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**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

NINETEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**1286th
PLENARY MEETING**

(Opening meeting)

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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Item 1 of the provisional agenda:</i> <i>Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Venezuela.</i>	1
<i>Item 2 of the provisional agenda:</i> <i>Minute of silent prayer or meditation.</i>	1
<i>Address by Mr. Carlos Sosa Rodríguez, Temporary President, Chairman of the delegation of Venezuela</i>	1
<i>Statement by the Secretary-General</i>	1
<i>Item 3 of the provisional agenda:</i> <i>Credentials of representatives to the nineteenth session of the General Assembly:</i> <i>(a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee</i>	2
<i>Item 4 of the provisional agenda:</i> <i>Election of the President</i>	2
<i>Address by Mr. Alex Quaison-Sackey, President of the nineteenth session of the General Assembly.</i>	2
<i>Item 18 of the provisional agenda:</i> <i>Admission of new Members to the United Nations.</i>	4

President: Mr. Alex QUAISON-SACKEY (Ghana).

Temporary President: Mr. Carlos SOSA RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela).

ITEM 1 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Venezuela

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the nineteenth regular session of the General Assembly.

ITEM 2 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I request the representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The representatives stood and observed a minute's silence.

Address by Mr. Carlos Sosa Rodríguez, Temporary President, Chairman of the delegation of Venezuela

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): At the beginning of the nineteenth session of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome all the representatives present in this Hall. At the same time, I should like to express my most earnest

hope that at this nineteenth session the same spirit of harmony will prevail that characterized the last session, over which I had the honour to preside.

4. Today more than ever it is essential that our debates should take place in an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect, because the problems which will have to be faced during this session are many and grave. Today more than ever we must bear in mind the need to preserve this Organization and to enable it to achieve its objective of peace and harmony among nations. To that end, we must be ready to make sacrifices in the conviction that they will not be made in vain because the cause of the United Nations is just.

5. I express my most sincere hope that the work of the nineteenth session will be crowned with success and that at the end of the session our Organization will emerge strengthened and we shall have taken one more step towards putting the principles of the United Nations Charter into effective practice.

6. I now call upon the Secretary-General.

Statement by the Secretary-General

7. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: In view of the differences of opinion which have arisen among Member States regarding the conduct of the nineteenth session of the General Assembly, I have been in consultation with several delegations for the past week with the sole purpose of avoiding a confrontation. In this connexion, I may mention that there is an understanding to the effect that issues other than those that can be disposed of without objection will not be raised while the general debate proceeds.

8. I hope that all delegations will agree with this procedure. As far as today's meeting is concerned, there is general agreement, I believe, that on the above basis we may proceed with the following items of business: first, appointment of the Credentials Committee; second, election of the President; third, admission of new Members to the United Nations.

9. I would recommend that the General Assembly proceed accordingly.

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After the close of the session, collated sets of fascicles will be placed on sale for the general public.

10. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The General Assembly has heard the statement by the Secretary-General.

11. If there are no objections we shall follow the procedure he has suggested.

It was so agreed.

ITEM 3 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Credentials of representatives to the nineteenth session of the General Assembly:

(a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee

12. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): We shall now consider the next item: Credentials of representatives to the nineteenth session of the General Assembly: Appointment of the Credentials Committee. In accordance with the decision just taken by the General Assembly, I propose that the Credentials Committee for the nineteenth regular session shall be composed of the following nine Members: Australia, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Iceland, Madagascar, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, and United States of America.

13. If there are no objections, I shall consider that those Members will form the Credentials Committee.

It was so agreed.

ITEM 4 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Election of the President

14. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): We shall now consider the next item, which is the election of the President of the General Assembly for the nineteenth session.

15. According to my information, there is only one candidate for this office, Mr. Alex Quaison-Sackey, the Ambassador of Ghana. In accordance with the procedure already agreed upon by the General Assembly, I shall declare that the General Assembly elects Ambassador Quaison-Sackey President of the nineteenth regular session by acclamation.

Mr. Alex Quaison-Sackey (Ghana) was elected President of the nineteenth session of the General Assembly by acclamation.

16. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): In expressing my most sincere congratulations to Ambassador Quaison-Sackey, I have pleasure in placing in his capable hands the responsibilities of this high office and inviting him to come to the rostrum and take the Chair.

Mr. Quaison-Sackey took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Alex Quaison-Sackey, President of the nineteenth session of the General Assembly

17. The PRESIDENT: It is with a profound sense of gratitude and humility that I take this Chair to serve you as President of the nineteenth session of the General Assembly. By your unanimous decision you have bestowed on me an honour which goes far beyond my humble person, for this is a tribute to Africa and to Ghana in particular, and above all to millions of people of African descent everywhere.

18. It is my earnest prayer that with your ready cooperation I shall carry out the onerous burden which devolves upon me at this session and thus requite the confidence which you have so ungrudgingly placed in me.

19. I come from a young but dynamic country in Africa. For centuries and centuries it smarted under the exploitation of European adventurers who called it the "Gold Coast". Then for more than one hundred years it was under British rule. It was not until 6 March 1957 that the Gold Coast became a free and independent Ghana and was admitted to the United Nations as a Member State. Since then Ghana has played an active role in international affairs by throwing its weight solidly on the side of peace. Ghana has an unshakable faith in the United Nations and has consistently supported the purposes and principles of the Charter.

20. In Africa, Ghana has bent all its energies, in concert with other sister African States, to the building of a united Africa in the cause of peace. At the very start of Ghana's independence, the President of Ghana told the world that "Ghana's independence is meaningless unless it is linked with the total liberation of the African continent". It can be said that, since 1957, Africa has not been the same again. It is a measure of the strides Africa has made that within seven years the number of independent African States has increased from eight to thirty-six. Today we have witnessed the renaissance of the African personality here, in this very Assembly. Indeed, who would have thought in 1945 that a representative of "Afrique noire" would today be presiding over the General Assembly of the United Nations.

21. Yes, nineteen years ago the voice of Africa was frail and hardly audible. For centuries the personality of Africa was truncated by dint of foreign domination, exploitation and oppression. For centuries Africa suffered the indignity of slavery and spoliation unparalleled in the history of mankind. African humanity suffered the worst form of degradation and devaluation, and yet Africans are not bitter. Was it not Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, the Foreign Minister of Sudan, who once said: "The African is naturally tolerant; we are prepared to forgive, for ours is not a creed of hate."

22. There was an international conspiracy to obliterate Africa's glorious past. When vision was short and knowledge scant, men called Africa the "Dark Continent", and some historians even made futile attempts to denigrate Africa's contribution to world civilization. To them the exploits and grandeur of the great empires of ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay, the powerful kingdoms of Ashanti, Buganda, Ife and Benin, belonged to the realms of mythology. To them, before the advent of Europeans, all was darkness and void.

23. But we who believe in the African personality are conscious of our ancient roots. We draw strength and inspiration from our glorious past, from the efflorescence of the powerful and enlightened civilization along the banks of the life-giving Nile, from the famous institutions of advanced studies in Timbuktu and from the glorious existence of Ethiopia.

24. Today, divided and mutilated, Africa is regaining its dignity and independence and is steadily moving towards its determined goal of continental unity and total liberation. The Organization of African Unity, in spite of severe handicaps, is tackling African problems with vigour and imagination. Africa is discovering its ancient glory and pride in a brave new world. Its future is now indissolubly linked with the destiny of Asia, Latin America and the rest of the world. Africans are resolved to play an effective role in world affairs. Indeed, they have already begun to make fruitful contributions to the solution of many difficult problems facing the United Nations. And why not? After all, the famous dictum of the Roman thinker, Pliny the Elder, has never lost its relevance, namely, *ex Africa semper aliquid novi*—out of Africa, always something new.

25. The United Nations, conceived in the sweat, tears and blood of a world conflagration, has been buffeted by both extremes of fortune for nineteen years, but it has shown a wonderful resilience in the face of crises which have threatened its very existence. The opening session of each General Assembly should, therefore, serve as an occasion to reaffirm our faith in the United Nations and to rededicate ourselves to its purposes, ideals and principles.

26. Sometimes we tend to become disheartened when we consider the long list of problems confronting the world. We have tough problems such as the present financial and constitutional crisis due to peace-keeping operations, Korea, Viet-Nam, Germany, general and complete disarmament, decolonization, apartheid, refugees, human rights and economic development. Some of these problems have been tackled with vigour by the United Nations. Others, like divided Germany, have not even been properly discussed at this Assembly. But it is my conviction that, given a large fund of good will and a spirit of tolerance and compromise, we can grasp the nettle and take the sting out of these seemingly intractable problems. There are a few bright spots in the history of our Organization when these qualities have saved the day and dissipated the spectre of failure. It is my belief that this spirit of tolerance and compromise will once again prevail in the search for a firm solution to the financial crisis resulting from peace-keeping operations.

27. This should give us hope that in the fire and crucible of crisis and danger we shall forge an organization which will fulfil its primary role of saving "succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

28. This is the greatest challenge of our time. There is a great commotion in our moral world. We have witnessed during the life of the United Nations conflicts in various parts of the world. It is true that no single Power would be foolhardy enough to start a war, but there are rumblings beneath the surface of the world situation, and, as the late Dag Hammarskjöld once said, "politically, the world situation represents a picture of interlocking stalemates". Is it impossible for us to take another look at these stalemates and make fresh attempts to solve them? Perhaps we may give thought to the setting up of some *ad hoc* committees to study critical questions and endeavour to find solutions to them.

29. Let us do some heart searching. Does the peace of the world depend upon the United Nations or does the United Nations depend upon peace between the great Powers? I must say here that it lies within your power, all of you representatives from Member States, to make the United Nations a strong organization, a bastion of peace and security. We should not be hemmed in by age-old ideas of power politics. We should make full use of the Charter of the United Nations, which is a living and dynamic document. It is essential for us to maintain inviolate the courage of our convictions. We should place a great premium on spiritual values, which alone have sustained mankind in times of triumph and tribulation up to the present day. We must all gird our loins to raise high the standard of freedom, justice and peace.

30. One of the tragedies of our world today is the scorn with which some view the whole question of international morality. To them it is anathema. They feel that problems can be solved only in terms of power politics and rigid legality or political expediency. What they fail to realize, however, is that our civilization, if it is to survive, should be humanistic and not purely technical. I am not advocating the wanton sacrifice of principles we hold so dear, but where some measure of accommodation can pave the way to the solution of a problem, we must not lack the courage to resort to it. We must not be afraid to reconsider our position, to re-examine our attitudes when changing circumstances make that inevitable. It is in this spirit that all of us who have pledged ourselves to observe the aims and purposes of the Charter should approach our responsibility.

31. It is in this spirit also that I approach the task entrusted to me as President of this General Assembly. I am confident that with your support and co-operation I will live up to your expectations. It gives me great courage to face my onerous responsibilities when I look back over the impressive succession of distinguished and dedicated former presidents who have left their imprint on the work of the General Assembly. Their record will serve me as a guide and inspiration.

32. And now, I deem it a great pleasure to pay a special tribute to my immediate predecessor, my friend and colleague, Mr. Carlos Sosa Rodríguez, whose efficient, dignified and impartial conduct of the eighteenth session of the General Assembly has won him universal applause and admiration. I shall endeavour, with your help, to follow in his footsteps and draw inspiration from his impressive record.

33. I also know that in all my endeavours I can count on the wisdom, knowledge and assistance of our Secretary-General. Let me here thank him for the magnificent work he is doing. He is in firm control at the head of the Secretariat, where his able lieutenants are giving of their best.

34. We have on the agenda of this nineteenth session many burning questions which call for our urgent and dedicated attention. Let us approach these problems in a sober and earnest mood devoid of all rancour. Our debates should reflect a genuine desire to seek solutions and to reach decisions. I am confident that the worthy precedents set by previous ses-

sions will be scrupulously observed, so that we may effectively complete the various items within the time available to us.

35. It will also be my special privilege and pleasure to preside over the admission of the new Member States of Malawi, Zambia and Malta. The birth of every new State is for us an occasion of great rejoicing, for it signifies the progressive eradication of the cancer of colonialism. Furthermore, the injection of new blood into our Organization will assure it a vigorous and fruitful existence and a realization of its goal of universality.

36. Let us all hope that in our lifetime it will be possible for us to see the complete eradication of domination and racialism. Let us attack the ramparts of oppression, ignorance, disease and poverty, and fulfil man's yearning for universal prosperity and progress. Let us work for humanity, not merely for nationality. Let us continue to work for peace. It is to this end that we should bend all our energies. This session of the General Assembly should take us a step nearer our objective.

37. I implore you to approach the work of this session in a spirit of frankness, courage and dedication and, with singleness of purpose, strive to bequeath to succeeding generations an effective world Organization, capable of ensuring the peace, happiness and well-being of mankind. The United Nations is our international Ship of State. It should cut through the icebergs and weather every storm. It must sail on. As the poet Longfellow put it:

*.... sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!*

38. What has begun as an Assembly of crisis should end as an Assembly of harmony and peace. May Divine Providence guide our deliberations.

ITEM 18 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Admission of new Members to the United Nations

39. The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly based on the statement by the Secretary-General, we shall now proceed with

the admission of new Members—Malawi, Malta, and Zambia. The Security Council has, in each case, made the appropriate recommendation to the General Assembly [A/5742, A/5769, A/5770].

40. If the General Assembly has no objection, I will take it that it agrees to the admission of Malawi as a Member of the United Nations.

It was so decided.

41. The PRESIDENT: I now declare Malawi admitted to membership of the United Nations.

The delegation of Malawi was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

42. The PRESIDENT: The second candidate for membership is Malta. If there is no objection, I will take it that the Assembly agrees to the admission of Malta as a Member of the United Nations.

It was so decided.

43. The PRESIDENT: I declare Malta admitted to membership of the United Nations.

The delegation of Malta was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

44. The third candidate for membership is Zambia. If there is no objection, I will take it that the Assembly agrees to the admission of Zambia as a Member of the United Nations.

It was so decided.

45. The PRESIDENT: I declare Zambia admitted to membership of the United Nations.

The delegation of Zambia was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

46. The PRESIDENT: Now that these new delegations have taken their seats, I feel I will be expressing the desire of all of us if I extend to them a sincere and cordial welcome on behalf of the Assembly as a whole.

47. The representatives who have indicated their desire to speak some words of welcome in their own names and in the names of a group of States will be able to do so tomorrow morning, immediately following the flag-raising ceremony, which will take place at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.