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President: Mr. Salim Ahmed SALIM
(United Republic of Tanzania)

AGENDA ITEM 15

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs (*concluded*):

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

1. The PRESIDENT: Over the past several weeks, the General Assembly has tried unsuccessfully to resolve the deadlock over the election of the one remaining non-permanent member of the Security Council. The Assembly, with a view to fulfilling its responsibility under the Charter, and in conformity with the existing rules of procedure, has conducted an unprecedented number of ballots: 154, between 26 October 1979 and 4 January 1980—all of which have proved inconclusive.

2. As members are aware, concurrently with the balloting process there has been a series of consultations, as well as discussions in the Assembly aimed at overcoming the impasse. As President of the Assembly, I have taken an active part in these consultations. I have made use of the office of the President to confer constantly with the broadest possible representation of this august body. Most specifically, I have held continuous—and, if I may say so, persistent—consultations with the principal parties, namely, the delegations of Colombia and Cuba.

3. To the entire membership of the Assembly I have always emphasized the need to enable this organ to discharge its responsibility by electing a fifteenth member of the Security Council in order that the Council could be properly constituted. To the candidates themselves I have appealed for understanding, co-operation and a spirit of accommodation so as to facilitate the Assembly's resolution of the impasse.

4. Subsequent to those appeals, I have made, through the two delegations, further efforts to impress on them the imperative need for an urgent solution. Similar

efforts have been made by a number of delegations. Again, through my consultations with the chairmen of the regional groups and a number of delegations, I have continued to stress the absolute necessity of finding a way out of this impasse. In that connexion, a number of possible options have of course been mentioned and considered. I have constantly emphasized to those with whom I have been consulting that, as President, my paramount interest has been and continues to be that the Assembly should discharge its responsibility. Many members of this Assembly have also played an active and constructive role in helping the Assembly to over-come the deadlock.

5. As a result of our collective appeals, and thanks to the positive spirit of understanding and awareness of the greater interests of this Assembly and of the United Nations as a whole, displayed by the Governments of Cuba and Colombia, I am most happy to be able to inform the Assembly that we are now on the verge of breaking the stalemate.

6. Yesterday, at noon, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba informed me of his Government's decision to withdraw from the election. I am happy to report that I have now been officially informed by the Chairman of the group of Latin American States that the group this morning formally endorsed the candidature of Mexico, subsequent to the decision of the Governments of Cuba and Colombia to withdraw. There is therefore now only one candidate to fill the one remaining non-permanent seat in the Security Council, and that is Mexico.

7. Needless to say, I am extremely relieved and gratified at this development. I am sure that I am reflecting the general sentiment of the entire membership of the Assembly when I express our profound appreciation for the important decision taken by the Governments of Colombia and Cuba in withdrawing their respective candidatures and thus enabling the Assembly to proceed forthwith with the election of only one, agreed candidate. It is my firm conviction that their decision represents an important contribution to the work of our Organization.

8. I wish also to express my personal thanks and gratitude to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Isidoro Malmierca Peoli, the Vice-Minister, Mr. Viera and the Ambassador, Mr. Raúl Roa-Kourí of Cuba and to Ambassador Indalecio Liévano of Colombia for the unfailing courtesy, co-operation and assistance they have extended to me throughout these difficult days and weeks. I would also express my particular pleasure and satisfaction at the dignified manner in which this Assembly has handled this highly sensitive and important question.

9. The Assembly will consequently now proceed to the election of the one remaining non-permanent member of the Security Council, from the group of Latin American States, for a period ending on 31 December 1981. The ballot papers will now be distributed.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nikulin (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) and Mr. Çelikol (Turkey) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

10. The PRESIDENT: I propose now to suspend the meeting while the ballots are being counted.

The meeting was suspended at 12.05 p.m. and resumed at 12.10 p.m.

11. The PRESIDENT: The result of the voting is as follows:

<i>Number of ballot papers:</i>	144
<i>Invalid ballots:</i>	0
<i>Number of valid ballots:</i>	144
<i>Abstentions:</i>	8
<i>Number of members voting:</i>	136
<i>Required majority:</i>	91
<i>Number of votes obtained:</i>	
Mexico	133
Cuba	3

As a result of this voting and that which took place at the 47th meeting, the German Democratic Republic, Mexico, Niger, the Philippines and Tunisia were elected non-permanent members of the Security Council for a two-year term ending on 31 December 1981 (see decision 34/328).

12. The PRESIDENT: I wish to congratulate Mexico and the other countries that have been elected non-permanent members of the Security Council for a two-year term that began on 1 January 1980. I also thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

13. I now call on the representative of Mexico.

14. Mr. MUÑOZ LEDO (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We wish to express our thanks to the General Assembly, this sovereign and democratic body of the United Nations, for having elected Mexico a non-permanent member of the Security Council for a two-year term that began on the first day of this decade.

15. We are pleased that Mexico's candidacy was unanimously proposed by the States members of the group of Latin American States, which was entitled to the vacant seat on the Council, and that Mexico's candidacy received such broad support from the community of nations. The Government of Mexico has heeded the appeal made by the countries of our region, and accepts this Assembly's decision, in a desire to contribute to the solution of the institutional crisis that faced the United Nations at the end of last year and prevented the Security Council from being constituted in accordance with the terms of the Charter.

16. We express our fraternal respect for and appreciation to the two countries—Colombia and Cuba—that, by withdrawing their candidacies, made a solution to this problem possible. In our view, both countries did that as a demonstration of their firm adherence to the principles of the United Nations. Both countries unquestionably deserved a seat on the Security Council, and they conducted themselves with dignity in a protracted democratic race.

17. Everyone must be aware that throughout the process that has ended today Mexico gave its firm support to Cuba's aspirations, not only because Cuba was the first candidate chronologically speaking, but also because we wished to contribute to repairing the harm done to that country, which, since its 1959 revolution, has seen one avenue after another closed to the normal development of its international relations. During the past weeks, various allegations have been circulating against the group of Latin American States. Some have undoubtedly been the result of understandable impatience; others have perhaps been the result of an unawareness of the political reality of our region. Among the countries of the third world, the Latin American countries have the most difficult and the oldest independent course. Because of limitations imposed by geography and history, we coexist in diversity but with one single purpose: fundamental unity. We must be understood and respected; we must never be reproached.

18. Fortunately, this episode through which the Assembly has just passed has culminated in a convergence of Latin American wills. Mexico is aware of the responsibility that this entails, and we believe it relevant to state to the General Assembly that in discharging the functions entrusted to it in the Security Council Mexico will remain faithful to the defence of the principles that have consistently inspired its foreign policy: friendship for all peoples; solidarity with the independence struggles; unconditional respect for the principles of self-determination and non-intervention; the search for peaceful settlements of disputes; the achievement of universal disarmament and collective security; and the prompt and effective application of the principles and rules at the basis of the new international economic order.

AGENDA ITEM 2

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

19. The PRESIDENT: I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members stood in silence.

Closing of the session

20. The PRESIDENT: I declare closed the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.