

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SIXTH SESSION

Official Records



333rd PLENARY MEETING

(OPENING MEETING)

Tuesday, 6 November 1951, at 3 p.m.

Palais de Chaillot, Paris

CONTENTS

	Page
Opening of the sixth session of the General Assembly.....	I
Minute of silent prayer or meditation.....	I
Statement by the Temporary President	I
Address by Mr. Vincent Auriol, President of the French Republic.....	I
Address by Mr. Nasrollah Entezam, President of the fifth session.....	3
Appointment of a Credentials Committee.....	4
Election of the President.....	4
Address by Mr. Luis Padilla Nervo, President of the sixth session.....	4

President : Mr. Luis PADILLA NERVO (Mexico).

Temporary President : Mr. Nasrollah ENTEZAM (Iran).

Opening of the sixth session of the General Assembly
[Agenda item 1]

The Temporary President and the Secretary-General of the United Nations conducted Mr. Vincent Auriol, President of the French Republic, to the rostrum.

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*translated from French*) : I declare the sixth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations open.

Minute of silent prayer or meditation
[Agenda item 2]

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*translated from French*) : In accordance with rule 64 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to rise and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The representatives stood in silence.

Statement by the Temporary President

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*translated from French*) : Mr. President of the French Republic, it is a great honour for me to be able, by virtue of my office, to greet you and to welcome you to these precincts on behalf of the General Assembly now about to hold its meetings here.

4. For the second time in three years France extends a welcome to the General Assembly of the United Nations in its capital and the President of the French Republic honours the opening of the General Assembly's session with his presence.

5. The representatives of the sixty States comprising the General Assembly are sincerely grateful to you for having furnished by your presence here fresh proof of the importance which the President of the French Republic attaches to the United Nations and of his faith in the ideals for which it stands and in the purposes it seeks to achieve.

May the setting and atmosphere of Paris inspire us in our efforts to organize peace.

6. I would ask you, Mr. President, to convey to the Government of the French Republic the General Assembly's sense of gratitude for the magnificent hospitality it is offering us.

Address by Mr. Vincent Auriol, President of the French Republic

7. Mr. Vincent AURIOL (President of the French Republic) (*translated from French*) : Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for receiving me in your precincts. Thank you for your welcome. Thank you, Mr. President, for your remarks.

The printed Official Records of the sixth session of the General Assembly are being published in fascicule form, that is, the record of each meeting will be issued separately as soon as possible. These will be so produced that they may eventually be bound into volumes, by organ and session. Pagination will therefore be continuous throughout each series of fascicules representing the records of a single body, and at the end of the session there will be issued, for each series, a prefatory fascicule containing a title page, table of contents, list of members attending, initial agenda, and other prefatory material. This prefatory fascicule should be placed in front of the record of the opening meeting, before binding. For ease of recognition the fascicules of the opening and closing meetings will be clearly identified as such in the masthead.

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

8. In wishing you, on behalf of the French Republic, a most hearty welcome, I do not come before you merely to express the pride which Paris feels at having been chosen by you and her happiness in again acting as your host. I come before you solemnly to re-affirm the hope which our country places in the United Nations as the safeguard of world peace. That is not a blind hope. The anxieties which we voiced before you three years ago are far from having been removed. The difficulties have increased, as have the misunderstandings, the mistrust, the fanaticism and the violence, for blood has been shed. War—to which I shall attach no adjective—is still raging, bringing destruction and death in its train, while increasingly ominous threats are, as the report of your Secretary-General¹ points out, darkening the hearts and the lives of the peoples of the world.

9. In face of these threats which, in view of the interdependence of all nations, concern us all, individually and collectively, in face of the fears of the peoples we represent, who turn towards the United Nations as the supreme hope for their security and existence, it is our duty, when we weigh up the forces of peace, to ask ourselves the question: what can the United Nations do? To what extent is it capable of satisfying the hopes of the nations and of mankind?

10. When the Charter was unanimously signed six years ago, at the end of an appalling world war the lessons of which were still fresh in everybody's mind, it appeared, and rightly, that the struggle for peace and collective security was inseparable from the struggle against ignorance, disease and poverty and that by working for economic, social, legal and intellectual progress, in every form and on a world scale, we would thereby eliminate the causes of conflict and create conditions favourable for the political solution of the problems of peace.

11. Hence the great volume of work done both by the Councils of the United Nations itself and by the specialized agencies—the activities and number of which show a gratifying tendency to increase in proportion to needs—work which in too many cases is practically unknown to the public. I have had occasion in the past to stress this fact before those excellent national and international associations and non-governmental organizations which have made themselves responsible for spreading knowledge of the United Nations and for providing the United Nations with the essential backing of the people's will. We must use all the modern media of information to make more and more people aware of the reality of the United Nations and of its work. Thus will we convince the sceptical, the hesitant and the lukewarm, all those who regard the international community as a remote, utopian goal of no immediate or practical significance.

12. It is fitting to mention the work accomplished by the specialized agencies in the fields of labour, agricultural development and public health. People must no longer, for example, be allowed to forget the millions of children who have been helped, the millions of children who have been immunized against tuberculosis thanks to the gigantic campaign conducted by the International Children's Emergency Fund and the International Children's Centre. People must be made aware of the fact that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is not only reducing illiteracy by multiplying centres of basic education but is preparing the way for

universal and whole-hearted co-operation by co-ordinating the work of international associations of specialists and by promoting the free movement of persons and scientific material for educational and cultural purposes. There is certainly no need for me to describe in detail what we already owe to all the specialized agencies, including the International Refugee Organization which has found new homes and new work for more than a million displaced persons.

13. Each of these organizations is a positive centre of peace and co-operation. Together with the Councils which are an integral part of the United Nations itself, they are the effective instruments of the fine expanded programme of technical assistance for economic development, social welfare and public administration. Each day they add more reality to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was approved unanimously by your Assembly in 1948 [*resolution 217 A (III)*] and the simultaneous, supervised and sincere application of which by all the signatory countries would suffice to provide the world with an era of peace, security and prosperity without precedent in history.

14. For in truth the problem we have to deal with is this: whereas in economic, social and legal matters, and in education, the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations have, despite delay, hesitancy and occasional setbacks, been applied and have benefited millions of human beings; whereas the foundations of an international life marked by confidence and prosperity have been laid; whereas international groups of thinkers, scholars and experts are being set up in ever larger numbers so that through them it will be possible to consolidate and speed up the progress achieved; whereas all the nations are interdependent and hence, quite apart from any moral obligations, bound to live in unity, yet in spite of all this peace is insecure and the United Nations is struggling to perform its first duty under the Charter, to preserve future generations from the scourge of war.

15. How, then, can we put an end to the present crisis and so prevent another world conflict which would be as absurd as it would be criminal? Reflecting on the causes of wars, the great philosopher Henri Bergson said: "None of these difficulties is insurmountable if a sufficient portion of mankind is determined to surmount them. But they have to be squarely faced: we must know what we are agreeing to when we ask for the abolition of war".

16. Accordingly, a first condition is that we must show determination. We must want peace. This means we must not agree that war is inevitable; it means we must not allow ourselves to drift with events, but rather, must anticipate, guide and master them. It means participating in good time in efforts to make armed collective security a reality, with all the consequences and all the responsibilities which such a commitment implies, even if for the time being the threat should appear only indirect.

17. And so we come to the second condition: we must know what we are agreeing to. The United Nations is not a State amongst States, nor is it a club or a forum where once a year governments meet to exchange ideas or polemics. It is the Organization in which we are all associated. Whether a world order of justice, peace and freedom, and hence our own security, can be established will depend on its strength. But the strength of the Organization depends on ourselves and, in the final analysis, on our determination to agree to the sacrifices and limi-

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Session, Supplement No. 1*.

tation of sovereignty necessary for the organization and defence of peace. For these France has already solemnly committed itself, subject to reciprocity and in keeping with the terms of the French Constitution.

18. This country, which has not yet fully rebuilt its ruins, which is trying to transform Europe into a united and prosperous federation open to all and which, having learned from painful experience, does not regard the regional pacts concluded within the limits of our Organization as more than provisional and necessary instruments of joint defence, accordingly supports by tradition and on grounds of principle all endeavours to strengthen collective security and will unhesitatingly associate itself with any concrete initiative likely to make collective security more effective.

19. We have no fonder wish than to see the establishment of permanent and simultaneous control in all countries of all armaments, whether conventional or atomic; it is our sincerest desire that an international army may gradually take the place of national armies, which would then become mere police forces. We ardently hope to see the day when persons, ideas and wealth will move freely across all frontiers and when the political systems which the peoples have given themselves will be respected by all without outside interference in any form or by any means.

20. Since, in order to obtain peace it is obviously not enough to combat poverty and ignorance but to dispel fear and destruction, and since peace is first and foremost a great act of trust, I will make bold to say that, if the distinguished men towards whom all anxious eyes are now turned were to come here to attend this session, not of course, to participate directly in your proceedings but to establish human contact with each other, to exchange ideas personally, to consider their differences without any agenda or public debate, and to try within the scope and in keeping with the principles of the United Nations jointly to reduce the disagreements which paralyse the world—if this should happen, we would welcome them with a joy which, I am convinced, would become world-wide.

21. Statesmen can earn no greater distinction than to seek that peace which will enable the peoples to prosper in the path they have chosen and permit men to work in happiness and security in the free and pacified atmosphere of their own countries.

22. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*translated from French*): I suspend the meeting for five minutes in order that we may accompany the President of the French Republic.

The Temporary President and the Secretary-General accompanied Mr. Vincent Auriol, President of the French Republic, from the Assembly hall.

Address by Mr. Nasrollah Entezani, President of the fifth session

23. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*translated from French*): In my capacity as acting President I have the privilege of inaugurating the work of the sixth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

24. It was only yesterday that the fifth session was declared closed, after more than a year of multifarious activities and a sometimes agitated existence.

25. In the political field, Korea and, more generally, the Far East held the Assembly's attention most constantly and for the longest time. On that subject the Assembly

adopted several important decisions, dealing with the unification and rehabilitation of Korea, the cessation of hostilities and the intervention of the People's Republic of China. Moreover, the events in Korea induced the Assembly to adopt a series of measures aimed at reinforcing the system of collective security by an appropriate use of the Assembly's competence and powers.

26. I should like to draw your attention to the true nature and profound meaning of the various resolutions the Assembly adopted on these subjects. Although these resolutions have a single aim, the establishment and maintenance of peace, they show two tendencies and two complementary purposes. It was the Assembly's wish to affirm the determination of the United Nations to check any aggression from whatever source, and at the same time to provide the Member nations with the means of effectively opposing aggression. It is clear, however, that collective security and its reinforcement, as conceived by the Assembly, should be thought of and applied as a means of preventing war.

27. The Assembly also made many attempts to bring about the cessation of hostilities and a peaceful settlement of the conflict. To refresh your memories, I would recall the constitution of the committee of three [*resolution 384 (V)*], the declaration of principle and the programme of action which were adopted by the Assembly, and lastly the establishment of the Good Offices Committee [*resolution 498 (V)*]. I would also recall the resolution [*377 (V)*] in which the Assembly recommended that the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics should meet to resume the consideration of outstanding problems, resolve fundamental differences and reach agreement in accordance with the spirit of the Charter. I would also recall the resolution [*494 (V)*] adopted by the General Assembly regarding the submission for study by the appropriate organs of the United Nations of the various points in the Secretary-General's memorandum on the development of a twenty-year programme for achieving peace through the United Nations.

28. Thus, it seems to me, resistance to aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes have been the two facets of the work of the fifth session. In pursuing that work, the Assembly has shown itself faithful to Chapter I of the Charter, which, in connexion with the maintenance of international peace and security, urges the necessity both of taking "effective collective measures... for the suppression of acts of aggression" and of bringing about "by peaceful means... adjustment or settlement of... disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace".

29. Furthermore, we are well aware that, if peace is to be established and maintained, it is not enough to resist aggression or bring about the peaceful settlement of disputes. Action at once bold and patient must be taken to develop international co-operation so as to ensure economic and social progress, and more particularly, to raise the standard of living of the peoples. Here again, the Assembly has done useful work by furthering the application of the expanded programme of technical assistance. In this field, as in many others, much remains to be done, but the direction has been shown and the way prepared.

30. It is not for me to trace the programme of your future work, and still less to prejudge its conclusion. I shall, however, ask your permission to make an observation and express a hope. When, on 19 September 1950, the Assembly began the work of its fifth session the situation was grave; international tension was greater than at any other time

and fear of a general conflict weighed upon the minds of all. I think I may say that the same is no longer true today. The difficulties are of course still great and the conflicts of interests and the clash of ideologies persist. Nevertheless, the chances of a successful conclusion of the armistice negotiations now being conducted in Korea seem to have increased and the time no longer seems far distant when hostilities will come to an end. It seems no exaggeration to say that, if that possibility were to become a reality, the face of things and, to a certain extent, the international climate and the general atmosphere would be appreciably changed.

31. I should consider that I was failing in my duty as Temporary President if I did not display optimism, I mean a reasoned and moderate optimism equally remote from rash hope and unconsidered scepticism. To be an optimist in present circumstances is to display faith in the United Nations, in the validity of its principles and the effectiveness of its methods.

32. Never before, perhaps, has the expectation of the peoples been keener or in some respects more anxious. No one, of course, expects this Assembly to resolve the problems which have been accumulating for several years by sleight of hand or by some magic operation. Most people, however, hope that you will define the elements of the problems and make a beginning with their settlement. All know that if use is made of the United Nations, its Charter, its machinery and its procedures, they can help to find solutions for the most difficult problems. The Assembly is and remains the meeting place, the centre of discussion, for the most varied countries and régimes. That is to say, it provides all with the opportunity of consultations which may lead to the necessary compromises.

33. I am confident that I interpret the desires of all nations when I express the fervent wish that the deliberations of this Assembly may mark a decisive turning-point towards the improvement of international relations.

Appointment of a Credentials Committee

[Agenda item 3]

34. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*translated from French*): The first act which devolves upon the Temporary President is the appointment of the Credentials Committee. Under rule 28 of the rules of procedure the Committee shall consist of nine members, appointed by the General Assembly on the proposal of the President. In accordance with this rule I propose that the General Assembly appoint the following countries members of the Credentials Committee: Bolivia, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ethiopia, France, Haïti, Indonesia, Iraq, New Zealand and Norway. If there are no objections I shall consider the Committee appointed.

It was so decided.

Election of the President

[Agenda item 4]

35. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*translated from French*): The next item on the agenda is the election of the President of the sixth session of the General Assembly. Rule 92 of the rules of procedure states that all elections shall be held by secret ballot and that there shall be no nominations. We shall therefore proceed to the vote forthwith. I request each delegation to write on the ballot paper the name of the person for whom it wishes to vote.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

At the invitation of the Temporary President, Mr. Bokhari (Pakistan) and Mr. Sandler (Sweden) acted as tellers.

Number of ballot papers :	59
Invalid ballots :	0
Number of valid ballots :	59
Abstentions :	0
Number of valid votes cast :	59
Required majority :	30

Number of votes obtained :

Mr. Padilla Nervo (Mexico)	44
Mr. Belaúnde (Peru)	9
Mr. Costa du Rels (Bolivia)	6

Mr. Padilla Nervo (Mexico), having obtained the required majority of the Members present and voting, was elected President of the sixth session of the General Assembly, and took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Luis Padilla Nervo, President of the sixth session

36. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Spanish*): The General Assembly has done me the very great honour of electing me President of its sixth session. I thank you all for this distinction, which I take as being conferred rather upon my country, both as a loyal and steadfast Member of the United Nations and as an integral part of the Latin-American group of countries which have continued to do their utmost to further the aims of this Organization.

37. I fully realize the responsibility you have placed upon me. I shall, in order to discharge my duties successfully as is the desire of all of us, require your friendly and unfailing co-operation, and I know in advance that even without my expressly requesting it each one of you will be prepared to extend it to me spontaneously, enthusiastically and generously. I thank you for this also.

38. Peace is the fundamental theme of the sessions of the General Assembly. It is therefore our duty to concern ourselves with it at a time which is not especially more critical or more difficult than during any other year since 1946, but which is nevertheless a period when world peace seems to be seriously threatened. Is that indeed the case? Should we admit that our efforts have been fruitless and that year after year, week after week, we are, each day, approaching the inevitable moment of yet another catastrophe? That is not my impression. I am, on the contrary, convinced that, in spite of the considerable obstacles in the way, the endeavours of the United Nations are, day by day, bringing nearer the time when the peoples of the world will, thanks to those endeavours, see their hopes of peace and justice become a reality.

39. Many have, all too soon, forgotten the horrors of the last war and imagine that, without having yet achieved peace, we are moving towards a third world war. It is, however, sufficient to recall the destruction wrought by the war between 1939 and 1945 in order to realize how far we have progressed, not only in the reconstruction of devastated areas but in the establishment of new concepts and new realities upon which our new peace of freedom and justice must be based. I do not exaggerate when I say that each of the meetings of the General Assembly has constituted a step forward towards social well-being and peace.

40. Let me emphasize an essential aspect of the work of the United Nations which would suffice in itself to justify and ennoble its existence. I refer to its efforts in the cause

of freedom. Freedom of nations and freedom of individuals is an indispensable condition for peace. Subjection to a foreign influence, whether it be another nation or another individual, whether it be a doctrine or a way of life which is imposed, can only result in violence and destruction. I am sure that the world will never again tolerate a peace based on slavery.

41. Through the United Nations the number of free countries has increased and will continue to increase. Along with this movement towards national freedom, in the very spirit of the Charter, there are others, no less important, brought about through a relationship of equality and co-operation among the Member States of the Organization.

42. Thus, in the conviction that material force does not over-shadow all aspects of international relations, the medium-sized and small countries have come nearer to achieving a full realization of their personality and of their rights as free States. A tendency towards effective equality between large and small countries has developed continuously in the joint consideration of international problems. For, just as we know that there can be no peace without freedom, neither can we overlook the fact that at the present time freedom cannot exist without equality and that equality, if it is to be fruitful, cannot be enclosed within the abstract limits of legal forms, but must give some tangible demonstration of equality of opportunity for nations and for individuals, so that all may have a fair share of the material and spiritual benefits of life. Hence the immense importance of the programme of assistance to under-developed countries as a factor of equalization and freedom. Whatever the present limitations of this programme, the fact that it exists is, in itself, proof that the United Nations has recognized and pointed to an unquestionable source of human benefits.

43. In the course of our deliberations, we must always bear in mind the sacrifices of those who are fighting and dying in Korea and the sufferings and distressing situation

of the Korean people, so as not to dissipate our efforts for the re-establishment of peace in that part of the world. The termination of hostilities in Korea under conditions in keeping with the political objectives of the United Nations will constitute real progress towards general peace and will facilitate the peaceful and just settlement of many other problems.

44. The efforts which this Assembly will certainly make to perfect the machinery of collective security—and which will make it possible, on the basis of the experience acquired in Korea, to establish conditions to hinder or combat any possible aggression—constitute, as Mr. Entezam has so eloquently stated, not an end but a means and an instrument for achieving the true and essential aim of this Organization which is, and will remain, the maintenance of international peace.

45. Let me, in closing, emphasize a point which my illustrious predecessor made in his speech. This Assembly continues to be the meeting place and the centre of discussion for widely different countries and ideologies. In other words, it affords to all the opportunity of entering into consultations which may lead to the necessary agreement.

46. It is my fondest hope that we may make of this sixth session the Assembly of consultation and negotiation and that you may, with your efforts, your firm determination and your generosity, succeed in creating a propitious atmosphere and the necessary conditions for progress in the peaceful settlement of the political problems oppressing the world.

47. In view of the lateness of the hour, and since the Assembly is next called upon to deal with the constitution of the General Committee, I suggest that the meeting should be adjourned until 3 p.m. tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.