More and more has been heard recently about the need for establishing special conditions for the trade of the developing countries and the need for other countries to make unilateral concessions in their favour. There are developed countries in the Western world that have enjoyed, for a long period of history, one-sided privileges in trade with those developing countries which used to be their colonies. From these one-sided privileges they have derived enormous economic advantages at the expense of the underdeveloped countries. Many of the latter countries are now presenting a counter-invoice and asking for the unilateral concession of more favourable terms for their trade and exports. As we see it, these demands should properly be addressed to those who, in their day, enjoyed unilateral economic and commercial privileges and advantages in the former colonies and other under-developed countries.

47. The Soviet Union and the other socialist States, for their part, have never enjoyed any unilateral commercial advantages or privileges in the developing countries or in any other countries; they have never sought such privileges and have never obtained them. The approach of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries to the economic needs of the developing countries has always been based on a friendly assessment of the needs and interests of the latter countries and on the principle of contributing to their economic development. This approach finds practical expression in a favourable assessment of the commercial needs and requirements of the developing countries, in economic and technical assistance to them, in the supply of industrial equipment on favourable terms, and in many other ways.

48. In accordance with the principles of peaceful coexistence on which its foreign policy is based, the Soviet Union steadfastly advocates the all-round

development of trade with all countries on the basis of equal rights, mutual advantage, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. This is precisely the basis on which the Soviet Union is developing its trade with the developing countries.

49. The Soviet Union now has trade agreements with almost thirty developing countries. I should add that Soviet trade with this group of countries is expanding more rapidly than its trade with the industrially developed countries. In building up its trade relations with the developing countries, the USSR pays due regard to the interests of their economic development. It is doing everything necessary to ensure that such trade will continue to expand, to the advantage of all concerned. What are the aspirations and intentions of the Soviet Union with regard to the development of commercial and economic relations with the various countries of the world?

50. N. S. Khrushchev, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, has repeatedly advocated, and continues to advocate, the all-round expansion and development of commercial and economic relations with other countries. For example, Mr. Khrushchev spoke to foreign journalists in Moscow on 25 October 1963. He mentioned some facts connected with the further development of commercial and economic relations between the USSR and the developing countries. In particular, in reply to a journalist's question about prospects for trade with Brazil, he said:

"The mutual interest of the USSR and Brazil in purchasing each other's traditional exports holds out good prospects for the development of trade ties between them. This fact was reflected, in particular, in the conclusion of a long-term trade agreement between the USSR and Brazil on 20 April 1963. This agreement provides for a volume of trade, over a three-year period, approximately four times the volume for the years 1960-1962 inclusive. I think this is a good beginning."

51. Mr. Khrushchev also welcomed the statement made by Mr. Arturo Illia, the new President of Argentina, and said:

"The Soviet Government hopes that friendly relations, mutual understanding and economic co-operation will begin to develop between our countries."

52. The trade relations of the Soviet Union with a number of other developing countries are steadily on the rise. Trade between the USSR and India increased by 21 per cent in 1962. As you know, a new five-year trade agreement between the USSR and India was signed in Moscow recently. Under this agreement, trade between the Soviet Union and India will increase very considerably. The agreement provides for an increase in large-scale Soviet purchases of finished industrial goods from India. A rapid increase is taking place in India's trade with a number of other socialist countries.

53. A few days ago, on 6 November 1963, it was announced that a trade agreement had been concluded between the Soviet Union and Algeria. The parties have granted each other most-favoured-nation treatment. The Soviet Union will supply the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria with various types of machinery and industrial equipment, including ships, cars, tractors, machine tools, agricultural machinery, excavators, road-building, hoisting, and transport

machinery, and oil-drilling equipment. Algeria will supply the USSR with citrus fruits, dates, olive oil, wheat, wheat flour, wine, ethyl alcohol, fruit juices, hides and other export items.

54. Commercial and economic relations are expanding and developing between the Soviet Union and an ever-increasing number of other developing countries. The prospects in this field are growing, not narrower, but wider.

55. We have already noted in the Committee the statement by the distinguished representative of Italy [884th meeting] in which he described the development of trade between the Soviet Union and Western European countries. We welcome the development of trade with Western European countries and the expansion of trade with that highly developed Asian country, Japan.

56. The Soviet Union's imports from Western European countries in 1962 included, from the United Kingdom, various kinds of machinery and equipment, including equipment for light industry, the chemical industry and the food industry, dyestuffs, footwear, synthetic fibres, etc.; from Italy, machinery and equipment, pipe, raw textiles, fibres, etc.; from France, machinery and equipment for various industries including light industry, the food industry and the chemical industry, rolled metal, high-grade steel, fibres, yarn and fabrics; and from the Federal Republic of Germany, various kinds of machinery and equipment, ships, rolled metal, fibres and yarn, semi-finished and finished chemical products, etc. From Japan the Soviet Union imported various kinds of machinery and equipment, ships and marine equipment, fibres and yarn, fabrics, rolled metal, etc.

57. There are also tremendous future possibilities for trade with these and other countries. The implementation of the Soviet Union's wide-ranging economic plans is creating ever-increasing opportunities for imports into the Soviet Union from other countries and exports from the Soviet Union to those countries.

58. All this—I repeat—is conditional upon the elimination from trade relations of the restrictions and obstacles which unfortunately still exist and which are often imposed on various countries.

59. The Press in the United States, Japan, Western European countries and other countries has recently carried an increasing number of statements by statesmen, the representatives of chambers of commerce, organizations, groups and businessmen, and a great many economic articles, assessing the trade situation and trade prospects. This, naturally enough, is drawing the attention of the various countries more and more to these problems in advance of what they view as the possibility, and what we know as the certainty, that an international trade conference will be convened.

60. These statements and articles show that a propitious atmosphere is now developing for an expansion of trade with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and for the removal of the obstacles to such expansion. In many publications we find specific references to the growing activity of Soviet trade organizations in external trade and to the advantages which accrue and can accrue to the trading partners from the development of such mutually advantageous trade.

61. Let us take as an example an article in a very recent issue of The Wall Street Journal, that of

7 November 1963. The article is interesting as an illustration of how individual organs of the Press react to the present economic situation. The article points out that in 1963 the Soviet Union increased its orders from the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Finland, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany and other countries. What do these increased orders cover? Industrial equipment, including complete plants for the chemical industry, ships, tankers, refrigerated ships, railway equipment, construction machinery, special types of steel including sheet steel, equipment for the paper industry, plant for the manufacture of marine equipment, etc.

62. This is merely an illustration drawn from the vast amount of material now being put out on these problems.

63. We are in favour of the development of trade, freed from imposed and unjustified restrictions, conditions and encumbrances, which are often of a political nature. It must be borne in mind that these restrictions and encumbrances work against the commercial and economic interest of the very countries which apply them.

64. In addition the Soviet delegation considers—and this has already been said, for example, at the sessions of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference—that the Conference should give an important place in its work to the question of economic and technical assistance from the developed to the developing countries. This serious and important question should be discussed in the widest and most practical terms.

65. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, for their part, have as you know gained a wealth of experience in rendering such assistance on a very large scale over a period of many years.

66. We are very satisfied at the activity currently displayed by the United Nations Secretariat, and by the special Conference secretariat, in preparation for the Conference. We thank U Thant, the United Nations Secretary-General, and Mr. Prebisch for their great efforts of organization and practical work in that direction.

67. The position of the Soviet Union on various other specific items on the Conference agenda will be explained in the appropriate documents and in statements by the Soviet Union representatives at the Conference itself.

68. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece): My delegation wishes to place on record the following considerations with regard to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Greece has not had the privilege of participating in the work of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which, in the course of two sessions, produced proposals for the scope and programme of the forthcoming Conference. We were not therefore able to take part in the formulation of the joint statement of seventeen developing countries, members of the Preparatory Committee, which the Committee agreed to include in its report. This joint statement or declaration has now been endorsed by seventy-five developing countries, the same countries that submitted the draft resolution contained in the report of the Second Committee [A/5587, para.9], and the declaration is annexed to the draft resolution which was adopted unanimously.

69. As a primary producing and economically less developed country, Greece has been invited to join

with other developing countries in the declaration by representatives of developing countries at the eighteenth session of the General Assembly. One may thus wonder why Greece's name is not among the signatories of the declaration.

70. It may be superfluous to repeat that, in common with all developing countries, we depend upon the industrialized countries for the capital equipment required for our economic development, and that the greater part of the foreign exchange needed to pay for capital goods is derived from the export of our primary commodities.

71. We are a primary exporting country. More than 80 per cent of our exports consist of a narrow range of agricultural products. But the peculiar structure of our economy brings it about that hardly two-fifths of our imports are covered by exports, and our huge trade gap is increasing at a perceptibly faster rate than income.

72. On the other hand, Greece's interests in the field of invisible trade are particularly important and at the same time, because of the very nature of invisible earnings, especially vulnerable. Despite a steady improvement in net invisibles, it cannot reasonably be expected that they will be able to offset the widening trade gap. Therefore, few, if any, among the primary producing countries face comparable balance-of-payments problems.

73. Because of this and some other considerations of a general character, my delegation has one or two reservations on points which, compared to the broad ideas of the declaration for increasing trade between industrialized and developing countries, are points of detail.

74. It is a matter of gratification that the Second Committee, during the debate on this draft resolution, maintained the atmosphere of objectivity and co-operation that was achieved within the Preparatory Committee. Approval by the General Assembly brings us nearer to the long-awaited opportunity which the Conference offers for an over-all attack on the many interrelated problems of development and international trade. We firmly believe that the declaration should prove an admirable basis for considering practical measures leading to new international policies on trade and development, and we wholeheartedly support the common views and aspirations expressed in the declaration by the representatives of seventy-five countries.

75. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): As I have no more speakers on my list, we shall proceed to vote on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee [A/5587, para.9]. Since this draft resolution, together with annexes I to IV, was unanimously approved by the Second Committee, may I take it that the General Assembly also adopts it unanimously?

*The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.*

## AGENDA ITEM 25

### Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly

76. Mr. Taieb SLIM (Tunisia), Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee: In the course of its seventeenth session, the General Assembly, in dealing with the item now under discussion, entitled "Improvement of

the Methods of Work of the General Assembly", took the decision to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to recommend the best ways and means to improve the work of the General Assembly. It also adopted a resolution, 1845 (XVII), noting that the Committee was not in a position to make recommendations and authorizing it to continue its work after the close of the session and to report to the eighteenth session.

77. Since I had the honour and privilege of serving as rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee, I should like, with the President's permission, to submit for the consideration of representatives the report [A/5423] on the final suggestions as recommended by the Committee.

78. During the first months of 1963, the Ad Hoc Committee held two sessions. During its first session, which extended throughout the month of February, the Committee concerned itself with the compilation, consideration and discussion of the various suggestions and information deriving from various sources.

79. Members will recall that, as an initial step, they were invited to submit to the Committee any recommendations which, in their view, could make more expeditious and more efficient the work of the General Assembly. The Committee considered all the proposals made in this connexion.

80. In the second phase of its preliminary work, the Ad Hoc Committee heard the observations of the Chairman of the main Committees and in some cases received their written statements.

81. The third source of our basic information was the documentation, working papers and statistical data very ably prepared by members of the Secretariat.

82. As a result of the discussions of these suggestions by the members of the Committee, the present report was set up and agreed upon unanimously.

83. In a short introductory chapter, from paragraph 1 to paragraph 9, the report deals with the background of the initial action on this matter and the appointment of the members of the Ad Hoc Committee.

84. Then, in part A of chapter II, from paragraphs 17 to 38, it considered the over-all procedural matters of the general organization of discussions of the General Assembly. It was felt that, with the amount of heavy work deriving from the increase in the number of Member States, the delay affecting the work of the General Assembly could be reasonably shortened without resorting to changes in the established rules of procedure.

85. In part B, from paragraph 39 to paragraph 56, the report refers mainly to the role of the presiding officers and their authority in conducting the debates of their respective Committees. It tries, without infringing on the fundamental principles of a democratic discussion, to define the interpretation of the rules of procedure and the way they should be applied. It also deals with some practical measures which may ensure a more expeditious course of the work of the Assembly.

86. Part C of the report, paragraphs 57 and 58, examines the advantages of the introduction in the General Assembly of mechanical means of voting. In the absence of any definite decision, the Committee thought it useful to provide the General Assembly with some working papers and statistical data, attached as annexes to the present report.

87. In part D, paragraphs 59 to 61, the report focuses on certain procedural situations raised by some presiding officers or members of the Committee, situations which brought about some difficulties in the past.

88. Lastly, in part E, paragraphs 62 to 66, certain other suggestions were considered which do not fall within the scope of the past practice and which the Committee thought fit to submit to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

89. This report was discussed by the Committee in its second session, during April and May of 1963, and a draft resolution, which will be found attached to the report [A/5423, chapter III, para. 67], was agreed upon, summarizing the main and most important suggestions to be specifically recommended in order to take a definite step forward toward ensuring the most expeditious and efficient procedure for the work of the General Assembly.

90. As may be seen from sub-paragraph (9) of the draft resolution, the most important general recommendation to the presiding officers was to enforce a more expeditious and methodical way of proceeding with the business of the General Assembly. Furthermore, the draft resolution makes specific recommendations to presiding officers and draws their attention to punctuality, the order of the names of representatives on the list of speakers, the proper exercise of the right of reply, explanations of votes and points of order.

91. To give additional information on some particular questions, annexes have been attached to the final report. I am confident that these will prove useful to representatives.

92. Extended efforts were needed in the Ad Hoc Committee to find a common and acceptable solution and to achieve a definite recommendation for improving the work of the General Assembly. Fortunately, the spirit of understanding and compromise which prevailed throughout the debates of the Ad Hoc Committee made it possible for this report and the draft resolution to be adopted unanimously. This was, of course, due first to the spirit of co-operation of the members of the General Committee and of the Committee, to whom I should like to express my most sincere gratitude; and secondly to the very valuable assistance given by members of the Secretariat, to whom I should like to express my deepest appreciation, in a matter which needed dedication and long experience.

93. I should now like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to certain points on which, despite extensive discussion within the Ad Hoc Committee, no definite and final recommendation was adopted. In my opinion, these points may contribute to achieving more efficiency and expedition in the proceedings of the General Assembly. I therefore thought it my duty to give some clarification for the benefit of those representatives who may wish to follow up these suggestions.

94. I would refer first to the paragraph in the report which reads as follows:

"The Committee also discussed the usefulness of the preparation by the Secretariat of a repertory of past practice and of a manual of procedure containing notes on the various rules and examples of decisions illustrating their application. While considering the subject worthy of further study, the

Committee does not find itself in a position to make definite recommendations on the matter." [A/5423, para. 56.]

95. Since in many instances the additional help of a repertory of past practice and a manual of procedure to assist presiding officers and representatives was felt to be a relevant factor in expediting the work of the Assembly, the Ad Hoc Committee discussed the matter extensively, without reaching a final decision.

96. My second remark relates to the question of installing mechanical devices for voting, as explained in part C of the report. In this regard the Committee made a thorough and exhaustive study of the various facets of the subject. From a practical point of view, members of the Committee examined the working of the equipment used in the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey. The Ad Hoc Committee also received a full report from the Secretariat, which is reproduced in annex VIII to the report, and which is a collection of data on the usefulness of such equipment and the financial implications of its adoption. Basing its judgement on those reports, the Committee finally arrived at a general agreement on the sizable saving of time which would result from the use of such equipment. However, as is explained in the report of the Committee, it was:

"the understanding of the Committee that the question would be considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions before the General Assembly reaches a final decision on the matter. Subject to further examination of the financial considerations involved, it was the view of the Committee that the Secretary-General should explore this possibility in order that the electric system of voting should be tried experimentally for one or two years in one or more conference rooms". [Ibid., para. 58.]

97. We are gratified to note that, since July, the Advisory Committee has given us the following valuable opinion on this matter in its seventh report to the Assembly:

"Given all the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that, should the General Assembly decide to approve the suggestions of the Ad Hoc Committee concerning the adoption of an electric system of voting in the United Nations, such a system should be introduced on an experimental basis for one year in one committee room. Further, because of the technical considerations explained in paragraph 8 above, the General Assembly may wish to consider whether, in addition to the complete equipment of one committee room, some essential work of a preparatory nature should be carried out at the same time in the plenary hall and one other committee room, so as to permit, if the experiment were successful, an eventual expansion of the system without undue expense.

"The Advisory Committee considered the cost estimates contained in annex VIII to the Ad Hoc Committee's report. On the basis of the information given therein, it would favour rental of the necessary equipment. Apart from the lower cost, the rental contract would provide that the supplier maintain and modernize the equipment." [A/5442, paras. 9 and 10.]

98. Furthermore, in sub-paragraph (e) of paragraph 7 of document A/C.5/991, dealing with the budget estimates for 1964, and particularly the expenses foreseen for major maintenance and capital improvement at



United Nations Headquarters, the Secretary-General outlines the estimates of the appropriations that would be involved if the General Assembly approved the adoption of the electric system of voting.

99. Consequently, it seems that all the various aspects of the question have been extensively reported on in the relevant documentation and that the decision now lies in the hands of representatives in the Assembly.

100. The delay in discussing this item has, in my opinion, been beneficial. It has enabled us to note with great satisfaction the happy results of the implementation of a report and a draft resolution prior to their consideration and formal adoption by the General Assembly. As everyone has certainly noticed, punctuality, efficiency, expedition and initiative seem to have been the "mots d'ordre" of all the presiding officers, who undoubtedly acquainted themselves, before taking office, with the recommendations contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

101. I should like to point out that members of the Ad Hoc Committee only made a systematic investigation of the experiment which was very ably launched by our distinguished former President, Mr. Zafrulla Khan, to whom I should like to pay a special tribute. We must also remind ourselves that this worthy attempt, so ably initiated, is becoming a very welcome tradition in this house, under your wise guidance, Mr. President, and after the intention you expressed in your inaugural speech [1206th meeting] to abide by the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee.

102. Finally, I should like, as representative of my country, to mention the particular interest which my Government and especially the chief of my delegation, Mr. Mongi Slim, attach to this matter, and to express my wish that the report and draft resolution [A/5423, para. 67] may be adopted unanimously by the members of the General Assembly.

103. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Before giving the floor to representatives who wish to make statements, I should like to point out to members of delegations that, in consideration of the comments appearing in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee [A/5423, paras. 10-16] and in the report of the Advisory Committee on Budgetary and Administrative Questions [A/5442], the Secretary-General has included, in his report to the Fifth Committee [A/C.5/991] on major maintenance and capital improvement at United Nations Headquarters, an estimate of costs for the installation of a mechanical voting system. Consequently, the General Assembly will consider this question when it takes up the report of the Fifth Committee.

104. I will now give the floor to speakers who wish to comment on the draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee [A/5423, para. 67].

105. Mr. YOST (United States of America): Mr. President, in your eloquent address accepting the responsibilities of the high office of the Presidency of this Assembly, which you gave at our opening session, [1206th meeting] you spoke at some length on the importance of the adoption of efficient methods of work. You pointed out that the efficiency of the Organization itself would depend to a great extent on the efficiency of its methods. In this connexion, you drew the attention of the delegations to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of

Work of the General Assembly [A/5423]. The United States delegation entirely agrees with you that this report is most valuable and that it deserves both approval by this Assembly and, if approved, faithful application of its recommendations by all delegations.

106. I believe we can say with satisfaction, as the rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee has just pointed out, that it is already evident that your advice is being heeded. Meetings of the plenary and of committees have begun promptly, with a considerable saving of time. The Secretariat has prepared tentative schedules of work in some instances, proposing approximate numbers of meetings and completion dates for the various items on the committee agendas. In others, committee chairmen have made proposals for the organization of work, drawing heavily on the suggestions of the Ad Hoc Committee. The work of the Assembly as a whole is proceeding with dispatch and we appear well on the way to achieving, Mr. President, your goal of the completion of our work within the normal period set for the regular sessions of the Assembly. Nevertheless, we must continue to devote the fullest attention to this problem.

107. The Ad Hoc Committee was careful not to make any recommendations which would lay down binding rules limiting our debates. Nevertheless, the sense of the Committee clearly was that it is in the interest of us all that debate should not be unnecessarily prolonged; that speeches be brief and to the point; that they should not repeat arguments or attitudes which have already been exhaustively presented; that the right of reply should be exercised sparingly; that points of order should be restricted to essential points of order and explanations of vote be confined solely to explanations of vote. If we will all subscribe to this excellent advice, we shall substantially contribute to the expedition of the work of this greatly expanded Assembly.

108. While many of the other suggestions of the Ad Hoc Committee are already well known and have been much discussed, I should like to draw attention to one, which may have received less notice, but which I believe is of considerable merit. It is contained in paragraph 55 of the report under consideration and suggests the usefulness of systematic notation by the Secretariat of the various questions of procedure which arise in the General Assembly and in its committees, and the compilation of this information in accessible form for consultation by committee chairmen and others so that precedents and established practices may be clearly understood by us all.

109. In urging adoption of the report and the draft resolution [A/5423, para. 67] under consideration, I shall be remiss if I did not mention the key role played in its conception by the President of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Mongi Slim, who devoted much thought and effort to this matter which is so important to the health of this Organization. I should also like particularly to express our appreciation to the Rapporteur of our Committee, Mr. Taieb Slim, for the tireless effort which he has expended to make a success of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, as well as to Mr. Zafrulla Khan, Mr. Frederick Boland and Sir James Plimsoll who presided so constructively over its deliberations.

110. Mr. LANNING (Denmark): The Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly is to be warmly commended for

the report [A/5423] and the draft resolution it has submitted.

111. It has approached its task with great earnestness and, before reaching conclusions, it has sought the opinion not only of all Members of the United Nations but also of former officers of Assembly Committees, whose views were given consideration. It has drawn on the experience of the Secretariat, and some of the studies which are annexed to the report furnish, in my opinion, extremely valuable data.

112. The Committee has worked within certain limitations which it fixed for itself. It thus agreed not to make any changes to the existing text of the rules of procedure for reasons that are indicated in its report, the main reason being that it was found that the present rules provide an adequate framework for the work of the Assembly and that gaps in them have been filled by practice. The Committee accordingly proposes basically that we should proceed in a more orderly manner, apply the existing rules more strictly as far as their spirit and letter are concerned, exercise self-discipline and avoid repetition.

113. We will all have noticed that, already at this session, the effects of some of the suggestions of the Ad Hoc Committee have been felt. Meetings of Committees begin nearer to the official opening time, even if reforms on this point may still be needed. The Committees endeavour to establish work schedules and to dispose of items within the allotted time and all efforts are made, under the direction of our President, in order that the session may end before Christmas.

114. Among the other recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, to which my delegation would attach special importance and which it would hope to see implemented in the course of future sessions, is, in particular, that which recommends that greater use should be made of sub-committees, working groups or working parties. We are, I believe, all convinced by now that, while full committee debates are useful when the debate is general, a full committee of 111 members is not very well fitted for drafting texts, for instance.

115. When the time arrives for taking final decisions, the discussion of concrete points and the detailed preparation and consideration of texts would be carried on more effectively in smaller groups which would be fully representative of the present membership of the Organization. Such preparation now often takes place in the course of meetings of informal political or regional groups. Their efforts might be usefully supplemented, prior to the consideration by full committees, by an examination in sub-committees where questions could be discussed in greater freedom by the Member States most directly interested in items under consideration.

116. Another more specific suggestion which deserves attention is that regarding the introduction of mechanical means of voting—the installation of mechanical voting devices—which was mentioned by the Rapporteur and which inter alia would make it possible to eliminate the time-consuming roll-calls. The matter has now been fully studied by the Ad Hoc Committee and, as we know, favourably commented upon by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

117. It is clear that time would be saved, with consequential financial advantages, by the use of electrical devices, and that the accuracy in recording and counting ballots, which is essential for the maintenance

of orderly proceedings in the Assembly and its Committees, would be better guaranteed than under the present system.

118. The new system would thus be fully accurate in the procedure corresponding to a vote by show of hands in connexion with which the Secretariat—especially on account of our doubled membership and its consequences—is meeting with increasing difficulties.

119. I hope, therefore, that the Fifth Committee will give early and favourable consideration to the financial aspects of this question in order that the Secretary-General may proceed with the necessary work in time for the next regular session.

120. Finally, I would like to express the hope that the suggestion made in paragraph 55 of the Committee's report, and mentioned by the representative of the United States—that the Secretariat, by way of assistance to presiding officers, should make available to presiding officers and to representatives who might wish to consult them, a systematic record of past decisions in the General Assembly and its Committees on matters of procedure—will be given full effect by the Secretary-General.

121. My delegation has for some time felt that it was important that such a useful tool should be placed at the disposal of those who are concerned with the orderly conduct of the Assembly's proceedings.

122. We hope, therefore, that the Secretary-General will study the most appropriate way to deal with this question and that, should he need any financial means to achieve the results sought, he will present proposals to the nineteenth session, if not before then.

123. In the same way I find that the study mentioned in paragraph 56 of the report, and quoted by the Rapporteur, on the usefulness of preparation by the Secretariat of a repertory of past practice and of a manual of procedure containing notes on the various rules and examples of decisions illustrating their application should be undertaken as soon as possible. I express the hope that the study will result in such a publication within the near future. I for my part feel sure that this would be of great use, especially to committee chairmen.

124. Mr. LORIDAN (Belgium) (translated from French): I should like first of all to pay a tribute to the President of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Mongi Slim, now Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, and to the Tunisian delegation, on whose initiative the Assembly has once again taken up the question of improving its methods of work.

125. As President of the General Assembly, Mr. Mongi Slim was apparently struck by the procedural flaws from which our work suffers and felt the need to adapt the methods of work to the new needs arising mainly from the increase in the membership of the United Nations, as well as from the growing number and complexity of the problems before the Assembly. During his term of office, he expressed his understandable concern to a number of delegations and ultimately drafted a memorandum<sup>3/</sup> containing some suggestions for increasing the speed and efficiency of the Assembly's work without restricting free and constructive debate.

126. It was, moreover, the Tunisian delegation which formally proposed this item for inclusion in the agenda

<sup>3/</sup> Ibid., agenda item 86, document A/5123.

of the Assembly's seventeenth session,<sup>4/</sup> and it was the President of the Assembly at that session, Mr. Zafrulla Khan, who proposed on 30 October 1962 [1162nd meeting] the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the improvement of the methods of work of the Assembly. After receiving an interim report from the Committee,<sup>5/</sup> the Assembly adopted a resolution [1845 (XVII)] on 19 December 1962 continuing the Committee with the same membership and terms of reference.

127. It should be noted that the terms of reference were never specified by the General Assembly. The Ad Hoc Committee itself endeavoured to define their scope, and while it, too, did not adopt any specific decision, the consensus of opinion seemed to be that its task was to be carried out within the framework of the existing rules of procedure. It quickly became evident to the delegations submitting proposals for changes in the rules of procedure that the Ad Hoc Committee as a whole regarded the rules as sacrosanct.

128. The Belgian delegation deeply regrets that the Ad Hoc Committee imposed that limitation on itself, for it was to prevent the Committee from considering drastic and bold but at the same time effective changes in our methods of work.

129. Mr. Taieb Slim, our Tunisian colleague, is responsible for the excellent report of the Ad Hoc Committee; he was wisely elected Rapporteur by reason both of his personal ability and his delegation's participation in this matter. This report [A/5423] sets forth with commendable clarity a number of suggestions which, within the limits I have just mentioned, the Ad Hoc Committee regarded as likely to improve the progress of our work.

130. The Belgian delegation, which was represented in the Ad Hoc Committee, fully supports those suggestions. However, while it regards them as useful recommendations, it finds them singularly inadequate.

131. Is it not striking that most of the conclusions reached by the Ad Hoc Committee are merely recommendations to the President of the Assembly, to the Chairmen of the main Committees and to the General Committee, to give effect to the powers and functions conferred upon them under the rules of procedure? Thus, the Ad Hoc Committee's suggestions are mainly ideas for possible improvement. That is one of the reasons why my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution [A/5423, para. 67] recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee for adoption by the Assembly. The draft enumerates a number of measures which my delegation regards as felicitous, and it contains no reference to what might be called the sacrosanct character which several members of the Committee appeared to attribute to the rules of procedure.

132. The Belgian delegation would, for example, have preferred the adoption of measures which, while fully safeguarding the freedom of expression of all Members of the Assembly, would limit the length of their statements. Miss Angie Brooks, representative of Liberia and Chairman of the Fourth Committee at the sixteenth session, had supplied the Ad Hoc Committee with specific proposals on this subject that were based on her experience in office. The Belgian delegation regrets that these interesting suggestions

did not receive the attention they warranted and were not accepted by the Committee.

133. I should like to dwell for a moment on another measure, which numbered among its supporters the Belgian member of the Ad Hoc Committee, namely, the introduction of mechanical means of voting. The Belgian delegation is gratified by the Ad Hoc Committee's positive comments on this point [*ibid.*, para. 58], for the Assembly spends a good deal of time every year on the counting and recording of votes. In this connexion, the seventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contains some very interesting information. It states [see A/5442, para. 3] that the Fifth Committee alone would have gained over nine working hours at the seventeenth session if it had used an electrical voting system in the 141 votes it took.

134. Annex IX of the Ad Hoc Committee's report shows that at the fifteenth session there were 146 roll-call votes and ninety-nine votes by show of hands. No accurate estimate can be made of the loss of time which might have been avoided by the use of electrical voting equipment in those circumstances, but it can be put at dozens of hours. Although the draft resolution proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee does not mention the installation of electrical voting equipment, which raises budgetary questions, the report notes that "the Committee considered that the Secretary-General should explore that possibility" [A/5423, para. 58]. The Secretary-General has in fact consulted the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and its report also has some practical suggestions. The Assembly will have to come to a decision on the installation of electrical voting procedures when it adopts the budget item dealing with "major maintenance and capital improvement at United Nations Headquarters", which will be considered by the Fifth Committee [see A/C.5/991].

135. The Belgian delegation hopes that the Assembly will decide, as was suggested, to introduce an electrical voting system on an experimental basis for one year in one conference room and to carry out the essential preparatory work in the Plenary Hall and one other conference room, so as to allow for the eventual expansion of the system.

136. I shall not dwell on other specific suggestions made in the Ad Hoc Committee's report, but I should like to stress the importance which my delegation attaches to the question of improving our methods of work. Faulty procedures, undue slowness and duplication of effort not only reduce the efficiency of the General Assembly's work, but can affect its prestige throughout the world and public interest in it as expressed through the Press.

137. In conclusion, my delegation feels that the Ad Hoc Committee has performed a useful task, if only by drawing attention to the resources inherent in the rules of procedure. It seems that already, under the leadership of the President and of the Chairmen of the main Committees, the recommendations in the Ad Hoc Committee's report on the improvement of our procedures are being put into practice even before the formal adoption of the report.

138. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly is not the first body constituted for that purpose. The Belgian delegation is convinced that it will not be the

<sup>4/</sup> *Ibid.*, document A/5165.

<sup>5/</sup> *Ibid.*, document A/5370.

last either, because its suggestions do not provide any definitive solution to the problems before us. The Ad Hoc Committee will have been no more than a milestone along the road that must be travelled before a truly satisfactory solution of the procedural aspects of our work can be achieved.

139. In voting in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee and of its report, the Belgian delegation can only hope that the suggestions which have been made will become a living reality.

140. Sir Patrick DEAN (United Kingdom): My delegation took part in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly, whose report [A/5423] is now before us. May I therefore begin by laying stress on the great harmony which naturally prevailed at its meetings. I should like, on this occasion, to pay a well-deserved tribute to the hard work and skill of the Secretariat, without which the Committee could not have carried out the complex task placed upon it by the General Assembly. I must also thank Mr. Mongi Slim, to whose initiative and experience as President of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly is due the timely effort which has now been made to consider what steps should now be taken to reform our procedures and streamline our methods of work.

141. There are one or two points in the report which I should like to single out for special mention. I am sure that other delegations must have been struck with the fact that, by and large, the recommendations which the Ad Hoc Committee has made to this Assembly relate not so much to specific reforms but to a closer and more determined application of the existing rules of procedure. We are particularly glad, therefore, to see the Committee's recommendation in subparagraph (f) of the draft resolution in chapter III of the report to the effect that more use should be made of the General Committee.

142. Then, again, we give particular support to the suggestion in paragraph 29 of the report, which calls for a greater use of sub-committee and working groups. This is a method of work which has been used all too little heretofore, but now that our membership has increased so much, it is only common sense that we should make efforts to break down the work of individual committees of the whole 111 Members and, where it can be done, argue out points of detail in smaller groups.

143. Of course, no hard and fast rules about this can be laid down. There are a number of questions which we discuss at the United Nations which cannot and should not be treated in this way. But we very much hope that delegations, and particularly the committee chairmen, will bear this point in mind in future and seize any opportunity that offers of conducting our work in this manner.

144. I should like to speak about the work which the Secretariat is called upon to do. We all know how widely this has increased since the United Nations was founded. The United Kingdom most emphatically welcomes the development and the increasing activity of our Organization, and we want to see that process continue. But it is important that the machinery which makes our Organization work should not be overburdened and be asked to undertake more than it is able to perform efficiently. I think that many of us, not least the Secretariat itself, have realized that

there is a great and increasing danger that the machinery may become clogged with overwork and the mass of paper.

145. The flood of documents increases yearly. Many of them, it goes without saying, are of great importance and value, but their very quantity lessens the chances of their being given the attention they deserve by delegations at the United Nations. If it were possible to reduce the quantity and length of the documents which are submitted to us, I am sure that this would improve their quality and lead to greater efficiency in our Organization. It was with this very end in view, to reduce the very heavy burden on the Secretariat, that the Secretary-General has already proposed that the functional commissions of the United Nations should meet less frequently. My Government strongly supports this practical proposal.

146. I should also like to refer to one suggestion which was discussed by the Committee, but on which it was decided to make no recommendation. This was that there might be either a handbook or a more detailed repertory on General Assembly procedure.

147. My delegation believes that these two possibilities might be further studied by the Secretariat. Such a handbook, or repertory, would go some way to meet the point made in paragraph 12 of the report that the Assembly would gain in efficiency if the rules of procedure were better known.

148. Lastly, I should like to say some words about the suggestion regarding mechanical means of voting. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee informs us that, subject to further examination of the financial aspects, it was their view that the Secretary-General should pursue this possibility further. I must confess that my delegation have had some doubts about this idea. We recognize, of course, that mechanical voting could lead to increased efficiency and could save a certain amount of time both in the particular committee where it is used and also for the Secretariat. But how far do these arguments weigh against the considerable expense which would be involved? Might it not be that, when all is said and done, mechanical voting is really a luxury—and the finances of our Organization are certainly not in such a healthy state that we can afford luxuries. I do not think I need labour that point.

149. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee makes a reservation about further consideration of the financial aspects by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Delegations will have seen that Committee's report of 18 July 1963 [A/5442], to which the Rapporteur has already referred. In view of the quotation made from the report by Mr. Taleb Slim, all I need say is that my delegation is prepared to accept the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on this matter.

150. It remains for me only to commend the draft resolution before us to this Assembly and to express the hope that it will be adopted unanimously.

151. Mr. HAY (Australia): Australia was a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly, and indeed my predecessor, as leader of the Australian delegation, had the honour to preside on occasion over its work. My delegation regarded participation in the work of the Committee as a rewarding experience. It finds the report issued by the Committee useful and businesslike. We commend to this Assembly the contents of the report and also the draft resolution



contained in it [A/5423, para. 67]. The draft resolution contains the essence of the Committee's findings, and if it is adopted and implemented in both its spirit and its letter, we believe that it will contribute towards achieving the objects of the Charter. My delegation wishes to pay tribute to Mr. Mongi Slim, whose idea it was to originate the Committee. We also pay tribute to Ambassador Taleb Slim of Tunisia for his part in the work of the Committee, in particular as Rapporteur.

152. I shall be faithful to the spirit of this report and my remarks will be brief. I wish to refer in particular to two points which were not the subject of recommendations and which do not therefore appear in the draft resolution. Paragraphs 57 and 58 give an account of the Committee's deliberations on the question of introducing mechanical means of voting into our proceedings. We have also before us the report [A/5442] on this question from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The findings, in the opinion of my delegation, are clear. The present manual system of voting is time-consuming and unwieldy in the large gathering which this present Assembly constitutes. We do not, however, wish to intrude on the deliberations of the Fifth Committee on the question of introducing this system. In principle, my delegation is in favour of it; but it may well be that when the Fifth Committee comes to consider this system, it will be necessary to decide between the priority to be applied to its introduction and the priority to be applied to other proposals which the Secretariat has before it in connexion with alterations to the Assembly's Headquarters. But should the Fifth Committee allocate a suitable priority to it, then my delegation will gladly accept that and favour it in the Assembly.

153. Mention has also been made of suggestions that the Secretariat keep a systematic note of procedural questions and also compile a repertory of past practice and procedure with notes on rules and examples of decisions given. Both these suggestions commend themselves to my delegation. We believe, however, that the Secretary-General should be asked to determine how much their implementation would cost in terms of money and manpower, and advise this Assembly accordingly. We do not suggest that that advice should be given immediately at this session, but it could perhaps be given at the nineteenth session. Subject to that advice, and in principle, my delegation is in favour of positive action on both these suggestions.

154. My delegation, Mr. President, welcomes your own contribution at this session to orderly procedures and methods and your injunction to our colleagues, as presiding officers over the Committees of the Assembly, to introduce in advance the recommendations which form part of the report before us. My delegation has noted with pleasure that, broadly speaking, those recommendations have been introduced, and that they have increased the speed with which our business has been conducted. But the issuing of a report, and even the adoption in advance of a number of its recommendations, does not solve the problem of applying efficient and businesslike procedures to the carrying-out of the Charter's objectives. Indeed, the nature of the recommendations reflects the difficulty of balancing, on the one hand, the requirements of administrative efficiency and, on the other, the dangers of restricting free discussion; and it may well prove to be that the only way in which less time can be taken in the conduct of our business is by the decision of

representatives themselves to limit the time which they give to their speeches. This suggests that there is a continuing responsibility for reviewing how we conduct our work. I have no doubt that you yourself, Mr. President, and your successors in office, will have contributions to make in the light of the experience of this and other years. I hope too that delegations which are not yet satisfied that we are as well-ordered in the conduct of our business as we might be—and I include the Australian delegation in that category—will not hesitate to make suggestions for the improved conduct of our work in the future.

155. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Soviet delegation considers it necessary to make some brief remarks on the question under discussion. We shall vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly [A/5423, para. 67]. The draft resolution is based on the correct conclusion drawn by the Ad Hoc Committee from its detailed study of the subject. This conclusion is set forth in paragraph 11 of the Ad Hoc Committee's report, which states:

"From the many suggestions received in writing by the Committee from Member States and from the oral statements heard by it, it was clear that the issue was not that of a revision of the rules of procedure."

The same paragraph stresses that "The present rules"—i.e., those of the General Assembly—"have stood the test of time", that they "provide an adequate framework for the Assembly's work", and that they do not require any correction.

156. Paragraph 12, in particular, correctly stresses the need to make better and more skilful use of the existing rules of procedure.

157. Those who have spoken today and those who spoke in the Committee when this question was under discussion have already drawn attention to various improvements which have been made and steps which have been taken at the previous and the present session to speed up and rationalize our work. It is to be hoped that the co-operation which, we think, will be forthcoming from all delegations in carrying out the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations will improve the organization of our work. The Soviet delegation, for its part, is prepared to co-operate in applying those recommendations.

158. Having said this, we wish to put before the General Assembly certain considerations relating to the Ad Hoc Committee's discussion of the use of the so-called electric system of voting. This question has already been touched upon by a number of representatives at today's meeting.

159. First of all, we would point out that according to paragraphs 57 and 58 of the Ad Hoc Committee's report, that Committee, after a careful study of the question, made no recommendations to the Assembly with regard to the introduction of this system on either a permanent or an experimental basis. The Committee merely advocated that the financial implications of this question should be considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions before the General Assembly reached a final decision on the matter.

160. The second piece of advice which the Committee gave was that the Secretary-General of the United

Nations should explore the possibility of trying the electric system of voting experimentally for one or two years in one or more conference rooms.

161. What I have just said is based both on the wording of paragraph 58 of the Ad Hoc Committee's report and on the following summary made by Ambassador Boland, the Chairman of the Committee, at its twentieth meeting on 27 May 1963:

"In the course of the ensuing discussion, it was generally agreed that further study of the project [for the introduction of the system of electric voting] was desirable, although there were differences of emphasis as to the urgency of the matter."

and further:

"... it was finally agreed that both the Advisory Committee and the Secretary-General should be ready to report to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session."

162. In the circumstances, it was decided to omit draft resolution B, which had originally been submitted at a meeting of the Committee, altogether, and not to put that draft resolution to the vote. It contained a proposal that the introduction of the system of electric voting should be approved in principle.

163. We would point out in particular that the Committee is not at present making any final recommendations to the General Assembly, or any recommendations at all for the installation of the system of electric voting on either a permanent or an experimental basis. We are stressing this point because the United Nations documents on the question show signs of patent misunderstanding—even, I venture to say, of a complete misinterpretation—of the conclusions reached by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly.

164. The seventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions [A/5442, paras. 8 and 9] contains some statements to the effect that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of the electric system of voting in the United Nations. Thus, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions states in paragraph 8 of its report:

"In view of the financial position of the Organization, the Advisory Committee would have hesitated to recommend that the experiment proposed"—and I emphasize the word "proposed"—"by the Ad Hoc Committee should be made at the present time."

165. Paragraph 9 states:

"Given all the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that, should the General Assembly decide to approve the suggestions of the Ad Hoc Committee"—and I emphasize the words "suggestions of the Ad Hoc Committee"—"concerning the adoption of an electric system of voting in the United Nations, such a system should be introduced on an experimental basis for one year in one committee room."

166. A comparison of these documents shows that the advice given in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Advisory Committee's report is the result of a perfectly obvious misunderstanding because, I repeat, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly made no recommendations and included none in its report.

167. This leads to yet another very important conclusion: the approval by the General Assembly, today, of the draft resolution proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee in its report will in no way signify the adoption by the Assembly of any kind of decision on the question of the introduction of an electric system of voting either on a permanent or on an experimental basis.

168. I feel that I must emphasize this point once again because, quite apart from the obvious inaccuracies and irregularities which have crept into the relevant parts of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Belgian representative in his statement today put the question in such a way that it might be thought that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly had really taken some decisions which might be regarded as recommending the installation of the system of so-called electric voting.

169. Whether such a system should or should not be installed, therefore, remains an open question, and I should like to issue an advance warning (if I am mistaken in this matter I shall be glad to hear it) against making any attempt, after the resolution in the Ad Hoc Committee's report is adopted, to treat it as signifying approval as a decision in principle, for the introduction of the system of electric voting.

170. The question is still open and can be given separate consideration by the General Assembly only after it has examined the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, whom the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly recommended to explore the possibility of introducing such a system on an experimental basis.

171. Both these reports should be examined at the proper time by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, with a view to the submission to the General Assembly of the appropriate report and recommendations on how to deal with the substance of this question.

172. Having now, so to speak, disposed of the procedural side of this matter, and emphasizing once again that our adoption today of a resolution approving the Ad Hoc Committee's report does not signify the adoption of any decision on the question of introducing the system of electric voting on either a permanent or an experimental basis, I should now like to say a few words which are prompted by the statement made at this meeting by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom.

173. I share the doubts expressed here by the United Kingdom representative. It has become increasingly obvious that the considerable financial outlay involved in installing the electric system of voting cannot be met out of savings under the United Nations budget; if this outlay were to be incurred, it would obviously have to come out of the already over-inflated budget of the United Nations. I therefore believe that in the present circumstances, in view of the tasks and activities which the Organization has to perform, at any rate in the very near future, there is no urgency or priority about reaching a decision on this question.

174. This seems to be clear even to those who take a different view, and who favour the immediate introduction of this system; for fewer and fewer voices are now to be heard calling for the immediate installation of this system on a permanent basis—a step which will ultimately involve spending about \$1 million.

175. They now talk of introducing this system on an experimental basis. But this would mean large sums, of the order of \$100,000, plus \$60,000 or so for preparatory work, would be spent on installing the system in one of the Committee rooms of the General Assembly without, in the final analysis, any effect whatsoever so far as speeding up the work of the General Assembly is concerned.

176. We cannot agree to adding an expenditure of approximately \$1 million to the United Nations budget in order to achieve the effect which has been discussed here and which, to tell the truth, is highly problematical. Still less, obviously, can we support the view that we should spend \$100,000 without achieving even a part of the problematical result which they claim would be achieved if we took this step.

177. I leave this dispute to the Fifth Committee, and to such time as the Fifth Committee's report comes up for consideration in the General Assembly.

178. I now wish to stress once again that this time the Fifth Committee will have not only to consider the financial aspect of this matter but also to make recommendations on whether or not this work should be undertaken at all in the near future. Thus we shall take up this question again in all its implications—both in regard to the decision of principle to be taken by the General Assembly and in regard to the financial implications of that decision—when we receive the appropriate documentation from the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly after it has considered the matter.

179. Mr. SEYDOUX (France) (translated from French): Because my delegation took part in the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly, I have some hesitation in addressing the Assembly just as it is about to take a decision on the results of our deliberations.

180. However, I should like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the quality of the document before us. The Rapporteur, Mr. Taleb Slim, has fully reflected the various points of view expressed, and I also think that had it not been for the clarity and precision of his statements in the Committee, that body would probably not have achieved the results that have now been submitted for our consideration.

181. Those results are obviously limited, but it should be recognized that it was difficult, in view of the terms of reference of the Ad Hoc Committee, to expect important changes. It is, moreover, to the credit of President Mongi Slim, that he was able, in his wisdom, to assess the present possibilities realistically and to propose<sup>6/</sup> only those objectives on which agreement could be reached. That flexible course of action may have resulted only in relatively modest proposals thus far, but it has had the great advantage of creating a general trend in support of improving the methods of work of the General Assembly and its Committees, and we should now be concerned with finding ways of keeping that trend alive. My delegation will certainly be disposed to examine with interest whatever suggestions may be made along these lines. I feel bound to say that all of us who are concerned with preserving the serious and orderly character of the Assembly sessions have been encouraged by the manner in which your predecessors, Mr. President, and notably Mr. Zafrulla Khan, have viewed their role as President.

182. You, in your turn, Mr. President, have made a signal contribution to this undertaking. Your authority, adroitness and objectivity have already left their mark on the work of the General Assembly, and the Assembly has every reason to be gratified at having elected as its President a person like yourself, whose education strikingly reflects the political and cultural values which have special meaning for your continent and mine.

183. I shall have little to say about the draft resolution [A/5423, para. 67] which the Ad Hoc Committee recommends for adoption. In the view of my delegation, it represents the minimum that should be done, and its unanimous adoption by the members of the Ad Hoc Committee should endow it with an almost mandatory effect. It would therefore be desirable to include the text of the resolution as an annex to future editions of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

184. My delegation considers that one of the most important measures proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee in the draft resolution is the one recalling the functions entrusted to the General Committee under rules 40, 41, and 42 of the rules of procedure and recommending that the General Committee should meet at least every three weeks. It is particularly important that, through the General Committee, all delegations should get a general picture of how the work is proceeding in the Committees and in the plenary meetings. To proceed in such a manner could not help but to strengthen the authority of the Chairmen and impress upon everyone the need for collective discipline.

185. Among the matters considered by the Ad Hoc Committee but not mentioned in the draft resolution is the use of mechanical means of voting. It has rightly been pointed out that this system has the merit of speed and accuracy whereas, with the large number of people frequently present at a meeting, the counting of votes by show of hands has become risky and uncertain. Taking into account these factors and the desirability of not burdening the United Nations with undue financial expenditure, my delegation endorses the conclusions set out in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions [A/5442]. Thus, if the Assembly should decide to institute an electrical system of voting, it would certainly be reasonable to experiment with it first in one conference room while at the same time taking advantage of the structural changes to be made in 1964 to undertake preliminary work in two other conference rooms.

186. Another question was discussed at length in the Ad Hoc Committee, but was not mentioned in the draft resolution. I refer to the publication of a practical repertory of the procedure of the Assembly and its Committees. We believe that this problem deserves the Assembly's attention; the Ad Hoc Committee's conclusions appear in paragraphs 55 and 56 of the report. The main reason why no specific recommendations could be made is that the preparation of a practical repertory of the Assembly's procedure could not be a mere counterpart of what already exists for the Security Council. These two United Nations organs are totally different in their method of operation. This observation should not, however, be construed to mean that a repertory of the Assembly's procedure is not necessary. The first step must be to decide on what form this work should take. In the circumstances, my delegation believes that the Assembly should encourage the Secretariat to continue its research on this par-

<sup>6/</sup> Ibid., document A/5123.

ticular point, and submit the results in the form of a report on the basis of which the Assembly would be able to take a decision at its nineteenth session.

187. I have concluded the few comments which my delegation wished to make on this item of our agenda. By adopting the draft resolution before it, the Assembly will have taken what, as I have said, is a modest step forward but also a useful one. In our view, it is only a first step toward a steady improvement of our procedure within the framework of the existing rules so that we may avoid, if possible, the development of certain practices based on hasty decisions or imposed by essentially accidental factors.

188. Mr. HSUEH (China): My delegation also thinks that the report of the Ad Hoc Committee [A/5423], now under our consideration, is a remarkable and extremely valuable document. The recommendations contained therein, when implemented by the General Assembly, will, we believe, help make its work more efficient and more expeditious. In other words, they will result, as suggested by the name of the Committee, in the improvement of the methods of work of this principal organ of the United Nations.

189. The report is, of course, the result of the collective work of the members of the Committee. But I wish to associate my delegation with the special tribute paid to Mr. Mongi Slim, now Foreign Minister of Tunisia, who, from his experience as the President of the General Assembly at its sixteenth session, initiated these studies; to Ambassador Zafrulla Khan, Chairman of the Committee, whose efficiency in the conduct of business as the President of the General Assembly at its seventeenth session is a great source of inspiration for the work of the Committee; to Ambassador Boland and Ambassador Sir James Plimsoll, who also presided over the Committee in the absence of Ambassador Zafrulla Khan, and to Ambassador Taieb Slim who, as rapporteur of the Committee, miraculously brought divergent views into agreement by the texts skillfully worked out by him. We are also indebted to the Legal Counsel, Mr. Stavropoulos, to Mr. Schreiber and to the other members of the Secretariat, without whose valuable assistance the work of the Ad Hoc Committee could not have been so fruitful.

190. Without wishing to repeat what has already been said, I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the two special features of the report.

191. In the first place, the Ad Hoc Committee does not seek any change in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Its recommendations are based on the conclusion that the rules are adequate and that all that is needed for the improvement of the methods of work of the General Assembly is to ensure their stricter application. Therefore, the Committee confines itself to encouraging the presiding officers and the members of the General Assembly to make greater use of the prerogatives existing under the present rules and inviting them to adhere more closely to the provisions of these rules. Paragraphs 39 to 48 of the report, relating to the powers and duties of the presiding officers in the conduct of debates are cases in point. My delegation believes that this is a sound and practical approach.

192. Secondly, the Ad Hoc Committee has made some most useful contributions in the clarification of certain rules. For example, paragraphs 49 to 53 of the report concerning the right of reply, explanations of vote and points of order deserve our special attention.

Without anything added to, or subtracted from, the relevant rules, these paragraphs serve to make the meaning of the rules so clear that there could not possibly be any more misunderstanding in their application. Indeed, these paragraphs could very usefully be inserted as footnotes to the rules of procedure for reference and guidance in case any controversy should arise.

193. In this connexion, I wish to make a special reference to a question discussed in paragraphs 55 and 56 in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee. Over the years, a large number of procedural questions have been raised and settled in this Assembly and in its main Committees. Of course, all these debates may be found in the relevant records. However, I believe that many delegations must have experienced the difficulty and inconvenience of locating them in the voluminous records of the United Nations. As the years go by, the difficulty and inconvenience are bound to increase. Therefore, my delegation strongly urges that the Secretariat should from now on, as suggested by the Ad Hoc Committee, keep systematic notes of the questions of procedure which arise in the Assembly and in the Committees, and assemble this information in a form accessible to us all. Furthermore, my delegation also hopes that the Secretariat could help us by looking into the records and undertaking the preparation of a repertory of past practice in a convenient form for our ready reference.

194. It may be noted that some of the recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Committee have already been put into practice. Under the President's able leadership, the general debate at this session was completed in approximately three weeks, meetings have been started at the stated time, and work schedules have been established by the various main committees. I am sure that the other recommendations of the Committee can also be implemented without difficulty and to the benefit of us all. Therefore, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 67 of the report.

195. Before concluding, may I also say a few words about the mechanical means of voting discussed in paragraphs 57 and 58 of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee. I joined the group from the Committee on a visit to the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey in Trenton, and personally examined the working of the equipment installed in its conference hall. I must say that I was very much impressed by the dependability of the system. As pointed out in the report, the system has the dual advantages of saving time and being accurate. With the membership of the General Assembly of the United Nations ever on the increase, the traditional methods of voting are becoming more and more difficult and time consuming. The introduction of an electric system of voting is therefore now highly desirable. At least it should be installed on an experimental basis. In this respect, my delegation appreciates the views expressed on the financial implications of the question by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its seventh report [A/5442]. I hope that this Assembly will make a favourable decision on this matter when the Fifth Committee submits its report.

196. Mr. CUEVAS CANCINO (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): As the General Assembly will no doubt recall, attention was drawn at its sixteenth session to the importance of undertaking a detailed



study of its methods of work. The item was specifically proposed by the Tunisian delegation at the seventeenth session,<sup>7/</sup> and the Mexican delegation commends it for its felicitous spirit of initiative.

197. By 1961 it was already clear that our work was increasing greatly and the items on our agenda becoming very complex. A proposal was therefore made at the seventeenth session to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on the improvement of the methods of work of the General Assembly so that this difficult problem could be given the attention it deserved. The Ad Hoc Committee was only able to make a start last year, and has thus continued its work this year as authorized by General Assembly resolution 1845 (XVII). The results of its efforts are to be found in the report [A/5423] which the General Assembly now has before it and in whose preparation my delegation had the honour to participate. I should therefore like to make a few general remarks on the main features of the report.

198. I shall begin by emphasizing the high technical standards which characterized the Committee's work at all times and which largely account for the high standard of the document.

199. The Committee had to decide, as a matter of principle, whether or not to recommend a revision of the present rules of procedure. It was clear from the beginning that the majority were not in favour of such a revision, as is indicated in paragraph 11 of the report.

200. Accordingly, the Committee purposely confined itself to recommending improved methods of work within the framework of the existing rules.

201. As is stated in paragraph 13 of the report, due account was also taken of the parallel process of diplomatic negotiation between representatives, which made it undesirable for the work of the Assembly to proceed at too hasty a pace. My delegation was then, and still is, of the opinion that these deliberate limitations on our work are most in keeping with present-day realities.

202. In considering the organization of sessions, the Ad Hoc Committee recognized the value of the general debate. It merely recommended various measures for expediting it, and these have to a large extent been applied during the present session. Other points to note are the prompt commencement of the work of the main Committees; the grouping of related items, a matter in which much can be done; the simultaneous consideration of various items, a proposal offering enormous possibilities; and, as another important recommendation, greater use of sub-committees and working groups, as recommended in paragraphs 29 to 32 of the report.

203. This last point is particularly important. My delegation hopes that in the future it will become the common practice of the Assembly, whose size makes it necessary to consider new methods of work. This system was frequently employed by the General Assembly in its earlier days, but then there was a tendency to neglect it, which we feel might now well be reconsidered. The proceedings of the Third Committee, for example, show how necessary this practice has become nowadays.

204. With regard to the conduct of the debates, the Ad Hoc Committee stresses the importance of the

role of the presiding officers and how necessary it is for them to exercise the authority given to them under the rules of procedure.

205. The specific recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Committee in paragraphs 42 to 51 of the report are also important, since they deal with questions, the neglect of which, has frequently given rise to procedural disorder.

206. I shall not at this stage discuss in detail the introduction of mechanical means of voting—a question to which the Secretariat has given careful study and which was ultimately referred to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. I should like to make it clear, however, that my delegation is not yet convinced of the necessity or desirability of such a measure.

207. The Ad Hoc Committee also considered a number of other procedural questions on which it decided not to make any recommendations. I should like, however, to draw attention to paragraph 55 of the report, which mentions that it would be useful if the Secretariat took steps to keep systematic note of the various questions of procedure which arise in the General Assembly. In this way it would be possible to compile a repertory that would be useful to future representatives—our successors—especially in view of the great benefits that have been derived from the repertory of practice concerning the Articles of the Charter. My delegation considers that this suggestion has great merit. We believe that this idea could be put into practice as suggested in paragraph 55 without, however, going so far as to prepare the larger repertory and manual of procedure suggested in paragraph 56, which is an undertaking of greater and more varied scope.

208. As the result of its deliberations, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended the adoption by the General Assembly of the draft resolution which was introduced a little while ago by the representative of Tunisia, in his capacity as the Rapporteur of the Committee. My delegation considers this draft resolution important, in that it proposes measures based on extensive experience and represents the minimum programme on which all the members of the Committee were able to agree. It proposes practical and reliable methods for improving the work of the General Assembly without altering or prejudging it.

209. My delegation supports the draft resolution [A/5423, para. 67] recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee to the Assembly.

210. Mr. HASEGANU (Romania) (translated from French): The increase in United Nations membership and the complexity of the problems with which the Organization has had to deal in recent years have necessitated an examination of methods for improving the work of the General Assembly. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly [A/5423], of which the Romanian People's Republic had the honour to be a member, and the draft resolution submitted for adoption by the General Assembly [*ibid.*, para. 67] are the result of the work done on this question this year.

211. In our view, one of the reasons for the progress made by the Ad Hoc Committee was the consensus of opinion among its members regarding the nature of its task. They were agreed from the outset that their main task was not to amend the present rules of procedure of the Assembly, which on the whole are demo-

<sup>7/</sup> *Ibid.*, document A/5165.

cratic in content, but to give them greater weight in relation to the new conditions that have emerged in the Organization. We share the Committee's opinion that, in various cases, full use has not yet been made of all the opportunities provided by the existing rules. In the circumstances, the Committee felt it necessary to make recommendations urging their concrete implementation.

212. We also appreciate the fact that in making its recommendation the Committee was guided by the established practice of the organs of the United Nations, which is based on the provisions of the rules of procedure and can serve to systematize certain methods of work. The suggestions and proposals of a number of Governments also did much to facilitate the task of selecting the best working methods.

213. In the selection of these methods the main object was to accelerate the work of the General Assembly and the main Committees so that the Assembly could complete the work of a regular session in the normal period of thirteen weeks. At the same time, we would draw attention to the Ad Hoc Committee's desire to formulate these methods in such a way that they do not encroach on certain basic principles of United Nations procedure such as, for example, the right to take the floor, the right of delegations to engage in diplomatic consultations and the right of reply.

214. The present rules of procedure, as we know, have elastic provisions which make it possible to hold extensive general debates both in the Assembly and in the main Committees so as to enable all delegations, without exception, to present their views.

215. The rules of procedure also provide an opportunity for delegations to engage in detailed consultations with a view to finding mutually advantageous solutions. The significance of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations lies in the fact that, without altering or restricting present practice based on the provisions of the rules of procedure, they set forth a number of procedural concepts and practices with special emphasis on their application in various cases. They can therefore be used without difficulty by the President of the General Assembly, the Chairmen of the main Committees and the representatives of Member States.

216. For the reasons I have just given, the Romanian delegation regards the work of the Ad Hoc Committee as satisfactory and will vote in favour of the report and draft resolution before the Assembly.

217. We should like to make only one reservation on the Ad Hoc Committee's report. It concerns the installation of a mechanical voting system. The report provides that:

"... the question of the cost of the installation would be examined by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions before the General Assembly took a final decision on the matter." [A/5423, para. 58.]

The problem appears, however, to have been brought before the Advisory Committee as if a decision had

already been, as if, in fact, the Ad Hoc Committee had already made a recommendation. We therefore endorse the comments and reservations made by other delegations concerning the necessary additional expenditure.

218. I would be loath to conclude this brief statement without noting with satisfaction the atmosphere of co-operation and freedom from tension which characterized the Ad Hoc Committee's session and which has helped it to select and elaborate the methods now submitted to the General Assembly for its approval.

219. Mr. TELL (Jordan): It is not my intention at this late hour to go into details about the report before the Assembly, especially since my delegation was represented in the Committee which produced the report and our views are expressed in it.

220. I have asked to speak only to state that we shall vote in favour of the draft resolution [A/5423, para. 67] and the recommendations it contains on the understanding that is explicit in paragraphs 58 and 59 of the report, which state that the introduction of the mechanical system for registering votes should be subject to prior discussion by the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee.

221. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Before putting the draft resolution submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly [A/5423, para. 67] to the vote, I should like once again to make it clear that, as I pointed out at the beginning of our discussion of this item, the question of mechanical means of voting is being considered by the Fifth Committee, and the General Assembly will take up that matter when it deals with the question of major maintenance and capital improvement at United Nations Headquarters. Accordingly, if no delegation demands a vote on the draft resolution, I shall take it that the Assembly adopts it unanimously.

*The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.*

#### Organization of work

222. The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Before adjourning the meeting I should like to inform the Assembly that, since some delegations have asked for more time in which to consider the reports of the Sixth and Third Committees that were to be considered at the plenary meeting to be held in the morning of Wednesday, 13 November, that meeting will be cancelled. Therefore, unless unforeseen circumstances arise, no further plenary meetings will be held this week. Next week we shall have several plenary meetings, the dates of which will be announced in the Journal. At those meetings we shall consider all the items on which reports have been received from the various Committees and which are ready to be considered in plenary, and also item 24, dealing with the report of the Preparatory Committee on the International Co-operation Year [A/5561].

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*