



**REPORT OF THE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE RATIONALIZATION  
OF THE PROCEDURES AND ORGANIZATION  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL RECORDS: TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION**

**SUPPLEMENT No. 26 (A/8426)**

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**New York, 1971**

#### **NOTE**

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 1898th plenary meeting, on 9 November 1970, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2632 (XXV) establishing the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly. That resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

Recognizing that the growth of its responsibilities and membership makes desirable a review of its procedures and the organization of its work,

Conscious of the fact that the United Nations is being increasingly called upon to meet new challenges and undertake new initiatives,

Mindful of the need to ensure that all important political and developmental items are discussed in the appropriate forum and continue to receive full consideration,

1. Requests the President of the General Assembly to establish during its present session a Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly, consisting of thirty-one Member States, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, to study ways and means of improving the procedures and organization of the Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including the allocation of agenda items, the organization of work, documentation, rules of procedure and related questions, methods and practices, and to submit a report to the Assembly at its twenty-sixth session;

2. Requests the Governments of Member States to give the Committee all the assistance it may require in pursuance of the present resolution and to submit their views and suggestions to the Committee by 28 February 1971;

3. Requests the specialized agencies to provide any relevant information regarding the procedures applying to their respective organizations;

4. Further requests the Secretary-General to give every assistance to the Committee in the performance of its task;

5. Authorizes the Committee to maintain and circulate summary records of its proceedings."

The Special Committee held 45 meetings, from 2 February to 9 July and from 8 to 17 September 1971. 1/

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1/ For the summary records of the meetings, see A/AC.149/SR.1-12 (vol. I), SR.13-23 (vol. II), SR.24-34 (vol. III) and SR.35-45 (vol. IV).

(a) Membership

2. At the 1933rd plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on 17 December 1970, the President of the Assembly announced that, in pursuance of paragraph 1 of the above resolution, he had appointed the members of the Special Committee. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: 2/

Afghanistan	Netherlands
Austria	Nigeria
Barbados	Pakistan
Bolivia	Philippines
Brazil	Poland
Burundi	Romania
Cameroon	Senegal
Canada	Tunisia
Chile	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Denmark	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Egypt	United States of America
France	Venezuela
Greece	Yugoslavia
India	Zambia
Japan	
Lebanon	
Liberia	

(b) Officers

3. The following were elected officers of the Special Committee: 3/

Chairman: Mr. Otto R. Borch (Denmark)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Ibrahima Boye (Senegal)  
Mr. Eugeniusz Kulaga (Poland)  
Mr. Motoo Ogiso (Japan)

Rapporteur: Mr. Bernardo Brito (Brazil), from 2 February to 4 June  
Mr. Ronaldo M. Sardenberg (Brazil), from 4 June

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2/ For the list of representatives, see annex I A.

3/ See A/AC.149/SR.1 (vol. I, p. 6) and SR.21 (vol. II, p. 124).

(c) Secretariat

4. Mr. Constantin A. Stavropoulos, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs, represented the Secretary-General at the meetings of the Special Committee. Mr. Jean Gazarian exercised the functions of Secretary of the Committee, Miss Kwen Chen those of Deputy Secretary, and Mrs. Isabel Bautista, Mr. Alexei Laptev, Mr. Macaire Pédanou, Miss Alice Bernard-Jones and Miss Farida Ayoub those of Assistant Secretary.

(d) Agenda

5. The Special Committee adopted the following agenda: 4/

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Organization of work.
5. Study of ways and means of improving the procedures and organization of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including the allocation of agenda items, the organization of work, documentation, rules of procedure and related questions, methods and practices.
6. Adoption of the report.

(e) Organization of work

6. The Special Committee decided that it would hold closed meetings but that the representatives of Member States which were not represented in the Committee would be allowed to attend meetings and to elaborate orally on the replies submitted by their Governments. 5/

7. Considering that their experience would be extremely useful to it in its work, the Special Committee decided to invite all the former Presidents of the General Assembly, and the Chairmen of the Main Committees for the twentieth to the twenty-fifth sessions, to submit in writing to the Committee, if they so desired, any views and suggestions they might wish to put forward with regard to the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. 6/

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4/ See A/AC.149/SR.1 (vol. I, p. 7).

5/ See A/AC.149/SR.2 (vol. I, p. 18).

6/ See A/AC.149/SR.2 (vol. I, p. 28).

8. After a general debate, during which delegations expressed their views on questions relating to the rationalization and organization of the General Assembly as a whole, the Committee decided to consider in detail the various suggestions which had been submitted to it.

(f) Working and drafting groups

9. The Special Committee established two working groups 7/ and three drafting groups 8/ to help it in its work, instructing them to consider the following questions:

First Working Group	General Committee, agenda
Second Working Group	Documentation
First Drafting Group	Opening of meetings at the scheduled time, quorum
Second Drafting Group	Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers, explanations of vote, right of reply, points of order
Third Drafting Group	Congratulations, condolences

(g) Documentation

10. The Special Committee decided that the summary records of the meetings should initially be given restricted distribution but should be available on request to Member States which were not members of the Committee. 9/ The Committee later decided that the records should be given general distribution. 10/ The Committee also decided that its documentation would be given limited distribution and that its working papers would have restricted distribution. 11/ The basic documents which the Special Committee had before it were the following: 12/

A/AC.149/

- (a) Synopsis of proposals considered by previous committees which were not acted upon by the General Assembly . . . . . L.2
- (b) Statistical data on the General Assembly and the Main Committees 13/. . . . . L.4

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7/ For the membership of the working groups, see annex I B.  
8/ For the membership of the drafting groups, see annex I C.  
9/ See A/AC.149/SR.2 (vol. I, p. 19).  
10/ See A/AC.149/SR.33 (vol. III, p. 155).  
11/ See A/AC.149/SR.2 (vol. I, p. 24).  
12/ For the complete list of documents, see annex II.  
13/ See annex III.



- (c) Views and suggestions submitted by Member States . . . . . L.5 and Add.1-4
- (d) Information submitted by the specialized agencies. . L.6 and Add.1
- (e) Views and suggestions submitted by former Presidents of the General Assembly and former Chairmen of Main Committees . . . . . L.7 and Add.1-3
- (f) Analytical summary of views and suggestions submitted to the Special Committee by Member States, former Presidents of the General Assembly and former Chairmen of Main Committees 14/ . . . . . L.8/Rev.1

Since the Committee discussed thoroughly the views and suggestions set forth in the analytical summary mentioned in (f), the headings of sections II-XI as they appear in that document are retained in this report.

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14/ See annex IV.

## II. MANDATE OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE 15/

11. The question of the Special Committee's mandate gave rise to a large number of comments of which the Committee took note without, however, considering them individually.

12. The members of the Special Committee agreed that the existing rules of procedure were generally satisfactory and that most improvements would be achieved not through changes in the rules of procedure but through better application of the existing rules, due account being taken of the conclusions of the Special Committee and of the various committees responsible for reviewing the procedures and organization of the General Assembly.

13. The Special Committee considered, moreover, that it would be desirable to review from time to time the procedures and organization of the General Assembly.

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<sup>15/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 6-12, and A/AC.149/SR.30 (vol. III, p. 112) and SR.35 (vol. IV).

### III. GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF SESSIONS<sup>16/</sup>

#### A. Opening date

14. The Special Committee considered suggestions for changing the opening date of the regular session, either by making it the first Tuesday in September or by setting a later opening date, or even by changing it to 15 January.

15. During the discussion, the representative of the Secretary-General pointed out that, if the session could open one week later, i.e. the fourth Tuesday in September, delegations and the Secretariat would have more time to prepare for it, thereby enabling the Assembly to complete its work in 12 weeks. <sup>17/</sup>

16. Against the suggestion to change the opening date of sessions, it was pointed out that for many years the work programme had been prepared on the basis of the present date, which was satisfactory, and there was therefore no reason to change it.

17. The Special Committee took note of the comments of the representative of the Secretary-General that postponement of the opening date for one week would facilitate preparations for the session without delaying its closure.

18. The Special Committee, however, is of the opinion that it would not be desirable to change the date fixed for the opening of sessions.

#### B. Duration of sessions

19. The Special Committee had before it proposals to limit the duration of sessions to 12 weeks, 10 weeks and even 8 weeks.

20. The members of the Special Committee who favoured a reduction in the length of sessions felt that the various rationalization measures contemplated by the Committee should make such a reduction possible. They stressed that a reduction in the length of sessions would benefit in particular the delegations of small countries, which could not spare their officials for a long period.

21. On the other hand, it was argued that the present duration of 13 weeks, which had been maintained for several years despite the considerable increase in the number of Member States, was entirely satisfactory.

22. The Special Committee, noting that, despite the appreciable increase in the number of Member States, it has been possible to maintain an average duration of

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<sup>16/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 13-19, and A/AC.149/SR.26 (vol. III, p. 39), SR.29 (vol. III, p. 90), SR.35 (vol. IV) and SR.41 (vol. IV).

<sup>17/</sup> For the decision concerning the duration of sessions, see para. 22.

13 weeks for regular sessions, is of the view that this period should not be changed and that, in any case, the session should end before Christmas.

23. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that the session should be divided into two parts. The Committee likewise did not endorse the suggestion that the session should theoretically last a whole year and should merely be adjourned after a two-month main session.

#### C. Residuary sessions

24. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that a brief meeting of the General Assembly, to be called a "residuary session", might be held at heads-of-mission level about the end of April for the discussion of certain administrative and routine questions.

#### IV. GENERAL COMMITTEE

25. The Special Committee had before it a considerable number of proposals relating to the composition of the General Committee, its functions and ways of facilitating its work.

26. Following a general discussion of the proposals as a whole, which is summarized below (see paras. 29, 30, 34, 35, 39, 40, 43, 44, 47, 48, 52, 53, 56 and 57), the Special Committee decided to refer the question of the General Committee to a working group, which was also instructed to consider the question of the agenda (see section V).

27. The First Working Group, composed of Austria, France, India, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zambia, was under the chairmanship of the representative of Venezuela. It held 16 meetings.

##### A. Composition of the General Committee<sup>18/</sup>

###### 1. Increase in membership

28. The Special Committee had before it a proposal that, in view of the increased number of Member States, the General Committee's membership should be expanded by increasing by five the number of Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly.

29. In support of that proposal, it was observed that the composition of the General Committee, which had remained stable since the eighteenth session, did not reflect the substantial increase in the number of Member States. By expanding the membership of the General Committee and thus making possible an increased participation by the different regional groups, a proper balance would be restored between the membership of the General Committee and the total membership of the Organization. It was also noted that, if the Committee was to be given a more important role, its size should be increased accordingly. Furthermore, it was suggested during the discussion that the Chairman of the Credentials Committee should be authorized to attend meetings of the General Committee and to participate without vote in the debates.

30. On the other hand, it was stressed that in recent years the General Committee had worked satisfactorily and that an enlargement of its membership might impair the effectiveness of its procedures. Moreover, it was observed that the General Committee merely made recommendations to the General Assembly and that the representatives of all Member States had the right to express their views in the plenary.

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<sup>18/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 21-24, and A/AC.149/SR.16 (vol. II, p. 48), SR.17 (vol. II, p. 60), SR.20 (vol. II, p. 102), SR.34 (vol. III, p. 158), SR.35 (vol. IV), SR.40 (vol. IV), SR.41 (vol. IV) and SR.44 (vol. IV).

31. After having noted the opinion expressed by the Working Group, 19/ the Special Committee decided not to take any action on the question of either maintaining or increasing the present membership of the General Committee.

32. Furthermore, the Special Committee did not retain the suggestion that the Chairman of the Credentials Committee should be authorized to participate in the work of the General Committee.

2. Absence of members of the General Committee elected in their personal capacity

33. The Special Committee considered a proposal that, when the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a Main Committee is unable to attend a meeting of the General Committee, the head of the delegation to which the Committee Chairman belongs should be empowered to appoint a representative to attend the meeting.

34. The members of the Special Committee who supported that proposal stressed the importance of the tasks before the General Committee and the need to maintain permanently an equitable geographical distribution. They emphasized that the Chairmen of Main Committees, though elected in their personal capacity, also represented a geographical region and that the balance established by General Assembly resolution 1990 (XVIII) should be maintained.

35. Other members of the Special Committee argued that the Chairman represented primarily the Committee which had elected him. They pointed out that, for precisely that reason, under rule 39 of the rules of procedure, the Chairman of a Main Committee, in case of absence, should designate the Vice-Chairman of the Committee as his substitute. Along those lines, it had even been proposed that the Committee might be represented by its Rapporteur. During the discussion, it was suggested that the number of Vice-Chairmen of Main Committees might be increased to three, thereby eliminating almost entirely the risk of non-representation of a Committee within the General Committee.

36. In the light of the comments made by the Working Group, 20/ the Special Committee considers that the problems which arise when the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a Main Committee cannot attend a meeting of the General Committee would be settled for the most part if the General Assembly decided to increase the number of Vice-Chairmen of the Main Committees (see para. 130).

37. The Special Committee also considers that, if the General Assembly took such a decision, the Chairman of a Main Committee, in designating a Vice-Chairman as his substitute, should take into account the representative character of the General Committee.

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19/ A/AC.149/R.14, para. 4.

20/ A/AC.149/R.14, paras. 6 and 7.

B. Functions of the General Committee<sup>21/</sup>

1. Importance of the role of the General Committee

38. The Special Committee had before it a number of comments concerning the General Committee's mandate. In particular, it was suggested that the General Committee should be more active in performing its functions and thus act as a steering committee and that it should be given due authority to organize the work and above all to ensure that decisions on the organization of work taken in the plenary and the Main Committees are implemented.

39. In support of these suggestions, it was pointed out that the General Committee, whose composition reflected the various tendencies represented within the Organization, had enough scope to be able to take an active and continuous part in the work of the General Assembly. Its role should be expanded and strengthened within the framework of the rules of procedure, whose provisions were already satisfactory but not fully applied. Finally, it was observed that the General Committee had a cardinal role to play in the performance of the work of the General Assembly and that by conferring more extensive functions upon the General Committee the effectiveness of the Assembly would be increased.

40. On the other hand, it was noted that the General Committee had performed its functions satisfactorily. It was also noted that it would not be appropriate to increase its role. The General Committee, which was required to assist the President and facilitate the work of the General Assembly, should in no way act as a steering committee.

41. After having examined the Working Group's proposal, <sup>22/</sup>the Special Committee considers that the General Committee, in view of the functions conferred on it by the rules of procedure, should play a major role in advancing the rational organization and general conduct of the proceedings of the General Assembly. The Committee is of the opinion that the General Committee should discharge completely and effectively the functions assigned to it under rules 40, 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure whose purpose is to assist the Assembly in the general conduct of its work.

2. Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

42. In the comments on the General Committee's functions, it was emphasized that the provisions of rule 40 of the rules of procedure concerning the consideration of the agenda of the General Assembly should be fully applied. It was suggested that the General Committee could review the draft agenda more stringently in order to reduce it, when appropriate, to a length at which all items could be completed by the end of the session. Moreover, it was noted that the General Committee should be given greater authority to draw up the agenda,

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<sup>21/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 25-34, and A/AC.149/SR.17 (vol. II, p. 60), SR.20 (vol. II, p. 102) and SR.34 (vol. III, p. 158).

<sup>22/</sup> A/AC.149/R.14, para. 8.

allocate items among the Committees and defer some of them to a subsequent session. In this connexion, it was suggested that, once the General Committee had finalized the agenda, the General Assembly should merely vote on the recommendations submitted to it by the General Committee and not reopen the debate in plenary meeting.

43. The attention of members of the Special Committee was drawn to the fact that the General Committee did not make sufficient use of the explicit powers conferred on it by rule 40 of the rules of procedure concerning the inclusion of items in the agenda, the rejection of some requests for inclusion or the inclusion of items in the provisional agenda of a future session.

44. Conversely, it was pointed out that, since the major responsibility for deciding on its agenda was borne by the General Assembly, there was no reason for giving the General Committee increased authority in that respect. It was also pointed out that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, the General Committee should not discuss the substance of any item or decide any political question. With regard to the suggestion that the Assembly should merely vote on an agenda finalized by the General Committee, it was stated that such a procedure would deprive delegations of their right to express their views concerning the inclusion of any item on the draft agenda.

45. On the proposal of the Working Group,<sup>23/</sup> the Special Committee recommends that, within the framework of the functions conferred on it by the rules of procedure, and subject to the limitation prescribed in rule 40 as regards the discussion of the substance of an item, the General Committee should examine the provisional agenda, together with the supplementary list and requests for the inclusion of additional items, more attentively and carry out more fully and consistently its functions of recommending with regard to each item its inclusion in the agenda, the rejection of the request for inclusion or its inclusion in the provisional agenda of a future session, as well as of allocating items to the Main Committees regard being had to rules 99 and 101 of the rules of procedure, with a view to ensuring that all items inscribed on the agenda can be taken up by the end of the session.

### 3. Organization of the work of the General Assembly

46. In several of the comments submitted to the Special Committee, it was emphasized that the General Committee should actively carry out the role conferred on it by rule 42 of the rules of procedure and, specifically, that it should meet more frequently. In this connexion, it was suggested that it should hold a mid-session meeting in order to determine whether, in the light of progress made by then, some agenda items might be postponed until the following session. It was also suggested that the General Committee might be given certain additional functions in this field; it could, for instance, propose to the General Assembly a better organized schedule for the general debate, make better use of its wide powers with respect to the organization of work without, however, encroaching on the political powers which belonged exclusively to the General Assembly, encourage the practice of drawing up a time-table at the beginning of the session and

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<sup>23/</sup> A/AC.149/R.14, para. 10.



reviewing it during the session, make recommendations as to the order of priorities and the order in which the items should be discussed by the Main Committee, watch the work-load of all the Committees with a view to improving co-ordination, eliminating duplication and generally streamlining the conduct of business, consider the question of time-limits on statements and, lastly, see to it that the same procedures were applied in the plenary and in the Main Committees. It was observed, on the other hand, that the determination of the General Committee to perform fully the functions entrusted to it would be far more conducive to better-organized sessions than any amendment of existing texts. Finally, it was pointed out that the General Committee should deal only with important questions and leave the day-to-day management of the General Assembly to the President of the Assembly, the Chairmen of the Main Committees and the Secretariat.

47. Recalling the recommendation made by the General Assembly at its eighteenth session that the General Committee should meet at least once every three weeks, it was pointed out that, in order to discharge fully the functions conferred on it concerning the co-ordination of the proceedings of the Main Committees, the General Committee should meet more frequently.

48. On the other hand, it was contended that rules 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure, if applied, were quite adequate to ensure the General Committee an effective role in organizing the work of the General Assembly and there was no need to broaden the General Committee's powers or to draw up any rigid rule in this respect.

49. Bearing in mind the proposals of the Working Group,<sup>24/</sup> the Special Committee recalls the recommendation, in subparagraph (f) of General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII), that the General Committee should meet at least once every three weeks. The Special Committee notes that the recommendation has not been complied with and expresses the hope that the General Committee will be able to hold more frequent meetings, in conformity with rule 42 of the rules of procedure, without thereby interfering with the normal meeting schedule of the plenary and the Main Committees.

50. The Special Committee also considers that, in the discharge of the functions conferred by rules 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure and subject to the limitation prescribed in rule 41 regarding the decision of any political question, the General Committee should review the progress of the General Assembly and the Main Committees and should, as required, assist and make recommendations to the President and the Assembly for the co-ordination of the proceedings of the Main Committees and for expediting the general conduct of business.

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<sup>24/</sup> A/AC.149/R.14, paras. 12 and 13.

C. Ways of facilitating the work of the General Committee<sup>25/</sup>

1. Preparatory meetings

51. The Special Committee considered several proposals aimed at enabling the General Committee to meet before the opening of sessions in order not to delay the organization of the General Assembly. The preparatory work could be entrusted to the General Committee of the preceding session. Another possibility would be to constitute for that purpose, at the end of a given session, the General Committee of the following session.

52. In support of the holding of preliminary meetings, it was pointed out that many delegations found it difficult to prepare for the General Assembly because of the late date at which they received the draft agenda. If the General Committee could hold a pre-session meeting, Member States would be better acquainted with the contents of the draft agenda at an early stage and would be in a position, when the session opened, to take a decision on it. The General Committee could also present its first report to the Assembly immediately after the session opened.

53. On the other hand, it was pointed out that the suggestion that the outgoing General Committee should consider questions relating to the coming session would lead to duplication of work, for the draft agenda would be considered both by the previous session's General Committee and by the new General Committee, and that in any case the suggestion was contrary to rule 31 of the rules of procedure whereby the functions of the President and the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly ceased after the close of the session at which they had been elected. Moreover, it would be impractical to elect a new General Committee at the end of the previous session, in particular because of the changes that might occur in the meantime.

54. In the light of the comments of the Working Group,<sup>26/</sup> the Special Committee does not consider that it is in a position to make any recommendation with regard to the holding of preparatory meetings of the General Committee.

2. Subsidiary organs

55. One of the suggestions submitted to the Special Committee was that certain working groups might help the General Committee in performing its functions. It was suggested, *inter alia*, that the unofficial weekly meetings of the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees should be institutionalized and that a sub-committee of the General Committee might be set up. During the discussion it was also suggested that a special committee

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<sup>25/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 35 and 36, and A/AC.149/SR.17 (vol. II, p. 60), SR.20 (vol. II, p. 102), SR.34 (vol. III, p. 158), SR.35 (vol. IV), SR.40 (vol. IV) and SR.42 (vol. IV).

<sup>26/</sup> A/AC.149/R.14, para. 14.

might be established to advise the Secretary-General on the preparation of the provisional agenda, thus obviating the difficulty of holding intersessional meetings of the General Committee (see para. 53).

56. Several members of the Special Committee stressed the usefulness of the weekly meetings attended by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Chairmen of Main Committees and members of the Secretariat dealing with the functioning of the Assembly, who might, so to speak, form a liaison committee responsible for the day-to-day organization of the work of the General Assembly. It was also pointed out that the proposed sub-committee of the General Committee might, at the beginning of the session, make recommendations for the general shaping of the agenda and, during the session, help the General Committee to review the agenda, the time-table, the allocation of items among the Committees and possible changes in that allocation.

57. The view was expressed that the usefulness of the weekly meetings of the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees was due precisely to the fact that they were of an informal nature. It was also pointed out that neither the proposed sub-committee of the General Committee nor the proposed advisory committee would be able to provide any tangible assistance to the General Committee, since the latter would still have to repeat much of the preparatory work to be carried out by these subsidiary organs.

58. In the light of the comments of the Working Group, 27/ the Special Committee does not consider that it is in a position to make any recommendation with regard to the establishment of subsidiary organs of the General Committee.

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27/ A/AC.149/R.14, para. 14.

## V. AGENDA

59. The Special Committee examined a large number of suggestions relating to the presentation and preliminary consideration of the provisional agenda, the reduction in the number of agenda items and the allocation of items.

60. Following a general discussion of the suggestions as a whole, which is summarized below (see paras. 62, 63, 68, 69, 72, 73, 77, 78, 82, 83, 87, 88, 93 and 94), the Special Committee decided to refer the question of the agenda to the First Working Group (see para. 27).

### A. Presentation and preliminary consideration of the provisional agenda 28/

61. The comments submitted to the Special Committee included suggestions relating to the provisional agenda drawn up under rule 12 of the rules of procedure, which is communicated to Member States 60 days before the opening of the session, and to the list of items proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda, of a purely unofficial nature, which is communicated to permanent missions by the Secretariat at the beginning of June to help delegations to prepare for the General Assembly. It was suggested that in both documents the Secretary-General might make suggestions regarding the allocation of the various items rather than give only a numerical listing. He might also be authorized to suggest the grouping or deferment of certain items. Lastly, it was suggested that, upon receipt of the provisional agenda, Member States might submit their views to the Secretary-General, for consideration by the General Committee, prior to the opening of the session.

62. It was pointed out that the adoption of the suggestions mentioned at the beginning of the preceding paragraph would give the Secretary-General greater freedom of action in the preparation of the provisional agenda. Also, the additional information he would communicate to the Member States would greatly facilitate the preparatory work of delegations. In the course of the discussion, the Committee members unanimously recognized the usefulness of the unofficial list of items sent to the permanent missions by the Secretariat and it was suggested that this list should be communicated to Member States earlier than the beginning of June. It was likewise suggested that the Secretary-General should prepare, for the use of delegations, an annotated agenda providing information on each item on the provisional agenda. Finally, it was suggested that at each session the General Assembly should adopt the agenda for the next session, on either a definitive or a provisional basis.

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<sup>28/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 38 and 39, and A/AC.149/SR.18 (vol. II, p. 80), SR.19 (vol. II, p. 86), SR.20 (vol. II, p. 102), SR.34 (vol. III, p. 158) and SR.37 (vol. IV).

63. In opposition to the suggestions aimed at giving the Secretary-General broader powers with regard to the drawing up of the agenda, it was argued that the method currently in force was satisfactory because it allowed each State to influence the decisions of the General Assembly. If the Secretary-General were entrusted with the allocation and grouping of agenda items - a task which often had political implications - he might on some occasions be placed in a very delicate position. With regard to the suggestion that the Assembly should at a given session adopt the agenda for the following session, it was argued that such a procedure would be inappropriate if approval were to be definitive, since the Assembly would be prejudging the decisions to be taken at a forthcoming session; if approval were to be provisional, the suggestion was superfluous, since the agenda would then have to be examined twice.

64. On the proposal of the Working Group, 29/ the Special Committee, aware of the need to assist delegations, to the greatest extent possible, to prepare for the work of the General Assembly, recommends to the Assembly that the Secretary-General should be requested:

(a) To communicate to Member States, not later than 15 February, the unofficial list of items proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda of the Assembly;

(b) To communicate to Member States, not later than 15 June, an annotated list of items which would indicate briefly the history of each item, the available documentation, the substance of the matter to be discussed and earlier decisions by United Nations organs;

(c) To communicate to Member States before the opening of the session an addendum to the annotated list.

65. Furthermore, the Special Committee recommends that Member States requesting the inclusion of an item should, if they deem it advisable, make a suggestion concerning its referral to a Main Committee or to the plenary Assembly.

#### B. Reduction in the number of agenda items 30/

66. Many of the observations submitted to the Special Committee drew its attention to ways of reducing the number of items on the General Assembly's agenda.

##### 1. Non-inclusion of certain items

67. Several proposals submitted to the Special Committee emphasized the need to eliminate certain items which appear yearly on the agenda without the expectation that any progress will be made with regard to them. To that end, it was suggested

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29/ A/AC.149/R.14, paras. 16 and 17.

30/ See annex IV, paras. 40-50, and A/AC.149/SR.18 (vol. II, p. 80), SR.19 (vol. II, p. 86), SR.20 (vol. II, p. 102), SR.34 (vol. III, p. 158), SR.36 (vol. IV), SR.37 (vol. IV), SR.40 (vol. IV), SR.42 (vol. IV), and SR.44 (vol. IV).

that the draft agenda should be thoroughly scrutinized and that items already dealt with should not be included in the agenda of each session unless new developments warrant their continued inclusion. It was also suggested that more General Assembly resolutions might call for reports to be submitted to Member States or to organs other than the Assembly, that subsidiary bodies could report to the Secretary-General or to the General Assembly, as appropriate, and that, in certain cases, the Secretary-General should present to the Assembly a progress report of which it would take note without discussion. One of the observations submitted to the Committee did, however, stress that the so-called "chronic" items should not be deleted from the agenda unless the parties directly concerned agree or the Assembly has already taken a final decision on the subject, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to the satisfaction of the parties and other interested Member States.

68. In support of the proposals that certain items should not automatically be included in the agenda, it was pointed out that consideration of relatively unimportant subjects diverted the General Assembly's attention from its fundamental tasks and that, with the help of the General Committee, the Assembly should endeavour to lighten its agenda.

69. On the other hand, it was observed that the legitimate interests of all Member States should be taken into account and that it would be detrimental to the work of the General Assembly to consider the deletion of certain agenda items. It would in fact be arbitrary to decide before considering an item that no progress could be made with regard to it. It was even argued that the increase in the number of items on the agenda was a salutary trend, as it indicated the confidence which Member States placed in the United Nations.

70. On the proposal of the Working Group, 31/ the Special Committee, considering that the General Assembly should take into account the relative importance of agenda items in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, recommends to the Assembly that, in the context of rules 22 and 40 of the rules of procedure, Member States should take special interest in the contents of the Assembly's agenda and, in particular, in deciding on the appropriate solution of questions or on the elimination of items which have lost their urgency or relevance, are not ripe for consideration or could be dealt with and even disposed of equally well by subsidiary organs of the General Assembly.

2. Staggering of items over two or more years and grouping of related items 32/

71. The Special Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that the staggering of certain items over two or more years might be an effective means of reducing the number of items included in the agenda. It was also suggested that, as far as possible, related items should be grouped under the same title in order to avoid repetition; this method would make it possible to examine the various aspects of a single problem more efficiently. In this regard, it was pointed out that the

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31/ A/AC.149/R.14, para. 20.

32/ The parts entitled "Staggering of items over two or more years" (see annex IV, para. 43) and "Grouping of related items" (see annex IV, paras. 44-46) were considered together.

grouping of related items should not be subject to the consent of the countries which have proposed them for inclusion in the agenda and that, in certain cases, such grouping could be proposed by the Secretary-General.

72. In support of the above-mentioned proposals, it was noted that both the staggering of items over two or more years and the grouping of related items were aimed at concentrating the efforts of the General Assembly in order to increase its efficiency. The first of these measures would in fact make it possible to devote the requisite attention to problems which had been adequately prepared; the second would allow simultaneous consideration of all aspects of a single item and avoid repetition through a joint general debate.

73. It was, however, argued that in no case should there be any fixed rules regarding the staggering of agenda items. For example, the procedure could not be applied if it were opposed by the delegations directly concerned. Furthermore, it would be unthinkable to postpone consideration of serious political problems from year to year on the grounds that they were not ripe for discussion. It was also stressed that the inappropriate grouping of items which were not adequately related could introduce an element of confusion, give rise to unrelated interventions and, consequently, destroy the unity of the discussions.

74. In the light of the Working Group's proposals, 33/ the Special Committee considers that the staggering of items over two or more years constitutes one means of rationalizing the procedures of the General Assembly.

75. Moreover, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that, as far as possible and appropriate, related items should be grouped under the same title.

### 3. Referral to other organs

76. In the observations submitted to the Special Committee, it was suggested that the General Assembly should pay the greatest heed to the debates that have taken place in other United Nations organs, because their membership, although limited, reflects in its geographical distribution the various trends within the Organization. It was also suggested that certain items, which fall within the competence of another United Nations organ or a specialized agency and which have not yet been examined by them, might be referred directly to them for consideration and appropriate action. It was also observed that items on the agenda of the General Assembly which were also before the Economic and Social Council should be considered as a self-contained group, since these items give rise to lengthy discussions in the Second and Third Committees and to resolutions which duplicate those of the Council. To remedy this situation, only those items whose examination by the Assembly has been specifically requested by the Council or a Member State should be referred to the Second and Third Committees. The over-all report of the Council would be considered by the plenary towards the end of the Assembly session. Also, instead of submitting each year an over-all report on its activities, the Council might submit separate reports on topics which, in its opinion, are ready for Assembly review and require Assembly action.

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33/ A/AC.149/R.14, para. 22.

77. It was pointed out in support of the suggestion made at the beginning of the previous paragraph that the General Assembly should take account of debates in other organs and that by doing so it would curtail its own debates and increase its efficiency. In particular, the Economic and Social Council, in the light of its own experience, should be in a position to find solutions from which the Assembly could benefit. Thus, any new item in the economic, social, scientific or technical fields should be referred for previous consideration to the Council, which could make recommendations regarding the kind of decision the Assembly should take.

78. In opposition to the above proposals, it was stated that under no circumstances should it become automatic practice to refer questions to other organs and that it should always be for the General Assembly to decide whether to refer certain items to an organ of its choice. If items falling within the competence of the General Assembly were referred to the Council for previous consideration, the Council's workload would be increased and the degree of political control exercised over it by the General Assembly weakened. It would be wise, therefore, to continue the practice of giving detailed consideration in the Main Committees to the Council's report in order to enable all Member States to examine the results of that essentially technical organ's work in a more political context.

79. In the light of the Working Group's proposals, 34/ the Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should, where relevant, refer specific items to other United Nations organs or to specialized agencies, taking into account the nature of the question.

80. The Special Committee also recommends that the General Assembly should give due weight to the debates that have taken place in other organs.

#### 4. Non-receivability of certain additional items

81. It was suggested that the General Assembly should exercise some discretion with regard to the inclusion of additional items. It was pointed out inter alia that, while the General Committee cannot refuse to recommend the inclusion in the agenda of political questions which are of special concern to certain Member States, it should not recommend the inclusion of new economic, social and other questions unless it considers that one or another Committee will have the practical possibility of examining them, bearing in mind the number of items already included in its agenda. It was also suggested that requests for the inclusion of additional items should be accepted only if such items qualify as truly urgent and important, as provided in rule 15 of the rules of procedure, and that they should be included in the agenda only by decision of a two-thirds majority.

82. Several members of the Special Committee supported proposals that Member States should exercise discretion in submitting requests for the inclusion of additional items. They emphasized that the stipulation in rule 15 of the rules of procedure that additional questions should be both important and urgent could not be considered a dead letter.

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34/ A/AC.149/R.14, para. 24.



83. In opposition to these comments, it was pointed out that it would be unwarranted to try to restrict the right of Member States to request the inclusion of additional items. It was also stated that it would be arbitrary to decide that, because of their nature, some items should have priority over others.

84. On the proposal of the Working Group, 35/ the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that additional items, which are proposed for inclusion in the agenda less than 30 days before the opening of a session, should be included only if the conditions prescribed by rule 15 of the rules of procedure are fully satisfied.

#### C. Allocation of agenda items 36/

85. Many of the comments submitted mentioned the need to review the question of the allocation of agenda items in order to achieve a better distribution of the work among the Committees and to ensure that some of them were not dealing with similar subjects.

##### 1. Division of work among the Committees

86. Several of the comments submitted to the Special Committee drew attention to the importance of an efficient and balanced distribution of agenda items among the Committees of the General Assembly. A review of this matter should, it was suggested, produce arrangements which would lighten the burden of those Committees whose agenda was too heavy by allocating more items to those which seemed to have too few. In that connexion, the Special Committee should avoid too strict an emphasis on subject categories and should approach the question of allocating agenda items from the purely practical point of view of the possible workload of each Committee.

87. In support of these comments, it was emphasized that a certain flexibility in the allocation of agenda items would result in a better division of work among the Committees and thereby enhance their efficiency.

88. While admitting that some of the Main Committees have a heavier workload than others, several members of the Special Committee pointed out that rules 99 and 101 of the rules of procedure conferred a certain functional specialization on each Committee. It followed that the allocation of agenda items should be based not only on the workload of the Committees but also, and above all, on the nature of the items under consideration.

89. In the light of the Working Group's proposals, 37/ the Special Committee wishes to draw attention to the importance of a rational distribution of agenda

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35/ A/AC.149/R.14, para. 26.

36/ See annex IV, paras. 51-59, and A/AC.149/SR.18 (vol. II, p. 80), SR.19 (vol. II, p. 86), SR.20 (vol. II, p. 102), SR.34 (vol. III, p. 158) and SR.36 (vol. IV).

37/ A/AC.149/R.14, paras. 28 and 29.

items among the Main Committees. In this connexion, the Committee, recognizing that the structure of the Main Committees gives them specialization and experience, recommends that the allocation of agenda items should be based not only on the workload of the Committees but also on the nature of the item, regard being had to rules 99 and 101 of the rules of procedure (see para. 119).

90. The Special Committee also considers that it would be helpful if suggestions concerning the allocation of items were made much earlier so that Member States might have more time to study them.

91. Lastly, the Special Committee recommends that the General Committee and the General Assembly should consider, in some cases, the possibility of referring more items directly to the plenary.

## 2. Non-referral of certain items to two or more Committees

92. In the comments submitted to the Special Committee it was suggested that the General Committee, when allocating agenda items, should ensure that the same item is not considered by more than one Committee.

93. It was pointed out that, for the efficient conduct of the General Assembly's work and in order to avoid repetition of discussions, the same item should not be referred to two or more Committees.

94. Several members of the Special Committee observed, however, that one and the same item could sometimes be viewed from very different angles. It was possible, therefore, that in certain cases it would be necessary to refer an agenda item to more than one Committee.

95. On the proposal of the Working Group, 38/ the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that agenda items should be so allocated as to ensure, as far as possible, that the same questions or the same aspects of a question are not considered by more than one Committee.

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38/ A/AC.149/R.14, para. 31.

## VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES

### A. Functions of the individual Committees<sup>39/</sup>

96. The Special Committee had before it a wide range of suggestions concerning the sphere of competence of certain Main Committees.

97. There was general agreement among the members of the Special Committee that a flexible approach should be adopted towards the whole question of the division of work among the Main Committees and that the Committee should not make any recommendation concerning the referral of specific items, in order not to go beyond its field of competence.

98. The Special Committee, considering that the potential of the seven Main Committees should be utilized to the full, recommends that the General Assembly should ensure a more balanced division of work among the Committees, giving due account to the nature of items. The Committee does not, however, feel that it should specify which items might be transferred from one Committee to another.

99. The Special Committee, recognizing that the workload of a number of Committees is extremely heavy, is of the opinion that the General Assembly should advise those Committees so to organize their work as to enable them to consider their agenda in the most effective way.

#### 1. First Committee

100. Among the suggestions submitted to the Special Committee, it was proposed that all political and security questions should be dealt with by the First Committee. It was also proposed that the latter should be relieved of certain items so that it might devote itself entirely to problems of peace, security and disarmament. It was further suggested that the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency and, possibly, the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation should be submitted to the First Committee for consideration in the context of the debate on disarmament.

101. Most members of the Special Committee considered that the First Committee should devote itself to the major problems of peace, security and disarmament, on the understanding that this was a general principle and not a specific recommendation.

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<sup>39/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 60-71, and A/AC.149/SR.21 (vol. II, p. 124), SR.22 (vol. II, p. 136), SR.23 (vol. II, p. 154), SR.24 (vol. III, p. 12), SR. 26 (vol. III, p. 47), SR.31 (vol. III, pp. 123 and 130), SR.32 (vol. III, p. 134), SR.36 (vol. IV), SR.38 (vol. IV), SR.41 (vol. IV) and SR.42 (vol. IV).

102. On the other hand, it was stated that the First Committee should consider questions which had political and security implications, because the Committee's functions should not be limited to problems relating to the maintenance of peace.

103. The Special Committee, recognizing that the role of the First Committee is essentially political, recommends that this Committee devote itself primarily to problems of peace, security and disarmament.

104. The Special Committee, not wishing to make any specific recommendation concerning the allocation of agenda items (see para. 98), did not feel that it should take any decision on the proposal that the reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation should be submitted to the First Committee.

## 2. Special Political Committee

105. The Special Committee considered various proposals concerning the Special Political Committee. It was suggested, in particular, that this Committee should have allocated to it certain items customarily referred to the First Committee. It was even suggested that items allocated to Committees other than the First Committee might be transferred to the Special Political Committee. Lastly, it was proposed that the name of the Special Political Committee should be changed to "Second Committee", "Seventh Committee", "Special Committee" or "Special Subjects Committee".

106. It was observed that the limited number of items referred to the Special Political Committee was incompatible with its status as a Main Committee and that certain specialized items traditionally referred to the First Committee might with advantage be transferred to the Special Political Committee. Such a step would re-establish the balance between the agenda of the First Committee, which was overburdened, and that of the Special Political Committee, which clearly contained an insufficient number of items.

107. On the other hand, it was observed that it was essential to retain the political character of the Special Political Committee and not turn it into a committee dealing exclusively with scientific and technical questions. If it confined itself to the consideration of such subjects, it would no longer be in a position to maintain its political character and consider the questions customarily submitted to it.

108. The Special Committee, reaffirming the major role which must be played by the Special Political Committee and recognizing further that the agenda of that Committee is relatively light, recommends that the General Assembly should consider transferring to the Special Political Committee one or two items usually considered by other Committees with a view to ensuring a better division of work among the Main Committees.

109. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestions concerning the renaming of the Special Political Committee.

### 3. Second Committee

110. It was suggested that certain items currently within the sphere of competence of the Third Committee should be allocated to the Second Committee. The items mentioned in this connexion included the social aspects of economic development, so that the Committee would deal with the total spectrum of economic and social development, and items concerning social policy, such as housing, building and planning, assistance in cases of natural disaster, refugees and narcotics. In the course of the discussion, it was suggested that the work programmes of the Second and Third Committees might be restructured: one of the Committees would deal with long-term problems of development while the other would be concerned with concrete issues requiring immediate negotiations and solutions.

111. It was stated in support of the first of these suggestions that, in view of the close link between the economic and social aspects of development, it would be logical to assign their consideration to one Main Committee, namely, the Second Committee. If that were done, it might be appropriate to change the present title of this Committee, "Economic and Financial Committee", to "Economic and Social Development Committee", which would require a slight amendment to rule 101 of the rules of procedure. It was pointed out also that discussion of all items relating to economic and social development in the Second Committee would be particularly valuable to those Member States which were not members of the Economic and Social Council.

112. Against these arguments, it was stated that the Second Committee, which was responsible, inter alia, for supervising the progress of the Second United Nations Development Decade, already had a very heavy agenda and that it would be inadvisable to burden it with new items. Such a step would divert its attention from economic problems which were of vital importance for the developing countries. The objective of a unified approach to the economic and social aspects of any particular item could easily be achieved if delegations adopted a consistent position on them in the different Committees.

113. The Special Committee did not feel that it should take any decision on the above-mentioned proposals that all the social aspects of development should be dealt with by the Second Committee. Accordingly, it did not endorse the suggestions to change the name of that Committee.

### 4. Third Committee

114. As mentioned above (see para. 110), the Special Committee had before it a proposal that certain items currently within the sphere of competence of the Third Committee should be allocated to the Second Committee. It was suggested also that certain items customarily included in the agenda of the Third Committee should be transferred to other Main Committees. Lastly, it was suggested that a thorough reorganization of the activities and working methods of the Third Committee should be undertaken.

115. Those members of the Special Committee who supported the idea of transferring some items from the Third Committee to other Main Committees stressed that its agenda was overburdened and that at every session the Third Committee was obliged to recommend that the General Assembly should defer to a subsequent session the consideration of certain items which it had not been able to take up. Most of the

items of which the Third Committee would then be relieved could be allocated to the Second Committee (see para. 111); others might, for example, be transferred to the Special Political Committee or even to the Sixth Committee. The Third Committee would thus be in a position to devote itself to the thorough consideration of the many items relating to human rights.

116. However, other members of the Special Committee argued that, although questions relating to human rights were very important, the agenda of the Third Committee should not be confined to such questions. If the Second Committee were to discharge its responsibilities in the economic field effectively, especially where long-term planning was concerned (see para. 112), the Third Committee should continue to consider all questions relating to social affairs. It could facilitate that task by reorganizing its methods of work.

117. The Special Committee did not feel it should take a decision on the proposal that some of the items on the agenda of the Third Committee should be transferred to other Main Committees.

#### 5. Conflicts of competence among Committees

118. The comments submitted to the Special Committee included a number of suggestions for avoiding conflicts of competence among the Main Committees concerning a given item. One suggestion was to stagger consideration of the item in such a way as to have it discussed first by one of the Committees concerned, the other Committee dealing with the item only when it had received a report from the Committee which first considered it. Other suggestions included the use of joint meetings of the Committees concerned or the establishment of joint co-ordinating groups.

119. The Special Committee considers that conflicts of competence among the Main Committees should be avoided whenever possible. Without prejudging the decision to be taken in each individual case, the Special Committee wishes to draw attention to the existence of this problem and to the advisability for the General Committee and the General Assembly to consider the most effective ways of remedying it (see para. 89).

#### B. Role of the presiding officers<sup>40/</sup>

120. The observations submitted to the Special Committee emphasized the role the Chairmen could play in the efficient conduct of the work of the Committees and the need for them to be sufficiently familiar with the tasks of the General Assembly and to avail themselves, if necessary, of the experience of their predecessors. One suggestion was that Chairmen should exercise stronger control over the work of their Committees, ensuring that the rules of procedure were rigorously applied. In that connexion, it was suggested that the choice of a Chairman should depend more on experience and competence than on the principle of geographical distribution.

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<sup>40/</sup> See annex IV, para. 72, and A/AC.149/SR.21 (vol. II, p. 124), SR.22 (vol. II, p. 136), SR.23 (vol. II, p. 154) and SR.26 (vol. III, p. 47).

To that end, the rules of procedure might be amended to include a requirement that every candidate should have had at least one year's experience in one of the Main Committees, preferably that over which he was going to preside. It was also suggested that Chairmen should be elected at the end of the previous session.

121. In view of the fact that Committee Chairmen could and should play a leading role in the conduct of the debates, it was observed that the competence of a candidate should outweigh any other consideration. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the task of presiding officers, it would be most desirable to prepare a handbook on the procedure of the General Assembly for their use (see paras. 334-339).

122. However, most members of the Special Committee emphasized that, although presiding officers should possess the necessary experience and personal competence, those criteria were in no way incompatible with the criterion of equitable geographical distribution. It would therefore not be necessary to amend the rules of procedure.

123. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should fully exercise the functions assigned to them in the rules of procedure and, in particular, make use of the prerogatives given them in rule 108.

124. The Special Committee also reaffirms that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution as well as on that of experience and competence, as provided for in rule 105 of the rules of procedure.

125. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that candidates should have had at least one year's experience in one of the Main Committees or the suggestion that Chairmen should be elected at the end of the previous session.

C. Simultaneous absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman<sup>41/</sup>

126. The Special Committee considered the question who should take the Chair in the event of the simultaneous absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of a Main Committee. The Special Committee had two suggestions before it: the first was that the Chair should be taken by the Rapporteur of the Committee, and the second that it should be taken by the chairman or senior member of the delegation to which the Chairman of the Committee belongs.

127. Those members of the Special Committee who were in favour of the designation of the Rapporteur as Chairman in the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman pointed out that on a number of occasions a Rapporteur had taken the Chair although rule 107 of the rules of procedure made no provision for such a step. In support of the suggestion to have recourse to a member of the Chairman's delegation, rule 30 of the rules of procedure was given as an example. Under that rule, at the opening

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<sup>41/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 73 and 74, and A/AC.149/SR.21 (vol. II, p. 124), SR.22 (vol. II, p. 136), SR.23 (vol. II, p. 154), SR.26 (vol. III, p. 47), SR.31 (vol. III, p. 127), SR.37 (vol. IV), SR.41 (vol. IV) and SR.42 (vol. IV).

of each session of the General Assembly, the chairman of that delegation from which the President of the previous session had been elected presided until the General Assembly had elected a President for the session.

128. However, for various reasons, most members of the Special Committee opposed both of the suggestions submitted. It was pointed out that Rapporteurs were too busy with the duties for which they had been elected while the chairmen of delegations, who were frequently Ministers for Foreign Affairs or held other high offices, were very likely to be unavailable when called upon to preside.

129. During the deliberations, it was suggested that the problem might be solved by increasing the number of Vice-Chairmen. After a discussion as to the number of Vice-Chairmen, it was also suggested to increase that number to two posts, to be allocated according to the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

130. In view of the foregoing considerations, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that rules 39, 105 and 107 of the rules of procedure should be revised as follows (see para. 165):

"Rule 39

"If a Vice-President of the General Assembly finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting of the General Committee, he may designate a member of his delegation as his substitute. The Chairman of a Main Committee shall, in case of absence, designate one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee as his substitute. A Vice-Chairman shall not have the right to vote if he is of the same delegation as another member of the Committee."

"Rule 105

"Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. In the case of other committees, each shall elect a Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence. These elections shall be held by secret ballot."

"Rule 107

"If the Chairman finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting or any part thereof, he shall designate one of the Vice-Chairmen to take his place. A Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairman. If any officer of the committee is unable to perform his functions, a new officer shall be elected for the unexpired term."

131. Moreover, from its own experience, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that its subsidiary organs should consider, as far as possible, the designation of three Vice-Chairmen in order to ensure the representative character of their officers.



D. Reports of the Committees<sup>42/</sup>

132. In the comments submitted to the Special Committee, it was suggested that consistency of practice should be established as regards the reports of the Main Committees and, in particular, that the procedure sometimes adopted of summarizing debates in reports should be examined. It was recommended that, if certain essential points raised during debate have to be brought out, e.g. reservations or statements of interpretation, the practice of having reports which summarize debates should be resorted to only in exceptional cases. The general rule should be to have reports focus attention on the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee concerned, in order to lighten the work of the Rapporteur and the Secretariat.

133. The Special Committee, recalling General Assembly resolution 2292 (XXII), recommends to the Assembly that the reports of the Main Committees should be as concise as possible and, save in exceptional cases, should not contain a summary of the debates. 43/

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<sup>42/</sup> See annex IV, para. 75, and A/AC.149/SR.21 (vol. II, p. 124), SR.26 (vol. III, p. 47), SR.36 (vol. IV) and SR.42 (vol. IV).

<sup>43/</sup> For the recommendations concerning the reports of subsidiary organs, see para. 304.

## VII. MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE TIME

### A. Plenary Assembly

#### 1. General debate

##### (a) Frequency<sup>44/</sup>

134. The Special Committee considered the suggestion that the general debate should be held only every two years.

135. In favour of this suggestion it was pointed out that the general debate had become routine and no longer attracted more than relative interest; if it took place every two years, it would be more meaningful for that very reason. Furthermore, Assembly sessions in alternate years would possibly be shortened.

136. The great majority of the members of the Committee were opposed to a reduction in the frequency of the general debate. It was stressed that the general debate was unquestionably important and useful. It provided all Member States with the only political forum where they could review together the major international problems on a yearly basis. Moreover, it provided heads of State or Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high officials with a unique opportunity to meet their counterparts.

137. The Special Committee, recognizing the unquestionable value of the general debate, considers that it should continue to be held every year and that the time devoted to it should be utilized to the maximum. It wishes to stress also the importance of participation by heads of State or Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high officials as a means of enhancing the significance of the general debate.

##### (b) Organization of meetings<sup>45/</sup>

138. The Special Committee had before it various suggestions concerning the organization of meetings devoted to the general debate.

##### (i) Length of the general debate

139. The Special Committee considered the suggestion that the General Committee should be authorized to propose to the General Assembly a reduction in the time allocated to the general debate so that it may be completed in 10 to 12 working days.

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<sup>44/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 79 and 80, and A/AC.149/SR.7 (vol. I, p. 86).

<sup>45/</sup> See annex IV, para. 81, and A/AC.149/SR.7 (vol. I, p. 94), SR.8 (vol. I, p. 113), SR.37 (vol. IV), SR.38 (vol. IV) and SR.42 (vol. IV).

140. In support of this suggestion it was pointed out that a shorter debate would be more effective. Moreover, if it were possible to fix in advance the length of the general debate, such a procedure would encourage attendance by heads of State and other high government officials who would thus be in a better position to plan meetings with their counterparts during that period.

141. On the other hand, it was stated that the determination in advance of the duration of the general debate would mean limiting the number of speakers or the length of statements and hence possibly depriving certain delegations of their right to speak. It was also pointed out that the General Committee was not necessarily authorized by rule 41 of the rules of procedure to make specific proposals in that connexion.

142. The Special Committee feels that the general debate would be more meaningful, as far as organization was concerned, if it took place intensively and without interruption. Its length should not normally exceed two and a half weeks if the time available were utilized to the maximum.

(ii) Closure of the list of speakers

143. The Special Committee considered the suggestion that the list of speakers for the general debate should be completed within the first week from the opening of the session so as to avoid the cancellation or early adjournment of meetings through lack of speakers.

144. Considering that the organization of the general debate would be improved if delegations were required to decide more quickly when to speak, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the list of speakers wishing to take part in the general debate should be closed at the end of the third day after the opening of the debate (see para. 202).

(c) Length of statements<sup>46/</sup>

145. In many of the comments submitted to the Special Committee it was suggested that the length of the statements made in the general debate should be limited. One of the arguments advanced in favour of such a procedure was the fact that the First Committee did not meet while the general debate was proceeding.

146. The majority of the members of the Special Committee were opposed to any specific limitation of the length of statements. Those members pointed out that such a limitation would mean restricting the freedom of expression within the United Nations. Each statement represented a synthesis of a Government's foreign policy and a State might feel the need to explain its position in detail. It was also pointed out that, according to the statistical data supplied by the Secretariat, <sup>47/</sup> in spite of the increase in the membership of the United Nations, the number of meetings devoted to the general debate had remained substantially the same since the fifteenth session; similarly there had been little variation in the average length of speeches made in the general debate during the seven most recent sessions.

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<sup>46/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 82 and 83, and A/AC.149/SR.8 (vol. I, p. 102).

<sup>47/</sup> See annex III, tables 8 and 9.

147. The Special Committee, noting that during the session commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations it had been possible to hear a large number of speakers during a relatively short period without limiting the duration of statements, considers that this result was due to a better utilization of the time available and not to the imposition of a limitation on the length of speeches.

148. The Committee notes that during recent sessions of the General Assembly the average length of speeches has been 35 minutes and expresses the hope that delegations will ensure that their statements will not be excessively long (see para. 211).

(d) Submission of written statements<sup>48/</sup>

149. The Special Committee had before it several suggestions to the effect that the length of interventions could be limited by the submission to the Secretariat of written statements which would expand oral statements and would be included in the records of plenary meetings.

150. In support of this solution it was pointed out that the submission of written statements would mean a considerable saving of time for the General Assembly.

151. The great majority of the members of the Special Committee, however, opposed the submission of written statements, the effect of which would be to alter substantially the nature of the Assembly's debates, to cause difficulties in the exercise of the right of reply and to increase the volume of documentation. Moreover, the Secretariat drew the Committee's attention to the serious technical difficulties and to the substantial financial implications of such a practice.

152. The Special Committee considers that the submission of written statements should not be formally instituted with regard to the general debate (see para. 162).

2. Debate on items already considered in Committee<sup>49/</sup>

153. In the views submitted to the Special Committee, it was stated that it is not desirable to discuss thoroughly in plenary meetings items already taken up in a Committee and that the way to avoid having the reports of Main Committees discussed in plenary meeting would be to enforce strictly rule 68 of the rules of procedure.

154. The majority of Special Committee members considered, however, that the existing provisions of rule 68 and the way in which they had been applied were entirely satisfactory. It was pointed out in this connexion that, in most cases, the reports of Main Committees were not discussed in plenary meeting.

155. The Special Committee is of the opinion that rule 68 of the rules of procedure has been applied judiciously and with satisfactory results (see para. 287).

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<sup>48/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 84 and 85, and A/AC.149/SR.8 (vol. I, p. 102) and SR.37 (vol. IV).

<sup>49/</sup> See annex IV, para. 86, and A/AC.149/SR.9 (vol. I, p. 118) and SR.37 (vol. IV).

### 3. Non-utilization of the rostrum<sup>50/</sup>

156. It was suggested that, since delegation tables in the General Assembly Hall were equipped with microphones, better use could be made of the time available by allowing representatives to speak from their seats to raise points of order, explain their votes or exercise their right of reply.

157. The Special Committee thinks that it would be useful to draw the attention of representatives to the possibility of speaking without going to the rostrum. It considers, however, that, in all cases, it is for representatives to decide whether they prefer to speak from their seats or from the rostrum, whether on a point of order, for an explanation of vote or in exercise of their right of reply.

### 4. Presentation of the reports of the Main Committees<sup>51/</sup>

158. The Special Committee wishes to recall the recommendation made in 1947 by the Committee on Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly that Rapporteurs should not read out their reports in plenary meetings. It wishes to stress that the presentation of reports in plenary meetings should be limited to brief introductory statements.

159. The Special Committee recommends also that the General Assembly should confirm the practice whereby certain related reports of a non-controversial nature may be introduced simultaneously to the plenary Assembly by the Rapporteur.

## B. Main Committees

### 1. Nomination of officers<sup>52/</sup>

160. The Special Committee had before it various proposals designed to limit the time spent on electing the officers of the Main Committees by allowing nominations to be made in writing, eliminating nomination speeches or confining such speeches to one per candidate.

161. The members of the Special Committee agreed that the nomination of candidates involved a significant loss of time. They also recognized that the terms of rule 105 of the rules of procedure, which provided that elections should be held by secret ballot, no longer corresponded to the present practice, since in most cases, as a result of prior consultations, there was only one candidate for each post and voting by secret ballot was therefore superfluous.

162. The Special Committee, bearing in mind particularly the financial implications of such a procedure, did not retain the suggestion that nominations should be made in writing (see para. 152).

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<sup>50/</sup> See annex IV, para. 87, and A/AC.149/SR.9 (vol. I, p. 120).

<sup>51/</sup> See annex IV, para. 88, and A/AC.149/SR.9 (vol. I, p. 121).

<sup>52/</sup> See annex IV, para. 89, and A/AC.149/SR.9 (vol. I, p. 121), SR.10 (vol. I, p. 132), SR.11 (vol. I, p. 144), SR.37 (vol. IV) and SR.40 (vol. IV).

163. Furthermore, in view of the dictates of courtesy and the possibility that cases might arise in which nominees would not be known until the last moment, the Special Committee did not deem it advisable to dispense completely with the oral nomination of candidates.

164. The Special Committee considers that the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the committee would proceed to the election immediately. The Special Committee considers, however, that the general principle that elections are held by secret ballot should be retained.

165. The Special Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly should amend rule 105 of its rules of procedure to read as follows (see para. 130):

"Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. In the case of other committees, each shall elect a Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence. The elections shall be held by secret ballot unless the committee decides otherwise in an election where only one candidate is standing. The nomination of each candidate shall be limited to one speaker, after which the committee shall proceed to the election immediately."

## 2. Commencement of work<sup>53/</sup>

166. The Special Committee considered various proposals designed to avoid losing time because the Main Committees did not start working soon enough after the opening of the session.

167. Many members of the Special Committee, referring to the statistics issued by the Secretariat, <sup>54/</sup> considered that the conduct of the General Assembly's work would be greatly facilitated if the Main Committees, with the exception of the First Committee, were required to begin their work much earlier than at present. It was even suggested that such a measure should also be applied to the First Committee.

168. On the other hand, it was observed that the Special Committee, while recognizing that the Main Committees should begin their work as soon as possible, could not propose that the Assembly should establish a definite time-limit for that purpose.

169. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should add the following sentence to the present rule 100 of its rules of procedure (see para. 175):

"All the Main Committees shall, during the first week of the session, hold the elections provided for in rule 105."

Rule 100 would be placed after the existing rule 101.

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<sup>53/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 90 and 91, and A/AC.149/SR.9 (vol. I, p. 124), SR.10 (vol. I, p. 136), SR.11 (vol. I, p. 144) and SR.37 (vol. IV).

<sup>54/</sup> See annex III, table 10.

170. The Special Committee also recommends that all the Main Committees, with the possible exception of the First Committee, should begin their work on the working day following the receipt of the list of items referred to them by the General Assembly.

171. Lastly, the Special Committee recommends that the First Committee should be ready to meet whenever no plenary meeting of the Assembly is being held.

### 3. Schedule of work<sup>55/</sup>

172. In several of the observations submitted to the Special Committee the need was stressed for the Committees to draw up, at the beginning of the session, a work programme to which they would adhere strictly. In that connexion, it was suggested that the work programme should include a definite time-table showing when each item was to be considered and the number of meetings to be devoted to it. It was also suggested that the programme should be reviewed each week.

173. It was observed that the preparation of a work programme would meet the wishes of delegations, which wanted to know when the various agenda items would be considered so that they could make appropriate arrangements. Furthermore, the presence of high officials or experts was often required because of the importance or technicality of certain items. The preparation of a definite time-table would enable them to anticipate when their presence would be needed in New York.

174. However, other members of the Committee, while recognizing the advantages of preparing a work programme, considered that a measure of flexibility was desirable, for the obligation to adhere too strictly to a time-table might prevent Committees from taking up an item out of the agreed order and might even jeopardize certain negotiations. For that reason it would be preferable to draw up time-tables which left the Committees a measure of latitude, in particular by allocating items on a weekly rather than a daily basis, as was done by the Second Committee.

175. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should add the following sentence to rule 100 of its rules of procedure as it will appear if the amendment to insert the provision concerning elections (see para. 169) is adopted:

"Each Main Committee shall at the beginning of the session adopt a programme of work indicating, if possible, a target date for the conclusion of its work, the approximate dates of consideration of items and the number of meetings to be allocated to each item."

The amended text of rule 100, which would be placed after the existing rule 101, would read as follows:

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<sup>55/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 92 and 93, and A/AC.149/SR.9 (vol. I, p. 127), SR.10 (vol. I, p. 138) and SR.11 (vol. I, p. 145).

## "Organization of work"

(a) All the Main Committees shall, during the first week of the session, hold the elections provided for in rule 105.

(b) Each Main Committee, taking into account the closing date for the session fixed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the General Committee, shall adopt its own priorities and meet as may be necessary to complete the consideration of the items referred to it. It shall at the beginning of the session adopt a programme of work indicating, if possible, a target date for the conclusion of its work, the approximate dates of consideration of items and the number of meetings to be allocated to each item."

The present rule 101 would become rule 100.

176. The Special Committee also recommends that the Main Committees should from time to time review the progress of their work.

### 4. General debate in Committee<sup>56/</sup>

177. The Special Committee considered a series of suggestions designed to shorten the time spent on the general debate on items referred to Committees. In particular, it was suggested that the general debate should be eliminated, dispensed with in the case of items already considered by another organ, authorized for certain items only or limited to the political Committees, or that a single general debate should be held on each group of items.

178. The great majority of the members of the Special Committee were opposed to eliminating the general debate, even partially. It was pointed out that the Main Committees provided a forum for discussion which was indispensable to the proper functioning of the Assembly, that the general debate in the Main Committees dealt with important subjects on which exchanges of views were essential and that the ideas expressed on that occasion constituted the basis for the preparation of draft resolutions. With regard to items previously considered by other organs, it was observed that the competence of the Main Committees should not be restricted. It was also pointed out that many Member States, which were not represented in those organs, should not be deprived of their only opportunity to express their views on those items. Lastly, attention was drawn to the need to allow each Committee to take its own decision regarding any questions pertaining to the length and conduct of its general debate.

179. Furthermore, many members of the Special Committee stressed that the Main Committees could gain time if the general debate were better organized. One means to that end would be to extend the practice of holding one general debate on several agenda items. <sup>57/</sup>

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<sup>56/</sup> See annex IV, para. 94, and A/AC.149/SR.11 (vol. I, p. 146).

<sup>57/</sup> See annex III, table 5, note (a).



180. The Special Committee, while recognizing the unquestionable usefulness and importance of the general debate, considers that Chairmen should encourage the Main Committees to:

(a) Recognize the advisability of shortening the general debate, whenever that is possible without detriment to the work of the Committees;

(b) Extend, whenever appropriate, the practice of holding a single debate on related and logically linked agenda items.

181. The Special Committee recognizes that a general debate on questions previously considered by a United Nations organ and covered by a report of the organ concerned should be retained. The Committee, however, draws the attention of the Chairmen of the Main Committees to the possibility of consulting their Committees in every case when a general debate on a certain item does not seem to be needed. The Chairmen may resort to this practice to ascertain in particular whether the Committees desire to hold a general debate on every question referred to them by other organs.

182. At the same time, the Special Committee wishes to reaffirm that the general debate serves a necessary and very useful purpose in the work of the Main Committees and that its organization should in no circumstances be changed without the consent of the Committees concerned, which therefore should decide on the applicability of the above-mentioned suggestions.

183. The Special Committee did not deem it appropriate to make a recommendation concerning the suggestion that delegations sharing the same point of view could use a spokesman who would express those views in a single statement. Nor did the Committee retain the suggestion that the consideration of certain items already debated in previous sessions might be introduced by specially appointed Rapporteurs who would summarize the main issues emerging from previous debates.

5. Concurrent consideration of several agenda items<sup>58/</sup>

184. The Committee considered the suggestion that Chairmen of Main Committees should be urged to alternate morning and afternoon meetings between different agenda items when, for various reasons, it was impossible to consider a given item continuously.

185. In support of that suggestion, it was pointed out that it was a measure of limited scope, designed to prevent the work of a Committee from being slowed because of a lack of speakers or delays in the submission of draft resolutions.

186. On the other hand, it was felt that it might be somewhat impractical to examine several agenda items alternately, and that it would be inadvisable to lay down a general rule on that subject.

187. The Special Committee considers that in certain cases, when a Main Committee cannot proceed with its discussion of one item, it should be prepared to begin considering the next item on its agenda.

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<sup>58/</sup> See annex IV, para. 95, and A/AC.149/SR.11 (vol. I, p. 152).

6. Establishment of sub-committees or working groups<sup>59/</sup>

188. The Special Committee wishes to remind the General Assembly of the desirability of the Main Committees' making use of sub-committees or working groups.

C. Measures applicable both to the plenary Assembly  
and to the Main Committees

1. Opening of meetings at the scheduled time<sup>60/</sup>

189. The Special Committee had before it several comments concerning the opening of the meetings of the plenary Assembly and the Main Committees at the scheduled time or at least with a minimum delay.

190. The members of the Special Committee, taking into account the statistics submitted by the Secretariat, <sup>61/</sup> agreed that the General Assembly would operate much more efficiently if the presiding officers made a special effort to open meetings at the scheduled time.

191. Since, however, the question of the opening of meetings is closely linked with that of the quorum, the Special Committee decided to consider them together (see paras. 193-198).

192. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion to have meetings begin at 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. in view of the practical difficulties that such a measure would entail.

2. Quorum<sup>62/</sup>

193. The Special Committee considered several proposals designed to allow the opening of meetings at the scheduled time (see paras. 189-191) by means of a revision of the rules of procedure governing the quorum. It was suggested, inter alia, that the quorum required under rules 69 and 110 of the rules of procedure for meetings of the plenary Assembly and the Main Committees should be reduced. It was even proposed that the presiding officer should be authorized to open meetings regardless of the number of members present. It should be noted, however, that none of the suggestions envisaged a reduction in the quorum required for voting.

194. The members of the Special Committee who supported an amendment to the rules of procedure on this point observed that, very often, presiding officers could not open meetings because of the lack of a quorum. If the present quorum requirements

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<sup>59/</sup> See annex IV, para. 96, and A/AC.149/SR.11 (vol. I, p. 154).

<sup>60/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 97 and 98, and A/AC.149/SR.11 (vol. I, p. 154), SR.12 (vol. I, p. 160), SR.15 (vol. II, p. 34) and SR.38 (vol. IV).

<sup>61/</sup> See annex III, para. 42.

<sup>62/</sup> See annex IV, para. 99, and A/AC.149/SR.11 (vol. I, p. 154), SR.12 (vol. I, p. 160), SR.15 (vol. II, p. 34) and SR.38 (vol. IV).

in rules 69 and 110 were to be reduced, except with regard to voting, there would be an appreciable saving of time and the efficiency of the General Assembly would be considerably increased.

195. Other members of the Special Committee, however, stressed that a reduction in the existing quorum might restrict the scope of discussions and diminish the General Assembly's authority as a political organ. It was also pointed out that the complete elimination of the quorum would be an unwarranted measure, incompatible with the democratic principles which govern deliberations.

196. The Special Committee decided to refer the question of the opening of meetings at the scheduled time and the question of the quorum to a drafting group.

197. The First Drafting Group, composed of Bolivia, France, Nigeria, the Philippines and Poland, was under the chairmanship of the representative of Poland. It held two meetings.

198. On the proposal of the Drafting Group, 63/ the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that rules 69 and 110 of its rules of procedure should be amended to read as follows:

"Rule 69

"The President may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when one third of the Members of the General Assembly are present. The presence of a majority of the Members shall be required for any decision to be taken."

"Rule 110

"The Chairman may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when one quarter of the members of the committee are present. The presence of a majority of the members shall be required for any decision to be taken."

3. List of speakers<sup>64/</sup>

199. In several of the comments submitted to the Special Committee it was stressed that, for the sake of the efficient conduct of the Assembly's work, the list of speakers should be closed as early as possible. Reference was also made to the need to end the practice whereby some speakers put down their names to speak at a particular meeting and at the same time indicated an alternative meeting if they were unable to keep to their original schedule.

200. In support of these comments, it was noted that the premature ending of certain meetings through lack of speakers caused the plenary Assembly and the Main Committees to waste valuable time. If the closure of the list of speakers, or

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63/ A/AC.149/R.6, para. 3.

\* 64/ See annex IV, paras. 100-102, and A/AC.149/SR.12 (vol. I, p. 164) and SR.38 (vol. IV).

at least the announcement of the closure by the presiding officer, could take place earlier, the work of the General Assembly and the Main Committees could be better planned.

201. It was, however, pointed out that the adoption of rigid rules on the subject might prevent delegations from speaking when they felt it necessary. A delegation which had not intended initially to speak on an item might later find it necessary to do so in the light of developments during the debate. To make allowance for such an eventuality, the list of speakers for each agenda item should not be closed until a certain number of meetings had been devoted to the discussion of that item.

202. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the President of the Assembly or the Chairman of a Main Committee should, soon after the beginning of the debate on an item, indicate a date for the closing of the list of speakers. He should endeavour to have the list of speakers closed at the latest after one third of the meetings allocated to the item have been held (see para. 144).

203. Moreover, the Special Committee considers that speakers should as far as possible avoid putting down their names to speak on a given item and at the same time indicating an alternative meeting if they are unable to keep to their original schedule.

204. Finally, the Special Committee wishes to reaffirm the practice whereby presiding officers should invite representatives to speak in the order of their inscription on the list of speakers, on the understanding that those prevented from doing so should normally be moved to the end of the list, unless they have arranged to change places with other representatives.

#### 4. Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers<sup>65/</sup>

205. The Special Committee had before it several suggestions for limiting either the length or the number of statements in plenary and Committee meetings by strictly applying the rules of procedure or possibly by amending them.

206. It was observed that limiting the length of statements would make it possible to use the available time more efficiently. It was suggested, inter alia, that the rules of procedure should be amended to the effect that, when the General Assembly or a Committee had before it a proposal to impose time-limits or speeches, not more than two representatives should be authorized to speak in favour of and two against such a proposal.

207. However, most of the members of the Special Committee supported the principle that it was essential not to deprive delegations of their right to present the views of their Governments on any agenda item as comprehensively as possible. It was emphasized that in the conduct of the discussion the democratic process should continue to be respected and that any limitation on the length of statements and particularly on the number of speakers would have adverse consequences. Moreover, in cases where a single general debate was held on a group of agenda items, statements would obviously tend to be longer than if each item were to be discussed separately.

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<sup>65/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 103-105, and A/AC.149/SR.14 (vol. II, p. 25), SR.15 (vol. II, p. 46), SR.18 (vol. II, p. 72) and SR.38 (vol. IV).

208. The Special Committee decided to refer the question of limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers to a drafting group.

209. The Second Drafting Group, composed of Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Japan and Romania, was under the chairmanship of the representative of Japan. It examined this question at two meetings. <sup>66/</sup>

210. On the proposal of the Drafting Group, <sup>67/</sup> the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that rules 74 and 115 of its rules of procedure should be amended to read as follows:

"Rule 74

"The General Assembly may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on any question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, a proposal to set such limits. When debate is limited and a representative has spoken his allotted time, the President shall call him to order without delay."

"Rule 115

"The committee may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and number of times each representative may speak on any question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, a proposal to set such limits. When debate is limited and a representative has spoken his allotted time, the Chairman shall call him to order without delay."

In that connexion, the Committee wishes to stress that the amendment in question is of a purely technical nature, its only purpose being to limit the number of representatives who could speak on a proposal submitted under the existing rules 74 and 115.

211. With regard to the general question of setting a time-limit on interventions, the Special Committee, while recognizing that, in so far as possible, statements should be kept brief so as to allow all delegations to present the views of their Governments, considers that no rigid rule on the question could be applied (see para. 148).

5. Explanations of vote <sup>68/</sup>

212. In several comments submitted to the Special Committee, it was suggested that the rules of procedure might be improved by spelling out in more detail the

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<sup>66/</sup> The Second Drafting Group was also instructed to consider the following questions: (a) Explanations of vote (see paras. 212-218), (b) Right of reply (see paras. 219-224) and (c) Points of order (see paras. 225-229).

<sup>67/</sup> A/AC.149/R.9, para. 3.

<sup>68/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 106-110, and A/AC.149/SR.13 (vol. II, p. 8), SR.15 (vol. II, p. 46) and SR.18 (vol. II, p. 72).

provisions concerning explanations of vote or that the length of such explanations should be strictly limited. It was also suggested that, when a proposal had already been put to the vote in a Main Committee, a delegation which had explained its vote in that Committee should not, as a general rule, be permitted to explain it again in plenary, unless it wished to record a change in position.

213. In support of the suggestions for spelling out more clearly the provisions relating to explanations of vote, it was pointed out that explanations of vote frequently gave rise to abuses and were used to make statements of substance or reopen a debate. It was also observed that delegations had ample opportunity to express their views on a given question during the general debate in the Committee and that explanations of vote should serve only to emphasize the main reasons which had caused a delegation to take a certain position during the voting.

214. A majority of members of the Special Committee, however, opposed any limitation of the right of delegations freely to express their views when explaining their votes with regard to a draft resolution. It was noted that under rules 90 and 129 of the rules of procedure the presiding officers had sufficient powers to correct abuses in that connexion, that the stricter application of those rules should suffice to solve the problem and that, accordingly, any amendment of the rules of procedure would not be appropriate.

215. The Special Committee decided to refer the question of explanations of vote to the Second Drafting Group, which examined it in the course of two meetings. 69/

216. Taking into account the proposals submitted by the Drafting Group, 70/ the Special Committee considers that, in explaining their votes, delegations should limit their statements to an explanation, as brief as possible, of their own votes and should not use the occasion to reopen the debate.

217. The Special Committee also considers that presiding officers should be encouraged to use, whenever they deem it appropriate, their powers under rules 90 and 129 of the rules of procedure.

218. Finally, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that a delegation should explain its vote only once on the same proposal, in either a Main Committee or a plenary meeting, unless the delegation considers it essential to explain it in both meetings. It recommends further that the sponsor of a draft resolution adopted by a Main Committee should refrain from explaining its vote during the consideration of that draft resolution in the plenary unless it deems it essential to do so.

## 6. Right of reply 71/

219. The Special Committee had before it a number of suggestions directed at preventing misuse of the right of reply. It was proposed, inter alia, that the

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69/ The Second Drafting Group was also instructed to consider the following questions: (a) Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers (see paras. 205-211), (b) Right of reply (see paras. 219-224) and (c) Points of order (see paras. 225-229).

70/ A/AC.149/R.9, para. 4.

71/ See annex IV, paras. 111 and 112, and A/AC.149/SR.14 (vol. II, p. 22), SR.18 (vol. II, p. 72) and SR.38 (vol. IV).

length or the number of statements which could be made in the exercise of that right should be limited. It was also suggested that that right should be exercised at the end of the discussion of an item or at the end of a meeting.

220. The speakers supporting those suggestions observed that statements made in exercise of the right of reply should not serve as a pretext for a delegation to restate its position or make a statement which did not properly constitute a reply. It was noted that the presiding officers should be invited to make better use of their powers, under the rules of procedure, by encouraging representatives to be brief and, as warranted, by ruling out of order any statement which did not properly constitute a reply.

221. Other speakers, however, stated that the purpose of exercising the right of reply was to correct erroneous impressions; thus statements made in exercise of that right were important both to the delegation making them and to the members as a whole. Since the nature of such statements varied according to the circumstances, it would not be appropriate to subject them to a time-limit. Any restriction on the length or number of such statements would infringe the sovereign rights of Member States.

222. The Special Committee decided to refer the question of the right of reply to the Second Drafting Group, which examined it in the course of two meetings. 72/

223. In the light of the proposals made by the Drafting Group, 73/ the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that delegations should use restraint in the exercise of their right of reply, both in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees, and that their statements in exercise of that right should be as brief as possible.

224. The Special Committee recommends, furthermore, that statements made in the exercise of the right of reply should be delivered, as a general rule, at the end of meetings.

#### 7. Points of order<sup>74/</sup>

225. In the comments submitted to the Special Committee, it was proposed, inter alia, that the length of statements on points of order should be limited. Furthermore, it was stressed that rules 73 and 114 of the rules of procedure should be strictly observed and, in particular, that the practice of raising a point of order in connexion with a statement by another representative on a point of order should be abolished.

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72/ The Second Drafting Group was also instructed to consider the following questions: (a) Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers (see paras. 205-211), (b) Explanations of vote (see paras. 212-218) and (c) Points of order (see paras. 225-229).

73/ A/AC.149/R.9, para. 5.

74/ See annex IV, paras. 113 and 114, and A/AC.149/SR.13 (vol. II, p. 14), SR.14 (vol. II, p. 20), SR.31 (vol. III, p. 122), SR.38 (vol. IV) and SR.40 (vol. IV).

226. In this connexion, it was observed that an intervention on a point of order was often used as an excuse for a general statement. It was therefore emphasized that it would be desirable to clarify the pertinent provisions of the rules of procedure and, in particular, to have a definition of a point of order.

227. Without being opposed to the preparation of such a definition, most members of the Special Committee stated that the provisions of rules 73 and 114 of the rules of procedure were satisfactory and that there was no need to amend them. Those rules conferred on presiding officers all the necessary authority to call a speaker to order if they felt that a statement did not constitute a point of order or was not pertinent. Most Committee members considered that it was not necessary to limit the length of statements on points of order.

228. The Special Committee decided to refer the question of points of order to the Second Drafting Group, which examined it in the course of four meetings. 75/

229. On the proposal of the Drafting Group, 76/ the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following text as a description of the concept of a point of order:

"(a) A point of order is basically an intervention directed to the presiding officer, requesting him to make use of some power inherent in his office or specifically given him under the rules of procedure. It may, for example, relate to the manner in which the debate is conducted, to the maintenance of order, to the observance of the rules of procedure or to the way in which presiding officers exercise the powers conferred upon them by the rules. Under a point of order, a representative may request the presiding officer to apply a certain rule of procedure or he may question the way in which the officer applies the rule. Thus, within the scope of the rules of procedure, representatives are enabled to direct the attention of the presiding officer to violations or misapplications of the rules by other representatives or by the presiding officer himself. A point of order has precedence over any other matter, including procedural motions (rules 73 /114/ and 79 /120/).

"(b) Points of order raised under rule 73 /114/ involve questions necessitating a ruling by the presiding officer, subject to possible appeal. They are therefore distinct from the procedural motions provided for in rules 76 /117/ to 79 /120/, which can be decided only by a vote and on which more than one motion may be entertained at the same time, rule 79 /120/ laying down the precedence of such motions. They are also distinct from requests for information or clarification, or from remarks relating to material arrangements (seating, interpretation system, temperature of the room), documents, translations etc., which - while they may have to be dealt with by the presiding officer - do not require rulings from him. However, in established United Nations practice, a representative intending to submit a procedural motion or to seek information or clarification often

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75/ The Second Drafting Group was also instructed to examine the following questions: (a) Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers (see paras. 205-211), (b) Explanations of vote (see paras. 212-218) and (c) Right of reply (see paras. 219-224).

76/ A/AC.149/R.9/Add.1.



risers to 'a point of order' as a means of obtaining the floor. This latter usage, which is based on practical grounds, should not be confused with the raising of points of order under rule 73 /114/.

"(c) Under rule 73 /114/, a point of order must be immediately decided by the presiding officer in accordance with the rules of procedure; any appeal arising therefrom must also be put immediately to the vote. It follows that as a general rule:

- (i) A point of order and any appeal arising from a ruling thereon is not debatable;
- (ii) No point of order on the same or a different subject can be permitted until the initial point of order and any appeal arising therefrom have been disposed of.

Nevertheless, both the presiding officer and delegations may request information or clarification regarding a point of order. In addition, the presiding officer may, if he considers it necessary, request an expression of views from delegations on a point of order before giving his ruling; in the exceptional cases in which this practice is resorted to, the presiding officer should terminate the exchange of views and give his ruling as soon as he is ready to announce that ruling.

"(d) Rule 73 /114/ provides that a representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. Consequently, the purely procedural nature of points of order calls for brevity. The presiding officer is responsible for ensuring that statements made on a point of order are in conformity with the present description."

## 8. Congratulations<sup>77/</sup>

230. The Special Committee considered various suggestions designed to limit the number of congratulatory statements made in connexion with the election of the officers of the Main Committees. It was proposed, inter alia, that a provision to that effect should be included in the rules of procedure.

231. It was pointed out that, according to the statistics provided by the Secretariat, <sup>78/</sup> an excessive number of hours was spent on congratulatory statements. Either the practice of congratulating the officers of a Committee on their election should be dispensed with, since the fact that they had been elected was already a tribute to their qualities, or the task should be entrusted to a single member of the Committee. It was also pointed out that in order to give greater weight to such a measure it should be mentioned in the rules of procedure.

232. While it was generally recognized that it would be advisable to limit congratulations to a single statement, it was observed that the measure proposed

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<sup>77/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 115 and 116, and A/AC.149/SR.15 (vol. II, p. 36), SR.25 (vol. III, p. 32), SR.30 (vol. III, p. 115), SR.32 (vol. III, p. 132) and SR.38 (vol. IV).

<sup>78/</sup> See annex III, table 13.

could be made a recommendation to the General Assembly and need not take the form of an amendment to the rules of procedure.

233. The Special Committee decided to refer the question of congratulations to a drafting group.

234. The Third Drafting Group, composed of Greece, Pakistan, Senegal, Venezuela and Yugoslavia, was under the chairmanship of the representative of Senegal. It held two meetings. 79/

235. In the light of the proposals submitted by the Drafting Group, 80/ the Special Committee is of the opinion that it would be better to retain the current practice of the plenary Assembly whereby congratulations to the President are confined to brief remarks included in the speeches made during the general debate.

236. With regard to the Main Committees, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following new rule to be inserted after the present rule 111:

"Corrections to the officers of a Main Committee shall be expressed only by the Chairman of the previous session - or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation - after all the officers of that Committee have been elected."

237. With regard to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, the Special Committee recommends that, in the case of a newly established organ or of the rotation of officers on an existing one, congratulations to the Chairman should be expressed only by the temporary Chairman and congratulations to other officers should be expressed only by the Chairman.

#### 9. Condolences<sup>81/</sup>

238. The Special Committee considered several suggestions aimed at reducing the number of statements of condolence. It was proposed, inter alia, that a provision to that effect should be included in the rules of procedure.

239. As in the case of congratulations (see para. 231), it was pointed out that, according to the Secretariat statistics, 82/ a considerable amount of time was spent on statements of condolence and that the number of such statements should be limited. In addition to the saving in time that it would represent, such a measure would have the effect of enhancing the dignity of the occasion. In particular, it was suggested that statements should be limited to a single speaker or to the chairmen of the regional groups.

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79/ The Third Drafting Group was also instructed to consider the question of condolences (see paras. 238-243).

80/ A/AC.149/R.10, para. 3.

81/ See annex IV, paras. 117 and 118, and A/AC.149/SR.15 (vol. II, p. 39), SR.25 (vol. III, p. 32), SR.30 (vol. III, p. 115) and SR.38 (vol. IV).

82/ See annex III, table 13.

240. Although there was a general desire to emphasize the solemn character of statements of condolence, it was pointed out that on such occasions delegations should continue to have the right to express their sentiments if they deemed it appropriate to do so. Furthermore, it was observed that the proposal that condolences should be expressed only by the chairmen of the regional groups did not make allowance for the fact that certain delegations did not belong to any such group.

241. The Special Committee decided to refer the question of condolences to the Third Drafting Group, which examined it in the course of two meetings. 83/

242. In the light of the proposals submitted by the Drafting Group, 84/ the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that condolences addressed to a delegation on the death of a prominent person or in the event of a disaster should be expressed solely by the President of the General Assembly, by the Chairman of a Main Committee or by the Chairman of a subsidiary organ on behalf of all members. Where circumstances warrant it, the President of the General Assembly might call a special plenary meeting for that purpose.

243. The Special Committee moreover takes note of the practice whereby the President of the General Assembly, on behalf of all Members, dispatches a cable to the country concerned.

#### 10. Roll-call votes 85/

244. The attention of the Special Committee was drawn to the need to review the provisions under which a roll-call vote is taken at the request of any representative. In particular it was proposed that, when a roll-call vote had taken place in a Main Committee on a draft resolution, a roll-call vote on the same draft resolution should be dispensed with in the plenary; there should instead be a recorded vote, unless the draft resolution adopted by the Main Committee had been revised in the plenary. It was also suggested that rules 89 and 128 of the rules of procedure might be amended so that the agreement of the majority or of one third of the members would be required before a roll-call vote could be taken.

245. In support of these proposals, it was observed that a roll-call vote took a considerable amount of time and that, thanks to the electronic system, a recorded vote made it possible to determine with the same precision how each delegation had voted.

246. The majority of the members of the Special Committee, however, opposed any change in the rules of procedure relating to this question. It was noted that, in order to determine whether a certain fraction of the members were in favour of a roll-call vote, a preliminary vote would have to be taken, which would involve a further waste of time. It was emphasized, moreover, that a roll-call vote was taken in a solemn atmosphere and had political and psychological advantages which

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83/ The Third Drafting Group was also instructed to consider the question of congratulations (see paras. 230-237).

84/ A/AC.149/R.10, para. 3.

85/ See annex IV, paras. 119 and 120, and A/AC.149/SR.15 (vol. II, p. 40).

a recorded vote did not have. It was also stressed that, although a very small amount of time would be saved, the right of every delegation to ask for a roll-call might be jeopardized.

247. The Special Committee, while believing that there is no need to change the rules of procedure relating to roll-call votes, recommends that delegations should endeavour not to request such a vote except when there are good and sound reasons for doing so (see para. 287).

11. Electronic devices<sup>86/</sup>

248. It was suggested that an electronic voting system should be used by all Committees to save time now wasted by counting hands.

249. The Special Committee did not believe that it should express any views on this matter, since the question of the installation of an electronic voting device was included in the draft agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

250. The Special Committee did not retain the suggestion that a mechanical or electronic timing device might be installed in the General Assembly Hall and the Committee rooms.

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<sup>86/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 121 and 122, and A/AC.149/SR.15 (vol. II, p. 45).

## VIII. RESOLUTIONS

### A. Submission of draft resolutions<sup>87/</sup>

#### 1. Date of submission of draft resolutions

251. In a number of the replies received by the Special Committee, it was observed that the work of the General Assembly would be facilitated if draft resolutions were submitted earlier. It was suggested that requests for the inclusion of supplementary items and additional items should be accompanied by draft resolutions, that delegations wishing to submit draft resolutions should do so as soon as possible, preferably before the opening of the debate, and that a time-limit for the introduction of draft resolutions might be set. It was also suggested that the competent subsidiary organs should submit draft resolutions to the Main Committees. On the other hand, it was noted that draft resolutions should, as a general rule, follow and not precede debate, for only thus could they reflect the consensus or at least the opinion of the majority.

252. Several members of the Special Committee felt that the early submission of draft resolutions had great advantages. They argued that a draft resolution, by providing a starting point for the deliberations, frequently obviated confused debate and time-wasting; it helped to shape the discussion and encouraged delegations to state their positions. It was also observed that, in the case of supplementary items or additional items, the early submission of a draft resolution was especially helpful as it provided guidance during the preliminary stages of the debate without, however, depriving delegations of their right to submit additional draft resolutions subsequently.

253. On the other hand, it was felt that the early submission of draft resolutions could not be made mandatory. A formal requirement that draft resolutions should be submitted before the debate opened would create an overly rigid framework, forcing delegations to determine prematurely their positions on a given question and thus limiting the scope of the deliberations. A draft resolution submitted in the course or at the end of the general debate would provide a more faithful reflection of the views expressed during the debate.

254. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that draft resolutions should be submitted as early as possible so as to give debates a more concrete character. It considers, however, that no rigid rule should be established in the matter, since it is for delegations to determine, in each case, the most appropriate moment for submitting draft resolutions.

255. So as to ensure that debates take shape as quickly as possible without making it mandatory for delegations to submit a formal draft resolution, the Special Committee also considers that delegations might resort more often to the possibility of circulating draft resolutions as informal working papers which would provide a basis for the discussion but whose contents would be strictly provisional.

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<sup>87/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 123-127, and A/AC.149/SR.23 (vol. II, p. 156), SR.24 (vol. III, p. 6), SR.38 (vol. IV) and SR.41 (vol. IV).

## 2. Submission of draft resolutions in writing

256. Because of the appreciable loss of time that such a procedure could entail, the Special Committee decided not to endorse the suggestion that proposals and amendments should be submitted in writing only.

## 3. Consultations

257. In some of the observations submitted to the Special Committee, emphasis was placed on the necessity of beginning consultations on draft resolutions as early as possible. More specifically, it was suggested that there might be negotiating bodies comprising members representing the various groups or the various points of view and that, if competing draft resolutions were introduced, a working group might be asked to produce an agreed text.

258. The Special Committee, recognizing the indisputable value of consultations, believes that delegations should explore every avenue for arriving at negotiated texts. It considers, however, that the initiative for such consultations must rest solely with the delegations concerned and can, under no circumstances, be dictated in mandatory provisions.

259. The Special Committee also believes that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should be invited to bear in mind the possibility of establishing, where necessary, working groups for the purpose of facilitating the adoption of agreed texts. Such groups may be open, as appropriate, to interested delegations. It does not, however, consider it advisable to contemplate the establishment of such working groups whenever two or more draft resolutions have been introduced on the same matter.

## 4. Number of sponsors

260. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that the number of sponsors of a draft resolution should be limited.

261. The Special Committee does, however, wish to draw attention to the practice whereby the sponsors of a proposal decide whether other delegations can become co-sponsors.

## 5. Time-lapse between the submission and the consideration of draft resolutions

262. The Special Committee considered various suggestions concerning the time which should elapse between the submission and the consideration of draft resolutions, amendments and subamendments. It was suggested in particular that rules 80 and 121 of the rules of procedure should be amended to specify a 48-hour rule for draft resolutions or to provide that proposals should be circulated not later than two days before the day of the meeting at which they were to be put to the vote. It was also suggested that the restrictions relating to the submission of amendments should be applied to subamendments.

263. In support of the changes proposed, it was observed that, if more time were available, Governments would be in a position to consider proposals more thoroughly and give proper instructions to their delegations.

264. Most of the members of the Special Committee felt, however, that rules 80 and 121 of the rules of procedure should not be amended, since the effect of the suggested amendment would be to delay the work of the General Assembly, which would be contrary to the objectives of the Special Committee.

265. The Special Committee, while recognizing the difficulties experienced by some delegations in consulting their Governments within the time laid down by rules 80 and 121 of the rules of procedure, does not deem it advisable to propose an amendment to those rules.

#### B. Content of resolutions<sup>88/</sup>

266. It was suggested that unnecessary preambular parts of draft resolutions should be eliminated and the operative part condensed in order to obtain more precise and effective texts. It was also suggested that draft resolutions should not contain provisions going beyond the competence of the Committee in which they were submitted.

267. The Special Committee is of the opinion that the wording of resolutions, to be effective, must be as clear and succinct as possible. It recognizes, however, that only the delegations concerned can decide upon the content of the proposals which they are sponsoring.

268. The Special Committee also wishes to emphasize that the text of a draft resolution should not go beyond the competence of the Committee in which it is submitted. Where, however, it is suggested that a draft resolution does so, the Special Committee feels that it is up to the Committee concerned to take a decision in the matter.

#### C. Financial and organizational implications<sup>89/</sup>

##### 1. Financial controls

269. In the observations submitted to the Special Committee, emphasis was placed on the need to ensure that draft resolutions having financial implications were subject to more stringent controls on the part of the administrative and budgetary organs. Such controls should be applied before the draft resolutions were voted upon and, moreover, in the light of an over-all assessment of priorities and in the context of programme budgeting for the Organization. It was also suggested that any resolutions involving expenditure adopted by subsidiary organs should be scrutinized more critically by the parent bodies.

270. In support of more stringent controls, it was argued that resolutions were sometimes adopted without sufficient awareness of their financial implications. The statement of financial implications was often submitted to the Main Committee concerned immediately prior to the vote on the relevant draft resolution, which was approved automatically without proper attention being given to priorities. If the statement of financial implications were circulated several days before the vote, certain measures might be seen to be financially inadvisable and would not

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<sup>88/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 128 and 129, and A/AC.149/SR.23 (vol. II, p. 156), SR.24 (vol. III, p. 6), SR.38 (vol. IV) and SR.41 (vol. IV).

<sup>89/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 130-132, and A/AC.149/SR.24 (vol. III, p. 6), SR.25 (vol. III, p. 20) and SR.38 (vol. IV).

be approved. Arguments were also advanced in favour of giving the Fifth Committee greater authority to decide whether a draft resolution could be financed from the budget for the current year and, if necessary, to defer implementation of a resolution until the following year.

271. In opposition to those suggestions, it was observed that, owing to the political character of the General Assembly, strict application of financial controls was sometimes inappropriate and might be detrimental to the very nature of the Assembly by preventing it from taking substantive action. Important though they were, financial implications should not be the decisive consideration in adopting or rejecting a proposal, nor should they hamper the freedom of action of political organs. Finally, it was stated that the question of programme budgeting was still under consideration in other United Nations organs and that it would not be appropriate for the Special Committee to take any decision on it.

272. The Special Committee feels that the provisions of rules 154 and 155 of the rules of procedure are satisfactory and should be strictly applied.

273. The Special Committee is also of the opinion that the financial implications of draft resolutions should be viewed in terms of an over-all assessment of priorities and that the principal organs should give careful consideration to the draft resolutions adopted by their subsidiary organs where such drafts call for the appropriation of funds.

## 2. Work of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

274. It was observed that, with a view to improving financial controls relating to the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions might either meet more often in the months preceding the opening of the session or even meet on a continuing basis. In that connexion, it was suggested that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee should receive an increased salary commensurate with the growing importance and demands of his functions.

275. The Special Committee recognizes that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions should meet more frequently, but does not consider itself qualified to make detailed recommendations on the matter.

## 3. Resolutions setting up new organs

276. The Committee considered the suggestion that, in view of the proliferation of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, a new rule should be added to the rules of procedure which would require the institutional implications of any draft resolution to be examined before it was voted upon.

277. While acknowledging that new organs should be set up only after mature consideration, the Special Committee believes that it would be inadvisable to amend the rules of procedure and lay down hard and fast rules in the matter.



1. Required majority

278. In the observations submitted to the Special Committee, it was pointed out that some resolutions were adopted by a small number of affirmative votes because of the large number of abstentions. To remedy this situation, it was suggested that rules 88 and 127 of the rules of procedure should be amended along the following lines: either abstentions and non-participation should be counted in deciding whether the required majority had been obtained, or members who abstained should be considered as not present, or the number of affirmative votes required to adopt a draft resolution should be greater than a majority of the total of the affirmative and negative votes and abstentions.

279. The Special Committee also considered a suggestion whereby a draft resolution, in order to be adopted, would require a majority of two-thirds in the General Assembly as well as a two-thirds majority of the votes of each regional group. Such a majority might be made up of States whose total contribution to the regular budget of the Organization amounted to a minimum percentage, to be agreed upon by the regional groups, of the contribution to that budget.

280. In support of the suggestions referred to in paragraph 278 above, it was observed that a resolution adopted by a small number of affirmative votes carried little weight and was very likely to go unimplemented, thus impairing the Organization's influence and authority.

281. The great majority of the members of the Special Committee were, however, opposed to making any changes in rules 88 and 127 of the rules of procedure. Some representatives argued that such changes might make it necessary to amend Articles 18 and 19 of the Charter and that the Committee was not competent to decide a question which was clearly not a procedural matter. It was observed that it would be unacceptable to consider members who abstained as not present, since the act of abstention had political significance and was sometimes the only way in which a delegation could indicate its position. It was also noted that all resolutions adopted by the General Assembly had the same legal value irrespective of the number of affirmative votes they received.

282. The Special Committee considers that rules 88 and 127 of the rules of procedure should be left unchanged.

283. The Special Committee also considers that the suggestion referred to in paragraph 279 above is unacceptable and, moreover, goes beyond its mandate.

2. Measures to accelerate procedures

284. The Special Committee considered several proposals designed to accelerate voting procedures in plenary meetings. The General Assembly could dispense with a roll-call vote on a draft resolution when such a vote had already taken place in a Main Committee, unless the draft resolution was revised in plenary, or it could refrain from reopening a debate on a draft resolution which had already obtained two-thirds of the votes at the Committee stage unless the President of the Assembly decided otherwise.

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<sup>90/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 133-136, and A/AC.149/SR.24 (vol. III, p. 6) and SR.25 (vol. III, p. 20).

285. It was observed in support of these suggestions that the procedure of the roll-call vote was largely superfluous and that recourse to it could be justified only in exceptional circumstances, as, for example, in the case of events of particular historical importance.

286. In opposition to the same suggestions, it was argued that political manoeuvring did not end with the adoption of a draft resolution in a Main Committee and that an evolving situation sometimes required a roll-call vote in the plenary. It was also pointed out that the matter of the discussion of a report of a Main Committee was dealt with in rule 68 of the rules of procedure, the practical application of which had proved entirely satisfactory.

287. The Special Committee, recalling the recommendations which it has made elsewhere concerning debate on items already considered in Committee (see para. 155) and roll-call votes (see para. 247), feels that it is inadvisable to make any changes in the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure.

### 3. Consensus

288. It was suggested that the Special Committee should encourage the adoption of decisions and resolutions by consensus, it being understood that this procedure would not compromise the legitimate rights and interests of all the parties concerned.

289. The Special Committee considers that the adoption of decisions and resolutions by consensus is desirable when it contributes to the effective and lasting settlement of differences, thus strengthening the authority of the United Nations. It wishes, however, to emphasize that the right of every Member State to set forth its views in full must not be prejudiced by this procedure.

#### E. Reduction in the number of resolutions<sup>91/</sup>

290. The Special Committee received some proposals aimed at reducing the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. In particular, it was suggested that in some cases the Assembly could refrain from adopting a resolution, especially when it was only taking note of a text, or could take note of various reports and topics in an omnibus resolution.

291. In support of these proposals, it was observed that the General Assembly could enhance its effectiveness by adopting fewer resolutions.

292. Most of the members of the Special Committee, however, indicated that they were opposed to a reduction in the number of resolutions. It was observed that a mechanical quantitative limitation of the number of resolutions was less important than the substance of the questions dealt with and that the adoption of a resolution frequently had political aspects. It was also argued that the approval of a report by the General Assembly was a necessary procedure that must be formally recorded.

293. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestions aimed at reducing the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

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<sup>91/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 137 and 138, and A/AC.149/SR.24 (vol. III, p. 6) and SR.25 (vol. III, p. 20).

## IX. DOCUMENTATION

294. The Special Committee had before it many proposals concerning a reduction in the volume of documentation, the preparation and distribution of documents, and the summary records of meetings.

295. Following a general discussion of the proposals as a whole, which is summarized below (see paras. 298, 299, 302, 303, 306 and 307), the Special Committee decided to refer the question of documentation to a working group.

296. The Second Working Group, composed of Barbados, Lebanon, Liberia, the Netherlands and Poland, was under the chairmanship of the representative of Poland. It held 10 meetings, in which the Rapporteur of the Special Committee and the Chief Editor of the Secretariat were invited to participate. The Working Group based its considerations on the observations submitted to the Special Committee and those made in the general discussion; it also took into account the suggestions contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit 92/ and other relevant documents before it.

### A. Reduction in the volume of documentation<sup>93/</sup>

297. Several of the observations submitted to the Special Committee stressed the need to reduce the volume of documentation of the General Assembly and to study means of increasing the usefulness of documents. It was pointed out that the control of documentation should be tightened in order to reduce excess circulation of documents and to eliminate the cases in which the same text is produced separately as a document of two different bodies. It was also suggested that limits might be set on the length of General Assembly documents, a task which might possibly be entrusted to a special body.

298. In support of these suggestions, it was stressed that, for reasons of both efficiency and economy, it was imperative to reduce the length of General Assembly documents; indeed, the value of a document was very often in inverse proportion to its size. It was also emphasized that it was equally imperative to limit the number of documents, since too many documents on any given subject considerably reduced their usefulness.

299. While generally recognizing the need to reduce the volume of documentation, some members of the Special Committee pointed out that automatic limitation could not be a panacea and that, in certain cases, there was no need to take too rigid an attitude. The increase in the tasks of the United Nations should be taken into account, and the real objective was not to reduce documentation systematically, but to eliminate documents which were superfluous. In any case it would be inappropriate to entrust to a new body the task of limiting the length of reports.

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<sup>92/</sup> A/8319 and Corr.1.

<sup>93/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 139-141, and A/AC.149/SR.26 (vol. III, p. 38), SR.28 (vol. III, p. 72), SR.32 (vol. III, p. 135), SR.33 (vol. III, p. 148), SR.39 (vol. IV) and SR.41 (vol. IV).

300. In the light of the proposals submitted by the Working Group, 94/ the Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should:

(a) Draw attention to the provisions of its resolutions 2292 (XXII) and 2538 (XXIV) summarized in document A/INF/136, and stress the need for strict adherence to them, not only in letter, but also in spirit, by Member States and also, in the light of its internal rules, by the Secretariat;

(b) Instruct its subsidiary organs to include in the agenda of each session an item on the control and limitation of the documentation of the organ itself in the spirit of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1272 (XIII).

B. Preparation and distribution of documents<sup>95/</sup>

301. The Special Committee had before it a number of comments with regard to the preparation and distribution of reports for the General Assembly. It was suggested that reports should be as brief as possible and contain, where appropriate, a summary of proposals, recommendations and conclusions. It was also suggested that reports should be issued without delay, that the General Assembly should consider introducing a time-limit, similar to that applied to Economic and Social Council documents, for the issue of reports to be submitted to the Assembly, and that bodies meeting between sessions of the Assembly should conclude their work and submit their reports in good time. Lastly, it was proposed that the distribution of reports should in principle be limited and that a list of such documents should be kept up to date by the Secretariat.

302. The members of the Special Committee agreed that reports to the General Assembly should be as brief as possible and contain, where appropriate, a summary of the recommendations addressed to the Assembly. Some members of the Committee emphasized the special difficulties faced by delegations of countries distant from Headquarters and expressed the view that the distribution of documents in good time as the result of the setting of a time-limit would enable Member States to prepare more effectively for the work of the General Assembly. Lastly, it was pointed out that the distribution of documents should not be automatic and that delegations, if they so requested, should obtain only those documents in which they were interested.

303. While acknowledging that delegations should receive documentation in good time, some members of the Special Committee believed that it would be unrealistic to establish an inflexible time-limit for the circulation of documents. It might in fact be necessary for a subsidiary body to meet during a General Assembly session in order to facilitate discussion of a particular item in one of the Main Committees. It was also noted that Member States should receive, upon request, restricted documents of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs, on the understanding that such documents would still not be made available to the public.

304. Taking into account the proposals of the Working Group, 96/ the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that:

94/ A/AC.149/R.15, para. 5.

95/ See annex IV, paras. 142-144, and A/AC.149/SR.26 (vol. III, p. 38), SR.28 (vol. III, p. 72), SR. 32 (vol. III, p. 135), SR.33 (vol. III, p. 148) and SR.39 (vol. IV).

96/ A/AC.149/R.15, para. 7.

(a) Timely distribution of documents in all working languages should be scrupulously observed;

(b) All the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should be required to complete their work and submit their reports before the opening of each regular session of the Assembly;

(c) Reports to be considered by the General Assembly should be as brief as possible and contain precise information confined to a description of the work done by the organ concerned, to the conclusions it has reached, to its decisions and to the recommendations made to the Assembly; the reports should include, where appropriate, a summary of proposals, conclusions and recommendations. As a rule, no previously issued material (working papers and other basic documents) should be incorporated in or appended to such reports, but, where necessary, referred to;

(d) Taking into account the needs of Member States, the number of copies of reports and other United Nations documents should, whenever appropriate, be limited, i.e., they should be issued in the /L. series. 97/

### C. Records of meetings<sup>98/</sup>

305. The Special Committee considered various proposals with regard to the records of meetings. In the case of plenary meetings of the Assembly, it was suggested that summary records should replace verbatim records, either for all meetings or for meetings other than those devoted to the general debate; delegations might be invited to provide summaries of their speeches to the Secretariat. With regard to meetings of Main Committees, it was suggested that the length of summary records should be reduced by half and that the verbatim records of the First Committee should be replaced by summary records; delegations might then, where appropriate, themselves assume the responsibility for the distribution of the full text of their statements.

306. It was recalled that General Assembly resolution 2538 (XXIV) provided that no organ of the Assembly could have both verbatim and summary records and it was suggested that it would be desirable and appropriate to make summary records the general practice, except for plenary meetings devoted to the general debate. Concise summary records should be the rule, unless the plenary Assembly or the First Committee decided otherwise for particularly important reasons.

307. Nearly all members of the Special Committee opposed the proposal that verbatim records of plenary meetings of the Assembly should be replaced by summary records. Most members of the Committee also opposed the application of that proposal to meetings of the First Committee. It was pointed out that questions of international peace and security were among the most important on the agenda and that delegations wanted their positions or their formal reservations on those questions to be reproduced verbatim in the records.

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<sup>97/</sup> For the recommendations concerning the reports of the Main Committees, see para. 133.

<sup>98/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 145 and 146, and A/AC.149/SR.26 (vol. III, p. 38), SR.28 (vol. III, p. 72), SR.32 (vol. III, p. 135), SR.33 (vol. III, p. 148), SR.39 (vol. IV) and SR.40 (vol. IV).

308. On the proposal of the Working Group, 99/ the Special Committee, believing that rule 60 of the rules of procedure no longer reflects actual practice, recommends to the General Assembly that that rule should be revised as follows:

"Records of meetings and sound recordings

"(a) Verbatim records of the meetings of the General Assembly and of the Political and Security Committee (First Committee) shall be drawn up by the Secretariat and submitted to those organs after approval by the presiding officer. The General Assembly shall decide upon the form of the records of the meetings of the other Main Committees and, if any, of the subsidiary organs and of special meetings and conferences. No organ of the General Assembly shall have both verbatim and summary records.

"(b) Sound recordings of the meetings of the General Assembly and of the Main Committees shall be made by the Secretariat. Such recordings shall also be made of the proceedings of subsidiary organs and special meetings and conferences when they so decide."

309. Also on the proposal of the Working Group, 100/ the Special Committee recommends that rule 60, as revised, should be applied in accordance with the following observations:

(a) Summary records should continue to be provided for the General Committee and for all Main Committees other than the First Committee;

(b) The General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, should decide annually whether the option that has traditionally been approved for the Special Political Committee to have, on specific request, transcriptions of the debates of some of its meetings, or portions thereof, should be maintained;

(c) The provision of summary records to subsidiary organs should be reviewed periodically by the General Assembly in the light of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the use of minutes instead of summary records, 101/ and of the comments of the Secretary-General 102/ and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions 103/ thereon;

(d) Sound recordings should be kept by the Secretariat in accordance with its practice.

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99/ A/AC.149/R.15, para. 8.

100/ A/AC.149/R.15, para. 9.

101/ E/4802.

102/ E/4802/Add.1.

103/ E/4802/Add.2.

## X. SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### A. Reduction of the number of organs<sup>104/</sup>

310. In several of the observations submitted to the Special Committee, attention was drawn to the need to halt the proliferation of the various intersessional organs of the General Assembly. To this end, it was suggested that the Assembly should make periodic reviews of the continuing need for such organs. It was also suggested that some organs might be merged.

311. In support of these suggestions it was stressed that some organs had outlived their usefulness and that steps should be taken to eliminate them. The General Assembly could reduce the number of subsidiary organs either by means of a triennial review of all organs or by assessing the value of each of them when considering their reports to the Assembly. The merger of several organs, particularly in the economic field, would also be conducive to a greater concentration of effort and thereby facilitate the Assembly's task while limiting expenditure.

312. Conversely, it was pointed out that growth in the number of subsidiary organs was not necessarily a negative development but, rather, a natural consequence of the increase in the volume, scope and complexity of the work of the United Nations. There should not, therefore, be an automatic quantitative reduction but rather an examination of each individual case. It was also pointed out that in any event the Special Committee was in no way competent to make specific recommendations on the subject.

313. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should review, either periodically or when considering their reports, the usefulness of its various subsidiary organs.

314. The Special Committee also recommends that the General Assembly should consider the possibility of merging some of these organs.

### B. Composition of organs<sup>105/</sup>

315. The Special Committee had before it various proposals concerning the composition of subsidiary organs. It was suggested in particular that they should have a smaller membership. It was further suggested that a larger number of delegations should be afforded an opportunity to follow the work of those organs either through periodic changes in their membership or by allowing States which were not members of them to participate in their work. It was also pointed out that some subsidiary bodies should refrain from undertaking constant visits to distant countries.

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<sup>104/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 148 and 149, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p.58), SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92) and SR.39 (vol. IV).

<sup>105/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 150 and 151, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p.58), SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92), SR.39 (vol. IV), SR.40 (vol. IV), SR.41 (vol. IV) and SR.42 (vol. IV).

316. It was observed, in favour of limited membership of organs, that small committees worked more efficiently than large ones, especially if their work was highly technical. Periodic change of the membership of organs would make it possible for a larger number of Member States to participate without impairing the efficiency of the organs.

317. It was nevertheless pointed out that it was not possible to establish any general rule with respect to the composition of subsidiary organs, which must vary according to the nature and function of each organ. In some cases, for instance, membership should be increased in the interests of equitable geographical representation.

318. The Special Committee considers that membership of a body depends on the nature and function of that body and that it cannot, therefore, be subject to any general rule.

319. The Special Committee is of the opinion that subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should, where appropriate, have the authority to invite a Member State which is not a member of the organ concerned to participate without vote in the discussion of a matter which the organ considers to be of particular interest to that Member State.

320. The Special Committee is also of the opinion that the composition of subsidiary organs should be subject to periodic change.

321. Finally, the Special Committee considers that visits of subsidiary organs away from their normal meeting places should be authorized by the General Assembly only when the nature of the work renders such visits essential.

#### C. Calendar of meetings<sup>106/</sup>

322. The Special Committee had before it a suggestion to the effect that decisions on the timing of meetings of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should be left to the Secretariat, which could, by means of prior co-ordination, prevent the simultaneous convening of meetings to be attended by the same officials.

323. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Secretary-General should play a greater role in drawing up the calendar of meetings, it being understood that in every case the final decision rests with the organ concerned (see para. 331).

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<sup>106/</sup> See annex IV, para. 152, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58), SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92) and SR.39 (vol. IV).



## XI. OTHER QUESTIONS

### A. Credentials of delegations<sup>107/</sup>

324. The attention of the Special Committee was drawn to the need to forestall long debates on the credentials of delegations. In that respect, proposals might be considered which, while leaving intact the present rules of suspension provided for in the Charter, might nevertheless indicate other consequences which could follow from non-recognition of credentials.

325. It was pointed out in support of that suggestion that, in certain cases where the General Assembly had decided not to recognize a delegation's credentials for reasons other than those covered by rule 27 of the rules of procedure, the President of the Assembly himself had had to determine the effect of the ruling on the delegation concerned. It was suggested that, in order to improve the situation in that regard, an explicit statement of the consequences of a General Assembly decision not to accept the credentials of a delegation should be added to rule 29. One possibility was that the delegation in question should withdraw from the proceedings of the General Assembly for that particular session.

326. It was argued, against that suggestion, that the existing provisions were satisfactory and that sanctions could be taken against Member States solely under Articles 5 and 6 of the Charter. It was also pointed out that the purpose of the suggestion was not sufficiently clear to be followed up at this stage.

327. The Special Committee, while aware of the problems posed by non-recognition by the General Assembly of a delegation's credentials, feels that it is not in a position to make any proposal on the matter.

### B. Role of the Secretary-General<sup>108/</sup>

328. The Special Committee had before it suggestions to the effect that the Secretary-General should have a stronger role in the organization of Assembly sessions, in particular with regard to the inclusion of certain items in the agenda and, where necessary, their deletion; the postponement to subsequent sessions of questions which do not need to be considered every year; the allocation of agenda items and, where necessary, the grouping of some of them.

329. Those members of the Committee who were in favour of the suggestion pointed out that rule 13 of the rules of procedure authorized the Secretary-General to propose the inclusion of items in the Assembly's agenda and that the Secretary-General's annual memorandum to the General Committee presented proposals concerning the allocation of agenda items. By allowing the Secretary-General greater freedom of action, the Committee would contribute towards enhancing the efficiency of the Organization and, in some cases, effecting economies.

330. Conversely, it was pointed out that, although the Secretary-General was empowered to take certain administrative steps and to make recommendations, the

<sup>107/</sup> See annex IV, para. 153, and A/AC.149/SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92).

<sup>108/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 154 and 155, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58), SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92), SR.39 (vol. IV), SR.40 (vol. IV) and SR.42 (vol. IV).

decision in each case lay with the General Assembly, particularly when it was a question of deleting or postponing agenda items and approving the calendar of meetings.

331. The Special Committee is of the opinion that the Secretary-General should play an active role in making suggestions with regard to the organization of sessions, it being understood that the final decision on the recommendations he makes lies with the General Assembly (see para. 323).

#### C. Secretariat<sup>109/</sup>

332. In one of the comments submitted to the Special Committee it was stated that the rationalization of the procedures would not accomplish much if reform of the Secretariat was not simultaneously undertaken.

333. The Special Committee considers that the question of reorganization of the Secretariat, however valid it might be, does not come within its terms of reference. It is of the opinion, therefore, that it should not make any recommendation on the matter.

#### D. Guidance regarding General Assembly procedure and assistance to presiding officers

##### 1. Preparation of a manual on procedure<sup>110/</sup>

334. It was suggested that, in order to assist Chairmen in expediting the work of their Committees, a manual on procedure for Chairmen should be prepared which would discuss the problems of presiding over Committees and refer to existing precedents.

335. During the discussion, the representative of the Secretary-General suggested <sup>111/</sup> that a systematic and comprehensive compilation of recommendations and suggestions - other than those incorporated in the rules of procedure - which had been adopted by the General Assembly on the basis of the reports of the various committees established to study the methods and procedures of the Assembly should be prepared. The compilation should also include any similar recommendations and suggestions which the General Assembly might adopt on the basis of the report of the Special Committee and in the light of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit. The representative of the Secretary-General further suggested that the compilation of recommendations and suggestions should, for the purposes of easy reference, be incorporated into a single text appended to the rules of procedure which would replace the present annexes.

336. It was also suggested during the discussion that, failing a manual on procedure, a compendium of the Special Committee's recommendations concerning the conduct of debates should be prepared in order to facilitate the task of Chairmen.

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<sup>109/</sup> See annex IV, para. 156, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58) and SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92).

<sup>110/</sup> See annex IV, para. 157, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58), SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92), SR.30 (vol. III, p. 118), SR.31 (vol. III, p. 129), SR.32 (vol. III, p. 133), SR.42 (vol. IV), SR.44 (vol. IV) and SR.45 (vol. IV).

<sup>111/</sup> See A/AC.149/R.12.

337. It was pointed out, in favour of the preparation of a manual on procedure, that persons elected to chair Committees were not necessarily fully conversant with General Assembly procedures. The proposed manual, which would group the various precedents, would be a useful adjunct to the rules of procedure, even though it would have no binding force.

338. In opposition to the suggestion, it was stated that the proposed manual would be an interpretation of the rules of procedure that would limit a Chairman's freedom of action. It was also stated that the question was of a political nature and that it would be necessary to decide who would be responsible for preparing such a manual.

339. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should consider requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a systematic and comprehensive compilation of the conclusions which the Assembly may adopt on the basis of the reports of the Special Committee and of the Joint Inspection Unit, this compilation to form an annex to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

## 2. Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs<sup>112/</sup>

340. The Special Committee considered a proposal that the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs should be brought up to date. In this regard, the Committee was informed by the Secretariat that the volumes which had been issued covered only the first 13 sessions of the General Assembly, but that three volumes, covering the fourteenth to twentieth sessions, were in preparation.

341. The Special Committee, recognizing the usefulness of the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, expresses the hope that it will be brought up to date as quickly as possible.

## 3. Preparation of a repertory of practice on the rules of procedure of the General Assembly<sup>113/</sup>

342. The Special Committee also had before it a proposal concerning the preparation of a repertory of practice for the General Assembly, categorized not by relevant Charter Articles but by the Assembly's rules of procedure.

343. During the discussion of this proposal, the representative of the Secretary-General pointed out that the Office of Legal Affairs had prepared, for its own use, a repertory of practice of the General Assembly. He stressed, however, that submission to the Assembly of such a document setting forth all the existing precedents would have considerable financial implications. He further noted that it would not be appropriate to ask the Secretariat to make a selection from among the various precedents.

344. The Special Committee took note of the fact that the publication of a repertory of practice on the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which would inevitably be lengthy, would have considerable financial implications. Accordingly, the Committee did not consider that it should endorse the proposal to issue such a repertory.

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<sup>112/</sup> See annex IV, para. 158, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58), SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92) and SR.39 (vol. IV).

<sup>113/</sup> Ibid.

4. Reminders of previous recommendations<sup>114/</sup>

345. It was suggested that at the beginning of the session the President of the General Assembly should remind the Assembly of, and particularly invite the attention of the Chairmen of Main Committees to, the recommendations for improving the methods of work which were specifically approved in General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII). It was also suggested that the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly 115/ should be reissued.

346. While there was general agreement on the principle underlying the first of the foregoing suggestions, the Special Committee did not feel that it need make any specific recommendation in that regard. The Committee did not retain the second suggestion on account of its financial implications.

5. Assistance in procedural matters<sup>116/</sup>

347. It was proposed that, even if he could not be present himself, the Legal Counsel should appoint someone to attend a Committee continuously whenever the situation so warranted. It was also suggested that the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees should enlist several assistants under them, both from the Secretariat and, wherever possible, from the delegations themselves to whom they would allocate items on the agenda for the purpose of closely following them up with the delegations directly concerned and expediting the progress of the General Assembly.

348. The Special Committee noted that it was not possible to assign a member of the Office of Legal Affairs continuously to each of the Main Committees but that legal advice was always furnished, either orally or in writing, when requested. The Committee did not consider that it should make any recommendation on the second proposal.

E. Studies of the rules of procedure<sup>117/</sup>

349. The Special Committee had before it various proposals concerning studies of the rules of procedure. It was suggested that a comparison should be made between the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and those of the Economic and Social Council to determine whether there would be advantage in incorporating into the rules of the Assembly provisions similar to those in the rules of the Council, for

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<sup>114/</sup> See annex IV, para. 159, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58) and SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92).

<sup>115/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

<sup>116/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 160 and 161, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58) and SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92).

<sup>117/</sup> See annex IV, paras. 162-164, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58) and SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92).

example, rules 66 and 80.<sup>118/</sup> It was also suggested that a comparative study of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and those of other bodies such as the governing bodies of the specialized agencies might be prepared. Lastly, it was suggested that the various language versions of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly should be concorded.

350. With regard to the comparative study of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, it was pointed out that the insertion into the rules of procedure of the Assembly of a provision similar to that of rule 66 of the Council's rules of procedure would help to avoid long procedural discussions. Moreover, the inclusion of a provision similar to rule 80 of the Council's rules of procedure would help to ensure co-ordinated use of the resources of the specialized agencies.

351. In opposition to the suggestions, it was pointed out that the role and functions of the General Assembly were different from those of the Economic and Social Council, that the Assembly dealt primarily with political subjects while the Council was a co-ordinating body concerned with more technical matters and that the differences between the two organs justified the differences in the provisions

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118/ The rules read as follows:

"Rule 66

"If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Council shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted. The Council may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

"Any motions requiring that no decision be taken on the substance of such proposals shall, however, be considered as previous questions and shall be put to the vote before them."

"Rule 80

"1. Where an item proposed for the provisional agenda or the supplementary list of items for a session contains a proposal for new activities to be undertaken by the United Nations relating to matters which are of direct concern to one or more specialized agencies, the Secretary-General shall enter into consultation with the agency or agencies concerned and report to the Council on the means of achieving co-ordinated use of the resources of the respective agencies.

"2. Where a proposal put forward in the course of a meeting for new activities to be undertaken by the United Nations relates to matters which are of direct concern to one or more specialized agencies, the Secretary-General shall, after such consultation as may be possible with the representatives at the meeting of the other agency or agencies concerned, draw the attention of the meeting to these implications of the proposal.

"3. Before deciding on proposals referred to above, the Council shall satisfy itself that adequate consultations have taken place with the agencies concerned."

of their respective rules of procedure. It was also pointed out that a provision such as that contained in rule 66 of the Council's rules of procedure was a double-edged weapon which could be used for procedural manoeuvres to curtail discussion of important proposals.

352. The Special Committee did not consider that it should retain the suggestions concerning the insertion in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of provisions similar to those in the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

353. The Special Committee took note of the proposal concerning a comparative study of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and those of the governing bodies of the specialized agencies and suggests that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should consider undertaking such a project.

354. Lastly, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Secretariat should be instructed to undertake a comparative study of the versions of the General Assembly's rules of procedure in the various official languages in order to ensure their concordance.

#### F. Special training programme<sup>119/</sup>

355. The Special Committee had before it a suggestion that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should be encouraged to arrange a special one-day training programme on General Assembly procedures and methods of operation. If the programme took place at the beginning of the session, it would be helpful to new members of delegations.

356. The Special Committee, aware of the training problems facing delegations, particularly as regards newly arrived representatives, suggests that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should consider ways of helping to solve these problems.

#### G. Regional groups<sup>120/</sup>

357. It was suggested that the names of chairmen of the regional groups for the month should be published in the Journal of the United Nations.

358. The Special Committee endorses this suggestion and recommends that it should be left to the Secretariat to decide how often it should be applied.

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<sup>119/</sup> See annex IV, para. 165, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58) and SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92).

<sup>120/</sup> See annex IV, para. 166, and A/AC.149/SR.27 (vol. III, p. 58) and SR.29 (vol. III, p. 92).

XII. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE<sup>121/</sup>

359. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 2632 (XXV) of 9 November 1970 on the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly,

Endorsing the view expressed by the Special Committee that the existing rules of procedure are generally satisfactory and that most improvements could be achieved not through changes in the rules of procedure but through their better application,

Conscious of the need to discharge in the most efficient manner the functions incumbent upon it under the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Decides to amend its rules of procedure by incorporating therein the modifications set forth in annex I to the present resolution;
2. Approves the conclusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly as they appear in annex II to the present resolution;
3. Declares the conclusions of the Special Committee to be useful and worthy of consideration by the General Assembly, its committees and other relevant organs;
4. Decides that the conclusions referred to in paragraph 2 above shall be reproduced as an annex to its rules of procedure;
5. Further decides to review from time to time the progress achieved in rationalizing its work and requests the Secretary-General, as appropriate, to report on the extent to which the conclusions of the Special Committee's report have been reflected in the practice of the General Assembly.

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<sup>121/</sup> See A/AC.149/SR.38, 40, 42, 43, 44 and 45 (vol. IV).

## Annex I

### Amendments to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. Replace the present rule 39 by the following text /para. 130 of the report of the Special Committee<sup>7</sup>:

"If a Vice-President of the General Assembly finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting of the General Committee, he may designate a member of his delegation as his substitute. The Chairman of a Main Committee shall, in case of absence, designate one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee as his substitute. A Vice-Chairman shall not have the right to vote if he is of the same delegation as another member of the Committee."

2. Replace the present rule 60 by the following text /para. 308:

#### "Records of meetings and sound recordings

(a) Verbatim records of the meetings of the General Assembly and of the Political and Security Committee (First Committee) shall be drawn up by the Secretariat and submitted to those organs after approval by the presiding officer. The General Assembly shall decide upon the form of the records of the meetings of the other Main Committees and, if any, of the subsidiary organs and of special meetings and conferences. No organ of the General Assembly shall have both verbatim and summary records.

(b) Sound recordings of the meetings of the General Assembly and of the Main Committees shall be made by the Secretariat. Such recordings shall also be made of the proceedings of subsidiary organs and special meetings and conferences when they so decide."

3. Replace the present rule 69 by the following text /para. 198:

"The President may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when one third of the Members of the General Assembly are present. The presence of a majority of the Members shall be required for any decision to be taken."

4. Replace the present rule 74 by the following text /para. 210:

"The General Assembly may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on any question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, a proposal to set such limits. When debate is limited and a representative has spoken his allotted time, the President shall call him to order without delay."



5. Replace the present rule 100 by the following text, to be inserted after the present rule 101 /para. 175/:

"Organization of work

(a) All the Main Committees shall, during the first week of the session, hold the elections provided for in rule 105.

(b) Each Main Committee, taking into account the closing date for the session fixed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the General Committee, shall adopt its own priorities and meet as may be necessary to complete the consideration of the items referred to it. It shall at the beginning of the session adopt a programme of work indicating, if possible, a target date for the conclusion of its work, the approximate dates of consideration of items and the number of meetings to be allocated to each item."

The present rule 101 will become rule 100.

6. Replace the present rule 105 by the following text /paras. 130 and 165/:

"Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. In the case of other committees, each shall elect a Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence. The elections shall be held by secret ballot unless the committee decides otherwise in an election where only one candidate is standing. The nomination of each candidate shall be limited to one speaker, after which the committee shall proceed to the election immediately."

7. Replace the present rule 107 by the following text /para. 130/:

"If the Chairman finds it necessary to be absent during a meeting or any part thereof, he shall designate one of the Vice-Chairmen to take his place. A Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairman. If any officer of the committee is unable to perform his functions, a new officer shall be elected for the unexpired term."

8. Replace the present rule 110 by the following text /para. 198/:

"The Chairman may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when one quarter of the members of the committee are present. The presence of a majority of the members shall be required for any decision to be taken."

9. Insert the following rule after the present rule 111 and renumber the present rules 112 to 164 accordingly /para. 236/:

"Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall be expressed only by the Chairman of the previous session - or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation - after all the officers of that Committee have been elected."

10. Replace the present rule 115 by the following text /para. 210/:

"The committee may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on any question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, a proposal to set such limits. When debate is limited and a representative has spoken his allotted time, the Chairman shall call him to order without delay."

## Annex II

### Conclusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly

#### I. MANDATE OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

1. The members of the Special Committee agreed that the existing rules of procedure were generally satisfactory and that most improvements would be achieved not through changes in the rules of procedure but through better application of the existing rules, due account being taken of the conclusions of the Special Committee and of the various committees responsible for reviewing the procedures and organization of the General Assembly /para. 12 of the report of the Special Committee/.
2. The Special Committee considered, moreover, that it would be desirable to review from time to time the procedures and organization of the General Assembly /para. 13/.

#### II. GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF SESSIONS

##### A. Opening date

3. The Special Committee is of the opinion that it would not be desirable to change the date fixed for the opening of sessions /para. 18/.

##### B. Duration of sessions

4. The Special Committee, noting that, despite the appreciable increase in the number of Member States, it has been possible to maintain an average duration of 13 weeks for regular sessions, is of the view that this period should not be changed and that, in any case, the session should end before Christmas /para. 22/.
5. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that the session should be divided into two parts. The Committee likewise did not endorse the suggestion that the session should theoretically last a whole year and should merely be adjourned after a two-month main session /para. 23/.

##### C. Residuary sessions

6. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that a brief meeting of the General Assembly, to be called a "residuary session", might be held at heads-of-mission level about the end of April for the discussion of certain administrative and routine questions /para. 24/.

### III. GENERAL COMMITTEE

#### A. Composition of the General Committee

##### 1. Increase in membership

7. The Special Committee decided not to take any action on the question of either maintaining or increasing the present membership of the General Committee /para. 31/.

8. Furthermore, the Special Committee did not retain the suggestion that the Chairman of the Credentials Committee should be authorized to participate in the work of the General Committee /para. 32/.

##### 2. Absence of members of the General Committee elected in their personal capacity

9. The Special Committee considers that the problems which arise when the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a Main Committee cannot attend a meeting of the General Committee would be settled for the most part if the General Assembly decided to increase the number of Vice-Chairmen of the Main Committees /para. 36/.

10. The Special Committee also considers that, if the General Assembly took such a decision, the Chairman of a Main Committee, in designating a Vice-Chairman as his substitute, should take into account the representative character of the General Committee /para. 37/.

#### B. Functions of the General Committee

##### 1. Importance of the role of the General Committee

11. The Special Committee considers that the General Committee, in view of the functions conferred on it by the rules of procedure, should play a major role in advancing the rational organization and general conduct of the proceedings of the General Assembly. The Committee is of the opinion that the General Committee should discharge completely and effectively the functions assigned to it under rules 40, 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure whose purpose is to assist the Assembly in the general conduct of its work /para. 41/.

##### 2. Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

12. The Special Committee recommends that, within the framework of the functions conferred on it by the rules of procedure, and subject to the limitation prescribed in rule 40 as regards the discussion of the substance of an item, the General Committee should examine the provisional agenda, together with the supplementary list and requests for the inclusion of additional items, more attentively and carry out more fully and consistently its functions of recommending with regard to each item its inclusion in the agenda, the rejection of the request for inclusion or its inclusion in the provisional agenda of a future session, as well as of allocating items to the Main Committees regard being had to rules 99 and 101 of the rules of procedure, with a view to ensuring that all items inscribed on the agenda can be taken up by the end of the session /para. 45/.

### 3. Organization of the work of the General Assembly

13. The Special Committee recalls the recommendation, in subparagraph (f) of General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII), that the General Committee should meet at least once every three weeks. The Special Committee notes that the recommendation has not been complied with and expresses the hope that the General Committee will be able to hold more frequent meetings, in conformity with rule 42 of the rules of procedure, without thereby interfering with the normal meeting schedule of the plenary and the Main Committees /para. 49/.

14. The Special Committee also considers that, in the discharge of the functions conferred by rules 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure and subject to the limitation prescribed in rule 41 regarding the decision of any political question, the General Committee should review the progress of the General Assembly and the Main Committees and should, as required, assist and make recommendations to the President and the Assembly for the co-ordination of the proceedings of the Main Committees and for expediting the general conduct of business /para. 50/.

#### C. Ways of facilitating the work of the General Committee

##### 1. Preparatory meetings

15. The Special Committee does not consider that it is in a position to make any recommendation with regard to the holding of preparatory meetings of the General Committee /para. 54/.

##### 2. Subsidiary organs

16. The Special Committee does not consider that it is in a position to make any recommendation with regard to the establishment of subsidiary organs of the General Committee /para. 58/.

### IV. AGENDA

#### A. Presentation and preliminary consideration of the provisional agenda

17. The Special Committee, aware of the need to assist delegations, to the greatest extent possible, to prepare for the work of the General Assembly, recommends to the Assembly that the Secretary-General should be requested:

(a) To communicate to Member States, not later than 15 February, the unofficial list of items proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda of the Assembly;

(b) To communicate to Member States, not later than 15 June, an annotated list of items which would indicate briefly the history of each item, the available documentation, the substance of the matter to be discussed and earlier decisions by United Nations organs;

(c) To communicate to Member States before the opening of the session an addendum to the annotated list /para. 64/.

18. Furthermore, the Special Committee recommends that Member States requesting the inclusion of an item should, if they deem it advisable, make a suggestion concerning its referral to a Main Committee or to the plenary Assembly /para. 65/.

## B. Reduction in the number of agenda items

### 1. Non-inclusion of certain items

19. The Special Committee, considering that the General Assembly should take into account the relative importance of agenda items in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, recommends to the Assembly that, in the context of rules 22 and 40 of the rules of procedure, Member States should take special interest in the contents of the Assembly's agenda and, in particular, in deciding on the appropriate solution of questions or on the elimination of items which have lost their urgency or relevance, are not ripe for consideration or could be dealt with and even disposed of equally well by subsidiary organs of the General Assembly /para. 70/.

### 2. Staggering of items over two or more years and grouping of related items

20. The Special Committee considers that the staggering of items over two or more years constitutes one means of rationalizing the procedures of the General Assembly /para. 74/.

21. Moreover, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that, as far as possible and appropriate, related items should be grouped under the same title /para. 75/.

### 3. Referral to other organs

22. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should, where relevant, refer specific items to other United Nations organs or to specialized agencies, taking into account the nature of the question /para. 79/.

23. The Special Committee also recommends that the General Assembly should give due weight to the debates that have taken place in other organs /para. 80/.

### 4. Non-receivability of certain additional items

24. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that additional items, which are proposed for inclusion in the agenda less than 30 days before the opening of a session, should be included only if the conditions prescribed by rule 15 of the rules of procedure are fully satisfied /para. 84/.

## C. Allocation of agenda items

### 1. Division of work among the Committees

25. The Special Committee wishes to draw attention to the importance of a rational distribution of agenda items among the Main Committees. In this connexion, the Committee, recognizing that the structure of the Main Committees gives them specialization and experience, recommends that the allocation of agenda items should be based not only on the workload of the Committees but also on the nature of the item, regard being had to rules 99 and 101 of the rules of procedure /para. 89/.

26. The Special Committee also considers that it would be helpful if suggestions concerning the allocation of items were made much earlier so that Member States might have more time to study them /para. 90/.

27. Lastly, the Special Committee recommends that the General Committee and the General Assembly should consider, in some cases, the possibility of referring more items directly to the plenary /para. 91/.

### 2. Non-referral of certain items to two or more Committees

28. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that agenda items should be so allocated as to ensure, as far as possible, that the same questions or the same aspects of a question are not considered by more than one Committee /para. 95/.

## V. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES

### A. Functions of the individual Committees

29. There was general agreement among the members of the Special Committee that a flexible approach should be adopted towards the whole question of the division of work among the Main Committees and that the Committee should not make any recommendation concerning the referral of specific items, in order not to go beyond its field of competence /para. 97/.

30. The Special Committee, considering that the potential of the seven Main Committees should be utilized to the full, recommends that the General Assembly should ensure a more balanced division of work among the Committees, giving due account to the nature of items. The Committee does not, however, feel that it should specify which items might be transferred from one Committee to another /para. 98/.

31. The Special Committee, recognizing that the workload of a number of Committees is extremely heavy, is of the opinion that the General Assembly should advise those Committees so to organize their work as to enable them to consider their agenda in the most effective way /para. 99/.

1. First Committee

32. The Special Committee, recognizing that the role of the First Committee is essentially political, recommends that this Committee devote itself primarily to problems of peace, security and disarmament /para. 103/.

33. The Special Committee, not wishing to make any specific recommendation concerning the allocation of agenda items, did not feel that it should take any decision on the proposal that the reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation should be submitted to the First Committee /para. 104/.

2. Special Political Committee

34. The Special Committee, reaffirming the major role which must be played by the Special Political Committee and recognizing further that the agenda of that Committee is relatively light, recommends that the General Assembly should consider transferring to the Special Political Committee one or two items usually considered by other Committees with a view to ensuring a better division of work among the Main Committees /para. 108/.

35. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestions concerning the renaming of the Special Political Committee /para. 109/.

3. Second Committee

36. The Special Committee did not feel that it should take any decision on the proposals that all the social aspects of development should be dealt with by the Second Committee. Accordingly, it did not endorse the suggestions to change the name of that Committee /para. 113/.

4. Third Committee

37. The Special Committee did not feel it should take a decision on the proposal that some of the items on the agenda of the Third Committee should be transferred to other Main Committees /para. 117/.

5. Conflicts of competence among Committees

38. The Special Committee considers that conflicts of competence among the Main Committees should be avoided whenever possible. Without prejudging the decision to be taken in each individual case, the Committee wishes to draw attention to the existence of this problem and to the advisability for the General Committee and the General Assembly to consider the most effective ways of remedying it /para. 119/.

B. Role of the presiding officers

39. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should fully exercise the functions assigned to them in the rules of procedure and, in particular, make use of the prerogatives given them in rule 108 /para. 123/.



40. The Special Committee also reaffirms that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution as well as on that of experience and competence, as provided for in rule 105 of the rules of procedure /para. 124/.

41. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that candidates should have had at least one year's experience in one of the Main Committees or the suggestion that Chairmen should be elected at the end of the previous session /para. 125/.

#### C. Number of Vice-Chairmen 122/

42. From its own experience, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that its subsidiary organs should consider, as far as possible, the designation of three Vice-Chairmen in order to ensure the representative character of their officers /para. 131/.

#### D. Reports of the Committees

43. The Special Committee, recalling General Assembly resolution 2292 (XXII), recommends to the Assembly that the reports of the Main Committees should be as concise as possible and, save in exceptional cases, should not contain a summary of the debates /para. 133/. 123/

### VI. MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE TIME

#### A. Plenary Assembly

##### 1. General debate

##### (a) Frequency

44. The Special Committee, recognizing the unquestionable value of the general debate, considers that it should continue to be held every year and that the time devoted to it should be utilized to the maximum. It wishes to stress also the importance of participation by heads of State or Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high officials as a means of enhancing the significance of the general debate /para. 137/.

##### (b) Organization of meetings

##### (i) Length of the general debate

45. The Special Committee feels that the general debate would be more meaningful, as far as organization was concerned, if it took place intensively and without

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122/ For the number of Vice-Chairmen of the Main Committees, see annex I, para. 6.

123/ For the recommendations concerning the reports of subsidiary organs, see para. 107.

interruption. Its length should not normally exceed two and a half weeks if the time available were utilized to the maximum /para. 142/.

(ii) Closure of the list of speakers

46. Considering that the organization of the general debate would be improved if delegations were required to decide more quickly when to speak, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the list of speakers wishing to take part in the general debate should be closed at the end of the third day after the opening of the debate /para. 144/.

(c) Length of statements

47. The Special Committee, noting that during the session commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations it had been possible to hear a large number of speakers during a relatively short period without limiting the duration of statements, considers that this result was due to a better utilization of the time available and not to the imposition of a limitation on the length of speeches /para. 147/.

48. The Committee notes that during recent sessions of the General Assembly the average length of speeches has been 35 minutes and expresses the hope that delegations will ensure that their statements will not be excessively long /para. 148/.

(d) Submission of written statements

49. The Special Committee considers that the submission of written statements should not be formally instituted with regard to the general debate /para. 152/.

2. Debate on items already considered in Committee

50. The Special Committee is of the opinion that rule 68 of the rules of procedure has been applied judiciously and with satisfactory results /para. 155/.

3. Non-utilization of the rostrum

51. The Special Committee thinks that it would be useful to draw the attention of representatives to the possibility of speaking without going to the rostrum. It considers, however, that, in all cases, it is for representatives to decide whether they prefer to speak from their seats or from the rostrum, whether on a point of order, for an explanation of vote or in exercise of their right of reply /para. 157/.

4. Presentation of the reports of the Main Committee

52. The Special Committee wishes to recall the recommendation made in 1947 by the Committee on Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly that Rapporteurs should not read out their reports in plenary meetings. It wishes

to stress that the presentation of reports in plenary meetings should be limited to brief introductory statements /para. 158/.

53. The Special Committee recommends also that the General Assembly should confirm the practice whereby certain related reports of a non-controversial nature may be introduced simultaneously to the plenary Assembly by the Rapporteur /para. 159/.

## B. Main Committees

### 1. Nomination of officers

54. The members of the Special Committee agreed that the nomination of candidates involved a significant loss of time. They also recognized that the terms of rule 105 of the rules of procedure, which provided that elections should be held by secret ballot, no longer corresponded to the present practice, since in most cases, as a result of prior consultations, there was only one candidate for each post and voting by secret ballot was therefore superfluous /para. 161/.

55. The Special Committee, bearing in mind particularly the financial implications of such a procedure, did not retain the suggestion that nominations should be made in writing /para. 162/.

56. Furthermore, in view of the dictates of courtesy and the possibility that cases might arise in which nominees would not be known until the last moment, the Special Committee did not deem it advisable to dispense completely with the oral nomination of candidates /para. 163/.

57. The Special Committee considers that the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee would proceed to the election immediately. The Special Committee considers, however, that the general principle that elections are held by secret ballot should be retained /para. 164/. 124/

### 2. Commencement of work<sup>125/</sup>

58. The Special Committee recommends that all the Main Committees, with the possible exception of the First Committee, should begin their work on the working day following the receipt of the list of items referred to them by the General Assembly /para. 170/.

59. The Special Committee also recommends that the First Committee should be ready to meet whenever no plenary meeting of the Assembly is being held /para. 171/.

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124/ For the relevant amendment to the rules of procedure, see annex I, para. 6.

125/ For the election of officers, see annex I, para. 5 (a).

3. Progress of work<sup>126/</sup>

60. The Special Committee recommends that the Main Committees should from time to time review the progress of their work /para. 176/

4. General debate in Committee

61. The Special Committee, while recognizing the unquestionable usefulness and importance of the general debate, considers that Chairmen should encourage the Main Committees to:

(a) Recognize the advisability of shortening the general debate, whenever that is possible without detriment to the work of the Committees;

(b) Extend, whenever appropriate, the practice of holding a single debate on related and logically linked agenda items /para. 180/.

62. The Special Committee recognizes that a general debate on questions previously considered by a United Nations organ and covered by a report of the organ concerned should be retained. The Committee, however, draws the attention of the Chairmen of the Main Committees to the possibility of consulting their Committees in every case when a general debate on a certain item does not seem to be needed. The Chairmen may resort to this practice to ascertain in particular whether the Committees desire to hold a general debate on every question referred to them by other organs /para. 181/.

63. At the same time, the Special Committee wishes to reaffirm that the general debate serves a necessary and very useful purpose in the work of the Main Committees and that its organization should in no circumstances be changed without the consent of the Committees concerned, which therefore should decide on the applicability of the above-mentioned suggestions /para. 182/.

64. The Special Committee did not deem it appropriate to make a recommendation concerning the suggestion that delegations sharing the same point of view could use a spokesman who would express those views in a single statement. Nor did the Committee retain the suggestion that the consideration of certain items already debated in previous sessions might be introduced by specially appointed Rapporteurs who would summarize the main issues emerging from previous debates /para. 183/.

5. Concurrent consideration of several agenda items

65. The Special Committee considers that in certain cases, when a Main Committee cannot proceed with its discussion of one item, it should be prepared to begin considering the next item on its agenda /para. 187/.

6. Establishment of sub-committees or working groups

66. The Special Committee wishes to remind the General Assembly of the desirability of the Main Committees' making use of sub-committees or working groups /para. 188/.

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<sup>126/</sup> For the organization of work, see annex I, para. 5 (b).

C. Measures applicable both to the plenary Assembly  
and to the Main Committees

1. Opening of meetings at the scheduled time

67. The members of the Special Committee agreed that the General Assembly would operate much more efficiently if the presiding officers made a special effort to open meetings at the scheduled time /para. 190/. 127/

68. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion to have meetings begin at 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. in view of the practical difficulties that such a measure would entail /para. 192/.

2. List of speakers

69. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the President of the Assembly or the Chairman of a Main Committee should, soon after the beginning of the debate on an item, indicate a date for the closing of the list of speakers. He should endeavour to have the list of speakers closed at the latest after one third of the meetings allocated to the item have been held /para. 202/.

70. Moreover, the Special Committee considers that speakers should as far as possible avoid putting down their names to speak on a given item and at the same time indicating an alternative meeting if they are unable to keep to their original schedule /para. 203/.

71. Finally, the Special Committee wishes to reaffirm the practice whereby presiding officers should invite representatives to speak in the order of their inscription on the list of speakers, on the understanding that those prevented from doing so should normally be moved to the end of the list, unless they have arranged to change places with other representatives /para. 204/.

3. Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers

72. The Committee wishes to stress that the amendment on this subject 128/ is of a purely technical nature, its only purpose being to limit the number of representatives who could speak on a proposal submitted under the existing rules 74 and 115 /para. 210/.

73. With regard to the general question of setting a time-limit on interventions, the Special Committee, while recognizing that, in so far as possible, statements should be kept brief so as to allow all delegations to present the views of their Governments, considers that no rigid rule on the question could be applied /para. 211/.

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127/ For the relevant amendment to the rules of procedure, see annex I, paras. 3 and 8.

128/ For the relevant amendment to the rules of procedure, see annex I, paras. 4 and 10.

#### 4. Explanations of vote

74. The Special Committee considers that, in explaining their votes, delegations should limit their statements to an explanation, as brief as possible, of their own votes and should not use the occasion to reopen the debate /para. 216/.

75. The Special Committee also considers that presiding officers should be encouraged to use, whenever they deem it appropriate, their powers under rules 90 and 129 of the rules of procedure /para. 217/.

76. Finally, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that a delegation should explain its vote only once on the same proposal, in either a Main Committee or a plenary meeting, unless the delegation considers it essential to explain it in both meetings. It recommends further that the sponsor of a draft resolution adopted by a Main Committee should refrain from explaining its vote during the consideration of that draft resolution in the plenary unless it deems it essential to do so /para. 218/.

#### 5. Right of reply

77. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that delegations should use restraint in the exercise of their right of reply, both in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees, and that their statements in exercise of that right should be as brief as possible /para. 223/.

78. The Special Committee recommends, furthermore, that statements made in the exercise of the right of reply should be delivered, as a general rule, at the end of meetings /para. 224/.

#### 6. Points of order

79. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following text as a description of the concept of a point of order /para. 229/:

"(a) A point of order is basically an intervention directed to the presiding officer, requesting him to make use of some power inherent in his office or specifically given him under the rules of procedure. It may, for example, relate to the manner in which the debate is conducted, to the maintenance of order, to the observance of the rules of procedure or to the way in which presiding officers exercise the powers conferred upon them by the rules. Under a point of order, a representative may request the presiding officer to apply a certain rule of procedure or he may question the way in which the officer applies the rule. Thus, within the scope of the rules of procedure, representatives are enabled to direct the attention of the presiding officer to violations or misapplications of the rules by other representatives or by the presiding officer himself. A point of order has precedence over any other matter, including procedural motions (rules 73 /114/ and 79 /120/).

"(b) Points of order raised under rule 73 /114/ involve questions necessitating a ruling by the presiding officer, subject to possible appeal. They are therefore distinct from the procedural motions provided for in rules 76 /117/ to 79 /120/, which can be decided only by a vote and on which

more than one motion may be entertained at the same time, rule 79 /120/ laying down the precedence of such motions. They are also distinct from requests for information or clarification, or from remarks relating to material arrangements (seating, interpretation system, temperature of the room), documents, translations etc., which - while they may have to be dealt with by the presiding officer - do not require rulings from him. However, in established United Nations practice, a representative intending to submit a procedural motion or to seek information or clarification often rises to 'a point of order' as a means of obtaining the floor. This latter usage, which is based on practical grounds, should not be confused with the raising of points of order under rule 73 /114/.

"(c) Under rule 73 /114/, a point of order must be immediately decided by the presiding officer in accordance with the rules of procedure; any appeal arising therefrom must also be put immediately to the vote. It follows that as a general rule:

- (i) A point of order and any appeal arising from a ruling thereon is not debatable;
- (ii) No point of order on the same or a different subject can be permitted until the initial point of order and any appeal arising therefrom have been disposed of.

Nevertheless, both the presiding officer and delegations may request information or clarification regarding a point of order. In addition, the presiding officer may, if he considers it necessary, request an expression of views from delegations on a point of order before giving his ruling; in the exceptional cases in which this practice is resorted to, the presiding officer should terminate the exchange of views and give his ruling as soon as he is ready to announce that ruling.

"(d) Rule 73 /114/ provides that a representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. Consequently, the purely procedural nature of points of order calls for brevity. The presiding officer is responsible for ensuring that statements made on a point of order are in conformity with the present description."

## 7. Congratulations

80. The Special Committee is of the opinion that it would be better to retain the current practice of the plenary Assembly whereby congratulations to the President are confined to brief remarks included in the speeches made during the general debate /para. 235/.

81. With regard to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, the Special Committee recommends that, in the case of a newly established organ or of the rotation of officers on an existing one, congratulations to the Chairman should be expressed only by the temporary Chairman and congratulations to other officers should be expressed only by the Chairman /para. 237/. 129/

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129/ For congratulations in the Main Committees, see annex I, para. 9.

## 8. Condolences

82. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that condolences addressed to a delegation on the death of a prominent person or in the event of a disaster should be expressed solely by the President of the General Assembly, by the Chairman of a Main Committee or by the Chairman of a subsidiary organ on behalf of all members. Where circumstances warrant it, the President of the General Assembly might call a special plenary meeting for that purpose /para. 242/.

83. The Special Committee moreover takes note of the practice whereby the President of the General Assembly, on behalf of all Members, dispatches a cable to the country concerned /para. 243/.

## 9. Roll-call votes

84. The Special Committee, while believing that there is no need to change the rules of procedure relating to roll-call votes, recommends that delegations should endeavour not to request such a vote except when there are good and sound reasons for doing so /para. 247/.

## 10. Electronic devices

85. The Special Committee did not believe that it should express any views on the possible use of an electronic voting system by all Committees, since the question of the installation of mechanical means of voting was included in the draft agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly /para. 249/.

86. The Special Committee did not retain the suggestion that a mechanical or electronic timing device might be installed in the General Assembly Hall and the Committee rooms /para. 250/.

# VII. RESOLUTIONS

## A. Submission of draft resolutions

### 1. Date of submission of draft resolutions

87. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that draft resolutions should be submitted as early as possible so as to give debates a more concrete character. It considers, however, that no rigid rule should be established in the matter, since it is for delegations to determine, in each case, the most appropriate moment for submitting draft resolutions /para. 254/.

88. So as to ensure that debates take shape as quickly as possible without making it mandatory for delegations to submit a formal draft resolution, the Special Committee also considers that delegations might resort more often to the possibility of circulating draft resolutions as informal working papers which would provide a basis for the discussion but whose contents would be strictly provisional /para. 255/.



2. Submission of draft resolutions in writing

89. Because of the appreciable loss of time that such a procedure could entail, the Special Committee decided not to endorse the suggestion that proposals and amendments should be submitted in writing only /para. 256/.

3. Consultations

90. The Special Committee, recognizing the indisputable value of consultations, believes that delegations should explore every avenue for arriving at negotiated texts. It considers, however, that the initiative for such consultations must rest solely with the delegations concerned and can, under no circumstances, be dictated in mandatory provisions /para. 258/.

91. The Special Committee also believes that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should be invited to bear in mind the possibility of establishing, where necessary, working groups for the purpose of facilitating the adoption of agreed texts. Such groups may be open, as appropriate, to interested delegations. It does not, however, consider it advisable to contemplate the establishment of such working groups whenever two or more draft resolutions have been introduced on the same matter /para. 259/.

4. Number of sponsors

92. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestion that the number of sponsors of a draft resolution should be limited /para. 260/.

93. The Special Committee does, however, wish to draw attention to the practice whereby the sponsors of a proposal decide whether other delegations can become co-sponsors /para. 261/.

5. Time-lapse between the submission and the consideration of draft resolutions

94. The Special Committee, while recognizing the difficulties experienced by some delegations in consulting their Governments within the time laid down by rules 80 and 121 of the rules of procedure, does not deem it advisable to propose an amendment to those rules /para. 265/.

B. Content of resolutions

95. The Special Committee is of the opinion that the wording of resolutions, to be effective, must be as clear and succinct as possible. It recognizes, however, that only the delegations concerned can decide upon the content of the proposals which they are sponsoring /para. 267/.

96. The Special Committee also wishes to emphasize that the text of a draft resolution should not go beyond the competence of the Committee in which it is submitted. Where, however, it is suggested that a draft resolution does so, the Special Committee feels that it is up to the Committee concerned to take a decision in the matter /para. 268/.

## C. Financial implications

### 1. Financial controls

97. The Special Committee feels that the provisions of rules 154 and 155 of the rules of procedure are satisfactory and should be strictly applied /para. 272/.

98. The Special Committee is also of the opinion that the financial implications of draft resolutions should be viewed in terms of an over-all assessment of priorities and that the principal organs should give careful consideration to the draft resolutions adopted by their subsidiary organs where such drafts call for the appropriation of funds /para. 273/.

### 2. Work of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

99. The Special Committee recognizes that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions should meet more frequently, but does not consider itself qualified to make detailed recommendations on the matter /para. 275/.

### 3. Resolutions setting up new organs

100. While acknowledging that new organs should be set up only after mature consideration, the Special Committee believes that it would be inadvisable to amend the rules of procedure and lay down hard and fast rules in the matter /para. 277/.

## D. Voting procedure

### 1. Required majority

101. The Special Committee considers that rules 88 and 127 of the rules of procedure should be left unchanged /para. 282/.

102. The Special Committee also considers that the suggestion referred to in paragraph 279 of the report is unacceptable and, moreover, goes beyond its mandate /para. 283/.

### 2. Measures to accelerate procedures

103. The Special Committee, recalling the recommendations which it has made elsewhere concerning debate on items already considered in Committee (see para. 50) and roll-call votes (see para. 84), feels that it is inadvisable to make any changes in the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure /para. 287/.

### 3. Consensus

104. The Special Committee considers that the adoption of decisions and resolutions by consensus is desirable when it contributes to the effective and lasting settlement of differences, thus strengthening the authority of the United Nations. It wishes, however, to emphasize that the right of every Member State to set forth its views in full must not be prejudiced by this procedure /para. 289/.

#### E. Reduction in the number of resolutions

105. The Special Committee did not endorse the suggestions aimed at reducing the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly /para. 293/.

### VIII. DOCUMENTATION

#### A. Reduction in the volume of documentation

106. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should:

(a) Draw attention to the provisions of its resolutions 2292 (XXII) and 2538 (XXIV) summarized in document A/INF/136, and stress the need for strict adherence to them, not only in letter, but also in spirit, by Member States and also, in the light of its internal rules, by the Secretariat;

(b) Instruct its subsidiary organs to include in the agenda of each session an item on the control and limitation of the documentation of the organ itself in the spirit of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1272 (XIII) /para. 300/.

#### B. Preparation and distribution of documents

107. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that:

(a) Timely distribution of documents in all working languages should be scrupulously observed;

(b) All the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should be required to complete their work and submit their reports before the opening of each regular session of the Assembly;

(c) Reports to be considered by the General Assembly should be as brief as possible and contain precise information confined to a description of the work done by the organ concerned, to the conclusions it has reached, to its decisions and to the recommendations made to the Assembly; the reports should include, where appropriate, a summary of proposals, conclusions and recommendations. As a rule, no previously issued material (working papers and other basic documents) should be incorporated in or appended to such reports, but, where necessary, referred to;

(d) Taking into account the needs of Member States, the number of copies of reports and other United Nations documents should, whenever appropriate, be limited, i.e., they should be issued in the /L. series /para. 304/. 130/

### C. Records of meetings

108. The Special Committee recommends that rule 60, as revised, 131/ should be applied in accordance with the following observations:

(a) Summary records should continue to be provided for the General Committee and for all Main Committees other than the First Committee;

(b) The General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, should decide annually whether the option that has traditionally been approved for the Special Political Committee to have, on specific request, transcriptions of the debates of some of its meetings, or portions thereof, should be maintained;

(c) The provision of summary records to subsidiary organs should be reviewed periodically by the General Assembly in the light of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the use of minutes instead of summary records, 132/ and of the comments of the Secretary-General 133/ and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions 134/ thereon;

(d) Sound recordings should be kept by the Secretariat in accordance with its practice /para. 309/.

## IX. SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### A. Reduction of the number of organs

109. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should review, either periodically or when considering their reports, the usefulness of its various subsidiary organs /para. 313/.

110. The Special Committee also recommends that the General Assembly should consider the possibility of merging some of these organs /para. 314/.

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130/ For the recommendations concerning the reports of the Main Committees, see para. 43.

131/ See annex I, para. 2.

132/ E/4802.

133/ E/4802/Add.1.

134/ E/4802/Add.2.

## B. Composition of organs

111. The Special Committee is of the opinion that membership of a body depends on the nature and function of that body and that it cannot, therefore, be subject to any general rule /para. 318/.

112. The Special Committee considers that subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should, where appropriate, have the authority to invite a Member State which is not a member of the organ concerned to participate without vote in the discussion of a matter which the organ considers to be of particular interest to that Member State /para. 319/.

113. The Special Committee is of the opinion that the composition of subsidiary organs should be subject to periodic change /para. 320/.

114. Finally, the Special Committee considers that visits of subsidiary organs away from their normal meeting places should be authorized by the General Assembly only when the nature of the work renders such visits essential /para. 321/.

## C. Calendar of meetings

115. The Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Secretary-General should play a greater role in drawing up the calendar of meetings, it being understood that in every case the final decision rests with the organ concerned /para. 323/.

## X. OTHER QUESTIONS

### A. Credentials of delegations

116. The Special Committee, while aware of the problems posed by non-recognition by the General Assembly of a delegation's credentials, feels that it is not in a position to make any proposal on the matter /para. 327/.

### B. Role of the Secretary-General

117. The Special Committee is of the opinion that the Secretary-General should play an active role in making suggestions with regard to the organization of sessions, it being understood that the final decision on the recommendations he makes lies with the General Assembly /para. 331/.

### C. Secretariat

118. The Special Committee considers that the question of reorganization of the Secretariat, however valid it might be, does not come within its terms of reference. It is of the opinion, therefore, that it should not make any recommendation on the matter /para. 333/.

D. Guidance regarding General Assembly procedure and assistance to presiding officers

1. Preparation of a manual on procedure

119. The Special Committee recommends that the General Assembly should consider requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a systematic and comprehensive compilation of the conclusions which the Assembly may adopt on the basis of the reports of the Special Committee and of the Joint Inspection Unit, this compilation to form an annex to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly /para. 339/.

2. Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs

120. The Special Committee, recognizing the usefulness of the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, expresses the hope that it will be brought up to date as quickly as possible /para. 341/.

3. Preparation of a repertory of practice on the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

121. The Special Committee did not consider that it should endorse the proposal to issue a repertory of practice on the rules of procedure of the General Assembly /para. 344/.

4. Reminders of previous recommendations

122. It was suggested that at the beginning of the session the President of the General Assembly should remind the Assembly of, and particularly invite the attention of the Chairmen of Main Committees to, the recommendations for improving the methods of work which were specifically approved in General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII). While there was general agreement on the principle underlying that suggestion, the Special Committee did not feel that it need make any specific recommendation in that regard /paras. 345 and 346/.

123. The Special Committee did not retain the suggestion that the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly 135/ should be reissued on account of the financial implications that such a measure would entail /paras. 345 and 346/.

5. Assistance in procedural matters

124. The Special Committee noted that it was not possible to assign a member of the Office of Legal Affairs continuously to each of the Main Committees but that legal advice was always furnished, either orally or in writing, when requested /para. 348/.

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135/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

125. The Special Committee did not consider that it should make any recommendation on the proposal that the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees should enlist several assistants under them, both from the Secretariat and, wherever possible, from the delegations themselves, to whom they would allocate items on the agenda for the purpose of closely following them up with the delegations directly concerned and expediting the progress of the General Assembly /paras. 347 and 348/.

#### E. Studies of the rules of procedure

126. The Special Committee did not consider that it should retain the suggestions concerning the insertion in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of provisions similar to those in the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council /para. 352/.

127. The Special Committee took note of the proposal concerning a comparative study of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and those of the governing bodies of the specialized agencies and suggests that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should consider undertaking such a project /para. 353/.

128. Lastly, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the Secretariat should be instructed to undertake a comparative study of the versions of the General Assembly's rules of procedure in the various official languages in order to ensure their concordance /para. 354/.

#### F. Special training programme

129. The Special Committee, aware of the training problems facing delegations, particularly as regards newly arrived representatives, suggests that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should consider ways of helping to solve these problems /para. 356/.

#### G. Regional groups

130. The Special Committee endorses the suggestion that the names of chairmen of the regional groups should be published in the Journal of the United Nations and recommends that it should be left to the Secretariat to decide how often it should be applied /para. 358/.

ANNEX I

List of members



# A. DELEGATIONS

## Officers of the Special Committee

Chairman Mr. Otto R. Borch (Denmark)

Vice-Chairmen : Mr. Ibrahima Boye (Senegal)  
Mr. Eugeniusz Kulaga (Poland)  
Mr. Motoo Ogiso (Japan)

Rapporteur : Mr. Bernardo Brito (Brazil), from 2 February to 4 June  
Mr. Ronaldo M. Sardenberg (Brazil), from 4 June

COUNTRY	REPRESENTATIVE	ALTERNATES	ADVISERS
Afghanistan	Mr. Abdur-Rahman <u>Pazhwak</u>	Mr. S.M. Farouk <u>Farhang</u> Mr. Yahya P. <u>Maroofi</u>	
Austria	Mr. Wolfgang <u>Wolte</u>	Mr. Alexander <u>Christiani</u> Mrs. Edda <u>Weiss</u>	
Barbados	Mr. George C.R. <u>Moe</u> Mr. Waldo Emerson <u>Waldron-Ramsey</u>	Mr. Clifton E. <u>Maynard</u>	
Bolivia	Mr. Walter <u>Guevara</u> <u>Arze</u>		
Brazil	Mr. Sergio A. <u>Frazão</u> Mr. João Augusto <u>de Araújo Castro</u>	Mr. Celso A. <u>de Souza e Silva</u> Mr. Sergio M. <u>Thompson-Flôres</u> Mr. Bernardo <u>Brito</u>	Mr. Ronaldo M. <u>Sardenberg</u> Mr. José A. Denot <u>Medeiros</u>

COUNTRY	REPRESENTATIVE	ALTERNATES	ADVISERS
Burundi	Mr. Nsanzé <u>Térence</u>	Mr. Félix <u>Magenge</u> Mr. Salvator <u>Ndururutse</u>	
Cameroon	Mr. Paul Bamela <u>Engo</u>	Mr. Ambroise <u>Mvogo</u>	
Canada	Mr. Yvon <u>Beaulne</u>	Mr. David C. <u>Reece</u> Mr. Godfrey L. <u>Hearn</u> Mr. Angus J. <u>Matheson</u>	
Chile	Mr. Humberto <u>Díaz</u> <u>Casanueva</u>	Mr. Uldaricio <u>Figueroa</u>	
Denmark	Mr. Benny <u>Kimberg</u>		
Egypt	Mr. M.H. <u>El-Zayyat</u>	Mr. A.I. <u>Teymour</u> Mr. A.M. <u>Moussa</u>	
France	Mr. Jacques <u>Kosciusko-</u> <u>Morizet</u>	Mr. François de <u>La Gorce</u>	Mr. Alain <u>Deschamps</u> Mrs. Catherine <u>Boivineau</u>
Greece	Mr. Dimitri S. <u>Bitsios</u>	Mr. Stéphane G. <u>Stathatos</u>	Mr. Alcibiades <u>Carokis</u>
India	Mr. S. <u>Sen</u>	Mr. N.P. <u>Jain</u> Mr. A.S. <u>Mani</u> Mr. R. <u>Gupta</u>	Mr. T. <u>Cherpoot</u>

COUNTRY	REPRESENTATIVE	ALTERNATES	ADVISERS
Japan	Mr. Motoo <u>Ogiso</u>	Mr. Hideo <u>Kagami</u> Mr. Tadashi <u>Ohtaka</u>	Mr. Kunio <u>Katakura</u>
Lebanon	Mr. Edouard <u>Ghorra</u>	Mr. Yahya <u>Mahmassani</u> Mr. Samir <u>Mobarak</u>	
Liberia	Mr. Nathan <u>Barnes</u>	Mr. Lafayette <u>Harmon Diggs</u>	
Netherlands	Mr. R. <u>Fack</u>	Mr. C.A. <u>van der Klaauw</u>	Mr. G.A.M. <u>Wehry</u>
Nigeria	Mr. E.O. <u>Ogbu</u>	Mr. O. <u>Adeniji</u>	
Pakistan	Mr. Agha <u>Shahi</u>	Mr. Sayid A. <u>Karim</u>	Mr. Mohammad <u>Farooq</u>
Philippines	Mr. Narciso G. <u>Reyes</u>	Mr. Privado G. <u>Jimenez</u> Mr. Cecilio R. <u>Espejo</u>	
Poland	Mr. Eugeniusz <u>Kulaga</u>	Mr. Zdzislaw <u>Ludwiczak</u> Mr. Edward <u>Sabik</u>	
Romania	Mr. Gheorghe <u>Diaconescu</u>	Mr. Traian <u>Chebeleu</u>	

COUNTRY	REPRESENTATIVE	ALTERNATES	ADVISERS
Senegal	Mr. Ibrahima <u>Boye</u>	Mr. Abdou Salam <u>M'Bengué</u>	
Tunisia	Mr. Rachid <u>Driss</u>	Mr. Ali <u>Chtioui</u> Mr. Abdelkrim <u>Moussa</u> Mr. Mohamed Larbi <u>Fayache</u>	
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. N.K. <u>Tarassov</u>	Mr. B.P. <u>Krasulin</u> Mr. Y.M. <u>Rybakov</u>	Mr. V.N. <u>Fedorov</u>
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Colin <u>Crowe</u> Mr. K.D. <u>Jamieson</u>	Mr. Michael S. <u>Weir</u> Mr. J.R. <u>Freeland</u> Miss Sheila E. <u>Harden</u>	
United States of America	Mr. Christopher H. <u>Phillips</u>	Mr. Seymour Maxwell <u>Finger</u> Mr. William E. <u>Schaufele</u>	Mr. Robert L. <u>Barry</u> Mr. Rudolph E. <u>Carter</u> Mr. Michael H. <u>Newlin</u> Mr. Robert B. <u>Rosenstock</u>
Venezuela	Mr. Andrés <u>Aguilar</u>	Mr. Tulio <u>Alvarado</u>	
Yugoslavia	Mr. Lazar <u>Mojsov</u>	Mr. Naste <u>Čalovski</u>	Mr. Zlatan <u>Kikić</u>
Zambia	Mr. M.T. <u>Mhlanga</u>	Mr. A.K. <u>Mwanamwambwa</u>	

## B. WORKING GROUPS

### First Working Group 1/

(General Committee, agenda)

Austria

France

India

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland

United States of America

\*Venezuela

Yugoslavia

Zambia

### Second Working Group 2/

(Documentation)

Barbados

Lebanon

Liberia

Netherlands

\*Poland

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\* State to which the chairmanship of the Group was assigned.

1/ Established on 2 June 1971 (see A/AC.149/SR.20 /vol. II, p. 112/).

2/ Established on 26 May 1971 as the "Fourth Drafting Group" (see A/AC.149/SR.18 /vol. II, p. 84/ and SR.20 /vol. II, p. 121/). On 23 June, the Special Committee decided to change the title to "Second Working Group" (see A/AC.149/SR.29 /vol. III, p. 90/).

C. DRAFTING GROUPS

First Drafting Group 3/

(Opening of meetings at the scheduled time, quorum)

Bolivia

France

Nigeria

Philippines

\*Poland

Second Drafting Group 4/

(Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers,  
explanations of vote, right of reply, points of order)

Brazil

Canada

Egypt

\*Japan

Romania

Third Drafting Group 5/

(Congratulations, condolences)

Greece

Pakistan

\*Senegal

Venezuela

Yugoslavia

- 
- 3/ Established on 12 May 1971 (see A/AC.149/SR.12 vol. I, p. 1647).  
4/ Established on 17 May 1971 (see A/AC.149/SR.14 vol. II, p. 227).  
5/ Established on 19 May 1971 (see A/AC.149/SR.15 vol. II, p. 387).

D. SECRETARIAT

Representative of the Secretary-General:

Mr. Constantin A. Stavropoulos

Secretary of the Special Committee:

Mr. Jean Gazarian

Deputy Secretary:

Miss Kwen Chen

Assistant Secretaries:

Mrs. Isabel Bautista

Mr. Alexei Laptev

Mr. Macaire Pédanou

Miss Alice Bernard-Jones

Miss Farida Ayoub

ANNEX II

List of documents



## A. GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Observations and references</u>
A/AC.149/		
1	Agenda	See para. 5
2	List of members of the Special Committee	See annex I A
SR.1-45	Summary records of the meetings of the Special Committee	Mimeographed: 1-12 (vol. I) 13-23 (vol. II) 24-34 (vol. III) 35-45 (vol. IV)

## B. LIMITED DISTRIBUTION

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Observations and references</u>
A/AC.149		
L.1	Provisional agenda	Same text as A/AC.149/1; see para. 5
L.2	Synopsis of proposals considered by previous Committees which were not acted upon by the General Assembly	Mimeographed
L.3	Preliminary work of the Special Committee	Mimeographed
L.4	Statistical data on the General Assembly and the Main Committees	See annex III
L.5 and Add.1-4	Views and suggestions submitted by Member States	Mimeographed
L.6 and Add.1	Information submitted by the specialized agencies	Mimeographed
L.7 and Add.1-3	Views and suggestions submitted by former Presidents of the General Assembly and former Chairmen of Main Committees	Mimeographed
L.8	Analytical summary of views and suggestions submitted to the Special Committee by Member States, former Presidents of the General Assembly and former Chairmen of Main Committees	Replaced by L.8/Rev.1
L.8/Rev.1	Analytical summary of views and suggestions submitted to the Special Committee by Member States, former Presidents of the General Assembly and former Chairmen of Main Committees	See annex IV

# C. RESTRICTED DISTRIBUTION

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Observations and references</u>
A/AC.149/		
R.1	Nomination of officers, commencement of work and schedule of work: note by the Chairman	Mimeographed
R.2	Nomination of officers, commencement of work and schedule of work: note by the Chairman	Mimeographed
R.3	Opening of meetings at the scheduled time and quorum: note by the Chairman	Mimeographed
R.4 and Add.1	Points of order: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
R.5	Explanations of vote and points of order: note by the Chairman	Mimeographed
R.6	Opening of meetings at the scheduled time and quorum: report of the First Drafting Group	Mimeographed
R.7 and Add.1	Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers, explanations of vote and points of order: note by the Chairman	Mimeographed
R.8	Composition of the General Committee: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
R.9 and Add.1	Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers, explanations of vote, right of reply and points of order: report of the Second Drafting Group	Mimeographed
R.10	Congratulations and condolences: report of the Third Drafting Group	Mimeographed
R.11	Composition of the working and drafting groups: note by the Secretary-General	Replaced by R.11/Rev.1
R.11/Rev.1	Working and drafting groups: note by the Secretary-General	See annexes I B and I C
R.12	Question of the preparation of a manual on procedure: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Observations and references</u>
A/AC.149/		
R.13	Functions of the individual Committees and simultaneous absence of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
R.14	General Committee and agenda: report of the First Working Group	Mimeographed
R.15	Documentation: report of the Second Working Group	Mimeographed
R.16	Draft report of the Special Committee	Replaced by R.16/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1 and 2
R.16/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1 and 2	Draft report of the Special Committee	Mimeographed
R.17	Annotated list of agenda items: financial implications of the proposal recommended by the First Working Group	Mimeographed
R.18 and Add.1	Proposed amendments to the draft report of the Special Committee	Mimeographed
<u>First Working Group</u>		
WG.I/1	Analytical summary of views and suggestions concerning the General Committee and the agenda: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
WG.I/2 and Add.1-9	General Committee: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
WG.I/3	Provisions of the rules of some of the specialized agencies: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
WG.I/4	Yugoslavia: working paper	Mimeographed
WG.I/5 and Add.1	Agenda: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
WG.I/6	Draft report of the First Working Group	Mimeographed

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Observations and references</u>
A/AC.149/		
<u>Second Working Group</u>		
WG.II/1 and Add.1	Draft report of the Second Working Group	Replaced by WG.II/1/Rev.1
WG.II/1/ Rev.1	Draft report of the Second Working Group	Mimeographed
<u>First Drafting Group</u>		
DG.I/1	Opening of meetings at the scheduled time and quorum: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
DG.I/2	Opening of meetings at the scheduled time and quorum: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
<u>Second Drafting Group</u>		
DG.II/1 and Add.1	Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
DG.II/2 and Add.1	Explanations of vote: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
DG.II/3	Right of reply: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
DG.II/4	Egypt: working paper	Mimeographed
DG.II/5	Canada: working paper	Mimeographed
<u>Third Drafting Group</u>		
DG.III/1	Congratulations and condolences: note by the Secretary-General	Mimeographed

### ANNEX III

#### Statistical data on the General Assembly and the Main Committees

STATISTICAL DATA ON THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE  
MAIN COMMITTEES

Note by the Secretary-General\*

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\* Issued previously under the symbol A/AC.149/L.4.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document has been prepared pursuant to the request made by the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly at its second meeting, on 11 February 1971. Some of the statistical data provided update working papers prepared in 1962 and 1963 for the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly.<sup>1/</sup> Others, such as those on reports to the General Assembly and on subsidiary organs of the Assembly, did not appear in the earlier documents.
2. The Secretary-General hopes that the information in this document will facilitate the task of the Special Committee during the preliminary phase of its work.

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<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 25, document A/5423, annexes III, IV, V and VII.



## II. DURATION OF SESSIONS

3. It is interesting to note that it has been possible in recent years to maintain the normal duration of the regular sessions of the General Assembly, i.e. thirteen weeks, despite the marked increase in the number of Member States. Table 1 shows, for example, that the twenty-fifth session did not last longer than the fifth, when the United Nations had only sixty Members.

TABLE 1  
Duration of regular sessions

Session		Dates	Approximate number of weeks	Number of Members
First	First part, held in London Second part, held in New York	10 January - 14 February 1946 23 October - 15 December 1946	5) 8)	13 51 55
Second		16 September - 29 November 1947		10 1/2 57
Third	First part, held in Paris Second part, held in New York	21 September - 12 December 1948 5 April - 18 May 1949	12) 6)	18 59
Fourth		20 September - 10 December 1949		11 1/2 59
Fifth		19 September - 15 December 1950		13 60
	Remained in session	16 December 1950 - 5 November 1951	Scattered meetings	
Sixth	Held in Paris	6 November 1951 - 5 February 1952		13 60
			(including 10-day recess)	
Seventh		14 October - 21 December 1952 24 February - 23 April 1953 17-28 August 1953	10 ) 8 ) 1 1/2 )	19 1/2 60
Eighth		15 September - 9 December 1953		12 60
	Remained in session	10 December 1953 - 20 September 1954	(no meetings held)	
Ninth		21 September - 17 December 1954		12 1/2 60
Tenth		20 September - 20 December 1955		13 76
Eleventh		12 November 1956 - 8 March 1957	16 1/2 ) (including ) 10-day ) recess )	17 81
		10-13 September 1957	1/2 )	
Twelfth		17 September - 14 December 1957		12 1/2 82
Thirteenth		16 September - 13 December 1958 20 February - 13 March 1959	12 1/2 ) 3 )	15 1/2 82
Fourteenth		15 September - 13 December 1959		13 82
Fifteenth		20 September - 20 December 1960 7 March - 21 April 1961	13 ) 6 1/2 )	19 1/2 99
Sixteenth		19 September - 20 December 1961 15 January - 23 February 1962 7-28 June 1962	13 ) 6 ) 3 )	22 104
Seventeenth		18 September - 20 December 1962		13 110
Eighteenth		17 September - 17 December 1963		13 113
Nineteenth		1 December - 30 December 1964	4 )	
	Remained in session	18 January - 18 February 1965 1 September 1965	4 )	8 115
Twentieth		21 September - 21 December 1965		13 116
Twenty-first		20 September - 20 December 1966		13 122
Twenty-second		19 September - 19 December 1967	13 )	
	Remained in session	24 April - 12 June 1968 23 September 1968	7 )	20 123 124
Twenty-third	Opening delayed one week	24 September - 21 December 1968		13 126
Twenty-fourth		16 September - 17 December 1969		13 126
Twenty-fifth		15 September - 17 December 1970		13 127

### III. AGENDA

#### A. Number of items

4. Although the duration of the regular sessions has varied little over the years (see para. 3 above), the same cannot be said of the number of items on the agenda. It is enough to glance at table 2 to see that the number of items has increased considerably since the early years of the United Nations.

5. Table 3 shows, however, that there has been no marked increase recently in the number of items. For the past few years, the agenda of a regular session has averaged 100 items. The higher figure of 108 items for the twentieth session is explained by the fact that a number of items had not been considered at the previous session. The total of 107 for the twenty-fourth session was due to the large number of additional items whose inclusion had been requested before or during the session.

6. As to the allocation of items, which is shown in table 3, it should be noted that the sum of all the items referred to plenary meetings and to the Main Committees is larger than the total number of items on the agenda (for example, 107 and 101 in the case of the twenty-fifth session). This difference is due to the fact that some agenda items, such as item 12 (Report of the Economic and Social Council) are considered simultaneously by more than one Committee or in plenary meetings, depending on the particular aspect concerned.

TABLE 2

Number of agenda items of regular sessions

<u>Session</u>	<u>Number of items</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>
First (First part . . . . .	33	51
(Second part . . . . .	65	55
Second . . . . .	65	57
Third . . . . .	79	59
Fourth . . . . .	68	59
Fifth . . . . .	76	60
Sixth . . . . .	70	60
Seventh . . . . .	77	60
Eighth . . . . .	76	60
Ninth . . . . .	73	60
Tenth . . . . .	66	76
Eleventh . . . . .	71	81
Twelfth . . . . .	69	82
Thirteenth . . . . .	73	82
Fourteenth . . . . .	74	82
Fifteenth . . . . .	92	99
Sixteenth . . . . .	97	104
Seventeenth . . . . .	95	110
Eighteenth . . . . .	85	113
Nineteenth . . . . .	92 <sup>a/</sup>	115
Twentieth . . . . .	108	118
Twenty-first . . . . .	98	122
Twenty-second . . . . .	99	124
Twenty-third . . . . .	98	126
Twenty-fourth . . . . .	107	126
Twenty-fifth . . . . .	101	127

<sup>a/</sup> Number of items on the draft agenda. No final agenda was adopted during that session.

TABLE 3

Allocation of agenda items

<u>Session</u>	<u>Total number of a/ items</u>	<u>Items considered directly in plenary meeting</u>	<u>Items referred to the Main Committees</u>						
			<u>First Committee</u>	<u>Special Political Committee</u>	<u>Second Committee</u>	<u>Third Committee</u>	<u>Fourth Committee</u>	<u>Fifth Committee</u>	<u>Sixth Committee</u>
Twentieth	108	29	11	5	19	16	9	15	9
Twenty-first	98	27	12	5	19	12	10	14	5
Twenty-second	99	30	9	4	12	15	13	15	8
Twenty-third	98	28	8	4	16	17	12	14	6
Twenty-fourth	107	32	8	4	14	19	13	15	12
Twenty-fifth	101	27	11	5	11	16	13	14	10

a/ See para. 6.

B. Grouping of related items

7. This section deals with the grouping of related agenda items for consideration in a Main Committee. It consists of two tables entitled "Grouping of several items under one agenda item" and "Number of related agenda items considered together".

8. Table 4 sets out those instances in which, on the recommendation of the General Committee, two or more items of the draft agenda were combined under one agenda item.

9. Table 5 sets out those instances when a Main Committee decided to group two or more agenda items either for the purpose of their consideration at all stages or for the purpose of holding only one general debate.

TABLE 4

Grouping of several items under one agenda item

<u>Session</u>	<u>Proposed agenda items</u>	<u>Final agenda item</u>
Twentieth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The authorization and financing of future peace-keeping operations.</li> <li>2. Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects: report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations.</li> </ol>	<p>Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations;</li> <li>(b) The authorization and financing of future peace-keeping operations.</li> </ol>
Twenty-second	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Korean question: report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> <li>2. Withdrawal of United States and all other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations.</li> <li>3. Dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> </ol>	<p>The Korean question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea;</li> <li>(b) Withdrawal of United States and all other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations;</li> <li>(c) Dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Programme of studies on multilateral food aid.</li> <li>2. Review of the World Food Programme.</li> </ol>	<p>Multilateral food aid:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Programme of studies on multilateral food aid: report of the Secretary-General;</li> <li>(b) Review of the World Food Programme.</li> </ol>

TABLE 4 (continued)

<u>Session</u>	<u>Proposed agenda items</u>	<u>Final agenda item</u>
	<p>1. Measures tending to implement the privileges and immunities of representatives of Member States to the principal and subsidiary organs of the United Nations and to conferences convened by the United Nations and the privileges and immunities of the staff and of the Organization itself, as well as the obligations of States concerning the protection of diplomatic personnel and property.</p> <p>2. Reaffirmation of an important immunity of representatives of Member States to the principal and subsidiary organs of the United Nations to conferences convened by the United Nations.</p>	<p>Question of diplomatic privileges and immunities:</p> <p>(a) Measures tending to implement the privileges and immunities of representatives of Member States to the principal and subsidiary organs of the United Nations and to conferences convened by the United Nations and the privileges and immunities of the staff and of the Organization itself, as well as the obligations of States concerning the protection of diplomatic personnel and property;</p> <p>(b) Reaffirmation of an important immunity of representatives of Member States to the principal and subsidiary organs of the United Nations and to conferences convened by the United Nations.</p>



TABLE 4 (continued)

<u>Session</u>	<u>Proposed agenda items</u>	<u>Final agenda item</u>
Twenty-third	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Korean question: report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> <li>2. Dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> <li>3. Withdrawal of United States and all other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations.</li> <li>4. Need to put an end to the discussion in the United Nations on the unification of Korea.</li> </ol>	<p>The Korean question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea;</li> <li>(b) Dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea;</li> <li>(c) Withdrawal of United States and all other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations;</li> <li>(d) Need to put an end to the discussion in the United Nations on the unification of Korea.</li> </ol>
Twenty-fourth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Withdrawal of United States and all other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations.</li> <li>2. Dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> <li>3. Question of Korea: report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> <li>4. Need to put an end to the discussion in the United Nations on the unification of Korea.</li> </ol>	<p>Question of Korea:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Withdrawal of United States and all other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations;</li> <li>(b) Dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea;</li> <li>(c) Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea;</li> <li>(d) Need to put an end to the discussion in the United Nations on the unification of Korea.</li> </ol>

TABLE 4 (continued)

<u>Session</u>	<u>Proposed agenda items</u>	<u>Final agenda item</u>
Twenty-fifth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishment of a United Nations Fund for Namibia.</li> <li>2. Question of Namibia:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;</li> <li>(b) Report of the United Nations Council for Namibia;</li> <li>(c) Appointment of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Question of Namibia:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;</li> <li>(b) Report of the United Nations Council for Namibia;</li> <li>(c) Establishment of a United Nations Fund for Namibia;</li> <li>(d) Appointment of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia.</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Withdrawal of United States and all other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations.</li> <li>2. Dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> <li>3. Question of Korea: report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> </ol>	<p>Question of Korea:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Withdrawal of United States and all other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations;</li> <li>(b) Dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea;</li> <li>(c) Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.</li> </ol>

TABLE 4 (continued)

<u>Session</u>	<u>Proposed agenda items</u>	<u>Final agenda item</u>
	<p>1. Question of the breadth of the territorial sea and related matters.</p> <p>2. Question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind:</p> <p>(a) Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction;</p> <p>(b) Marine pollution and other hazardous and harmful effects which might arise from the exploration and exploitation of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction: report of the Secretary-General;</p> <p>(c) Views of Member States on the desirability of convening at an early date a conference on the law of the sea: report of the Secretary-General.</p>	<p>(a) Question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind: report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction;</p> <p>(b) Marine pollution and other hazardous and harmful effects which might arise from the exploration and exploitation of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction: report of the Secretary-General;</p> <p>(c) Views of Member States on the desirability of convening at an early date a conference on the law of the sea: report of the Secretary-General;</p> <p>(d) Question of the breadth of the territorial sea and related matters.</p>

TABLE 5

Number of related agenda items considered together

Session	First Committee	Special Political Committee	Second Committee	Third Committee	Fourth Committee	Fifth Committee	Sixth Committee
Twentieth					2 2 2 2		2
Twenty-first	2 3		2 <u>3a/</u> <u>3a/</u>		2 2		
Twenty-second	<u>3a/</u>			2	2 3		
Twenty-third	<u>5a/</u>				<u>10a/</u>		
Twenty-fourth	<u>4a/</u>		2 2	2 2 3	<u>3a/</u> <u>10a/</u>		2
Twenty-fifth	<u>7a/</u>		2	2	<u>3a/</u> <u>9a/</u>		

a/ Items grouped for the purpose of holding a single general debate.

C. Consideration of related items in two or more Main Committees

10. This section deals with those instances when agenda items which appear to be related, either directly or in some aspects, to a similar subject-matter have been considered in two or more Main Committees. These cases are listed in table 6.

11. Section A of the table lists the subject-matters and the Main Committees in which they were considered. Section B supplements section A by giving the titles of agenda items under each of those subject-matters, together with the indication of the Main Committee in which each item was considered.

TABLE 6

Consideration of related agenda items in two or more Main CommitteesA. List by subject-matter

	<u>Twentieth session</u>	<u>Twenty-first session</u>	<u>Twenty-second session</u>	<u>Twenty-third session</u>	<u>Twenty-fourth session</u>	<u>Twenty-fifth session</u>
1. Apartheid and racial discrimination	Special Political Committee  Third Committee	Special Political Committee  Third Committee	Special Political Committee  Third Committee  Fourth Committee	Special Political Committee  Third Committee  Fourth Committee	Special Political Committee  Third Committee  Fourth Committee	Special Political Committee  Third Committee  Fourth Committee
2. Disarmament	First Committee  Second Committee	First Committee  Second Committee		First Committee  Second Committee		
3. Sovereignty of States and non-interference in domestic affairs	First Committee  Sixth Committee					
4. Sea and sea-bed				First Committee  Second Committee		

TABLE 6 (continued)

## B. List by agenda items

<u>Session</u>	<u>Title of agenda items</u>	<u>Considered by</u>
<u>Twentieth</u>	1. <u>Apartheid and racial discrimination</u>	
	1. The policies of <u>apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa:	Special Political Committee
	(a) Reports of the Special Committee on the Policies of <u>Apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa;	
	(b) Reports of the Secretary-General.	
	2. Measures to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General.	<u>Third Committee</u>
	3. Draft International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.	Third Committee
	4. Manifestations of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance	Third Committee
<u>Twenty-first</u>	1. The policies of <u>apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Policies of <u>Apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa.	Special Political Committee
	2. Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination:	Third Committee
	(a) Measures to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;	
	(b) Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General.	
	3. Manifestations of racial prejudice and national and religious intolerance.	Third Committee
	4. Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including policies of racial discrimination and segregation and of <u>apartheid</u> , in all countries, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories.	Third Committee

TABLE 6 (continued)

Session	Title of agenda items	Considered by
Twenty-second	<p>1. The policies of <u>apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa:</p> <p>(a) Report of the Special Committee on the Policies of <u>Apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa;</p> <p>(b) Report of the Secretary-General.</p> <p>2. Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination:</p> <p>(a) Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General;</p> <p>(b) Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; report of the Secretary-General;</p> <p>(c) Measures to be taken against nazism and racial intolerance;</p> <p>(d) Measures for the speedy implementation of international instruments against racial discrimination.</p> <p>3. Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including policies of racial discrimination and segregation and of apartheid, in all countries, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories: report of the Secretary-General.</p> <p>4. Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Southern Rhodesia, South West Africa and Territories under Portuguese domination and in all other Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, <u>apartheid</u> and racial discrimination in southern Africa.</p>	<p>Special Political Committee</p> <p>Third Committee</p> <p>Third Committee</p> <p>Fourth Committee</p>
Twenty-third	<p>1. The policies of <u>apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Policies of <u>Apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa.</p>	<p>Special Political Committee</p>



TABLE 6 (continued)

Session	Title of agenda items	Considered by
Twenty-third (continued)	<p>2. Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination:</p> <p>(a) Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;</p> <p>(b) Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General;</p> <p>(c) Measures to be taken against nazism and racial intolerance: report of the Secretary-General.</p> <p>3. Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including policies of racial discrimination and segregation and of <u>apartheid</u>, in all countries, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories: report of the Secretary-General.</p> <p>4. Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Southern Rhodesia, Namibia and Territories under Portuguese domination and in all other Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, <u>apartheid</u> and racial discrimination in southern Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.</p>	<p>Third Committee</p> <p>Third Committee</p> <p>Fourth Committee</p>
Twenty-fourth	<p>1. The policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Policies of <u>Apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa.</p>	<p>Special Political Committee</p>

TABLE 6 (continued)

<u>Session</u>	<u>Title of agenda items</u>	<u>Considered by</u>
<u>Twenty-fourth</u> <u>(continued)</u>	<p>2. Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination:            (a) Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;            (b) Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: Report of the Secretary-General;            (c) Programme for the celebration in 1971 of the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General.</p> <p>3. Measures to be taken against nazism and racial intolerance: report of the Secretary-General</p> <p>4. Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including policies of racial discrimination and segregation and of apartheid, in all countries, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories:            (a) Measures for effectively combating racial discrimination and the policies of apartheid and segregation in southern Africa: report of the Secretary-General;            (b) Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on the treatment of political prisoners in South Africa: report of the Secretary-General.</p> <p>5. Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Southern Rhodesia, Namibia and Territories under Portuguese domination and in all other Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination in southern Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.</p>	<p>Third Committee</p> <p>Third Committee</p> <p>Third Committee</p> <p>Third Committee</p> <p>Fourth Committee</p>

TABLE 6 (continued)

Session	Title of agenda items	Considered by
Twenty-fifth	1. The policies of <u>apartheid</u> of the Government of South Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Policies of <u>Apartheid</u> of the Government of the Republic of South Africa.	Special Political Committee
	2. Measures to be taken against nazism and racial intolerance: report of the Secretary-General.	
	3. Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination: (a) International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General; (b) Measures for effectively combating racial discrimination and the policies of apartheid and segregation in southern Africa: report of the Secretary-General;	
	(c) Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, submitted under article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; (d) Status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: report of the Secretary-General.	
4.	Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Southern Rhodesia, Namibia and Territories under Portuguese domination and in all other Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, <u>apartheid</u> and racial discrimination in southern Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.	Fourth Committee

TABLE 6 (continued)

<u>Session</u>	<u>Title of agenda items</u>	<u>Considered by</u>
	<u>2. Disarmament</u>	
<u>Twentieth</u>	1. Question of general and complete disarmament: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.	First Committee
	2. Question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.	First Committee
	3. Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.	First Committee
	4. Question of convening a world disarmament conference.	First Committee
	5. Declaration on the denuclearization of Africa.	First Committee
	6. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.	First Committee
	7. Conversion to peaceful needs of the resources released by disarmament: (a) Reports of the Economic and Social Council; (b) Reports of the Secretary-General.	Second Committee
<u>Twenty-first</u>	1. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.	First Committee
	2. Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.	First Committee
	3. Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.	First Committee

TABLE 6 (continued)

<u>Session</u>	<u>Title of agenda items</u>	<u>Considered by</u>
<u>Twenty-first</u> (continued)	<p>4. Question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.</p> <p>5. Renunciation by States of actions hampering the conclusion of an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.</p> <p>6. Conversion to peaceful needs of the resources released by disarmament: report of the Secretary-General.</p>	<p>First Committee</p> <p>First Committee</p> <p>Second Committee</p>
<u>Twenty-third</u>	<p>1. Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.</p> <p>2. Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.</p> <p>3. Memorandum of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning urgent measures to stop the arms race and achieve disarmament.</p> <p>4. Conversion to peaceful needs of the resources released by disarmament: report of the Secretary-General.</p>	<p>First Committee</p> <p>First Committee</p> <p>First Committee</p> <p>Second Committee</p>
<u>Twentieth</u>	<p>3. <u>Sovereignty of States and non-interference in domestic affairs</u></p> <p>1. The inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of States and the protection of their independence and sovereignty.</p>	<p>First Committee</p>

<u>Session</u>	<u>Title of agenda items</u>	<u>Considered by</u>
Twentieth (continued)	<p>2. Consideration of principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Report of the Special Committee on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States;</li> <li>(b) Study of the principles enumerated in paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 1966 (XVIII);</li> <li>(c) Report of the Secretary-General on methods of fact-finding.</li> </ul> <p>3. Observance by Member States of the principles relating to the sovereignty of States, their territorial integrity, non-interference in domestic affairs, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the condemnation of subversive activities.</p>	Sixth Committee
Twenty-third	<p>4. <u>Sea and sea-bed</u></p> <p>1. Examination of the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind: report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction.</p> <p>2. Resources of the sea: report of the Secretary-General.</p>	First Committee  Second Committee

D. Staggering of items over two or more years

12. Table 7 shows that there are three different instances in which certain items are staggered over two or more years.

13. The most frequent instance is when the Assembly requests that certain reports be submitted to it not at the next session but at a later session. For example, the item appearing as No. 27 in the table was not on the agenda of the twenty-third session. The reason is that the General Assembly, in resolution 2292 (XXII), requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its twenty-fourth session.

14. The second instance of staggering, marked in the table by the letter (a), involves certain items whose inclusion in the agenda was postponed to a later session, on the recommendation of the General Committee. Such a recommendation may have been made at the suggestion of the Secretary-General; for example, in his memorandum to the General Committee at the twenty-third session, the Secretary-General observed<sup>2/</sup> that the report for the item appearing as No. 6 in the table would not be ready in time. Alternatively, the General Committee's recommendation may have been made at the proposal of a Member State, as was the case at the twenty-fifth session for the items listed as Nos. 1, 17, 26 and 29 in the table.

15. The third example, marked by the letter (b) in the table, concerns items which have been deferred to the following session in accordance with a decision taken by the General Assembly at the end of a session. These are generally items which the Committees concerned have not had time to consider.

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<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., Twenty-third Session, Annexes, agenda item 8, document A/BUR/171/Rev.1, para. 3.

TABLE 7

Staggering of certain items

Agenda item	Twentieth session	Twenty-first session	Twenty-second session	Twenty-third session	Twenty-fourth session	Twenty-fifth session
1. Installation of mechanical means of voting	x	x	x	x	x	<u>a/</u>
2. Report of the Committee on Arrangements for a Conference for the Purpose of Reviewing the Charter	x		x			
3. Co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity	x	x	x		x	
4. Question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons	<u>b/</u>	x				
5. International conferences on the peaceful uses of atomic energy	x		x	x	x	x
6. The role of the United Nations in training national technical personnel for the accelerated industrialization of the developing countries	x		x	<u>a/</u>	x	
7. Conversion to peaceful needs of the resources released by disarmament	x	x		x		
8. Permanent sovereignty over natural resources	<u>b/</u>	x		x		x
9. World Food Programme	x		x	x	x	
10. General review of the programmes and activities in the economic, social, technical co-operation and related fields of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Children's Fund and all other institutions and agencies related to the United Nations system	x	x	x		x	
11. Decentralization of the economic and social activities of the United Nations	<u>b/</u>	x				
12. Population growth and economic development	<u>b/</u>	x				
13. Assistance in cases of natural disaster	x			x		x
14. Housing, building and planning	x		<u>b/</u>	<u>b/</u>	x	x



TABLE 7 (continued)

Agenda item	Twentieth session	Twenty-first session	Twenty-second session	Twenty-third session	Twenty-fourth session	Twenty-fifth session
15. Creation of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	x	<u>b/</u>	x	x	x	<u>b/</u>
16. Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance	x	<u>b/</u>	x	<u>b/</u>	<u>b/</u>	<u>b/</u>
17. Town twinning as a means of international co-operation			<u>b/</u>	<u>b/</u>	<u>b/</u>	<u>a/</u>
18. Question of the punishment of war criminals and of persons who have committed crimes against humanity			x	x		x
19. Capital punishment			x	x		
20. Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination	x	x	<u>b/</u>	x	x	x
21. Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including policies of racial discrimination and segregation and of apartheid, in all countries, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories		x	<u>b/</u>	x	x	x
22. Draft Declaration on Social Progress and Development				<u>b/</u>	x	
23. Status of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights			x	<u>b/</u>	x	x
24. Question of the elderly and the aged					<u>b/</u>	<u>b/</u>
25. Question of Fiji		x	x	x	<u>b/</u>	x
26. United Nations International School	x	x	x	x	x	<u>a/</u>
27. Publications and documentation of the United Nations			x		x	x
28. Amendment to Article 22 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice and consequential amendments to Articles 23 and 28					<u>b/</u>	<u>b/</u>
29. Declaration on Universal Participation in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties					<u>b/</u>	<u>a/</u>
30. Need to consider suggestions regarding the review of the Charter of the United Nations					<u>b/</u>	x

Notes: x = Item considered during the session.

a/ Item whose inclusion in the agenda was postponed to a later session on the recommendation of the General Committee (see para. 14).

b/ Item included in the agenda but whose consideration was postponed to a later session (see para. 15).

#### IV. GENERAL DEBATE

16. In the part of its report relating to the general debate at plenary meetings, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly stressed "the importance of ensuring that the debate proceeds as speedily as possible in an organized and regular manner and that as little time as possible remains unused during the meetings devoted to it".<sup>3/</sup>

17. Through the combined efforts of delegations, Presidents of the General Assembly and the Secretariat, the goal of the Ad Hoc Committee seems to have been achieved. Table 8 shows that, despite the considerable increase in membership and the corresponding increase in the number of speakers, the total number of plenary meetings devoted to the general debate has altered little in the past ten years. For example, the same number of meetings was devoted to the general debate at the sixteenth and twenty-fourth sessions, although the number of speakers had increased from eighty to 112.

18. In this connexion, it should be noted that the twenty-fifth session was an unusual case since, in addition to the general debate, the Assembly held a commemorative session to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. Seventeen plenary meetings were devoted to the commemorative session, during which eighty-six speakers made statements.

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<sup>3/</sup> Ibid., agenda item 25, document A/5423, paragraph 18.

TABLE 8

Number of speakers in the general  
debate at plenary meetings

Session	Dates	Number of members	Number of speakers	Number of meetings
Tenth	22 September - 4 October 1955	60	45	13
Eleventh	16 November - 6 December 1956	76	68	14
Twelfth	19 September - 8 October 1957	80	71	21
Thirteenth	18 September - 7 October 1958	81	72	23
Fourteenth	17 September - 7 October 1959	82	79	24
Fifteenth	22 September - 17 October 1960	99	79	30
Sixteenth	22 September - 18 October 1961	104	80	29
Seventeenth	20 September - 18 October 1962	110	91	29
Eighteenth	19 September - 14 October 1963	112	96	30
Nineteenth	3 December - 23 December 1964) 19 January - 27 January 1965)	115	94	30
Twentieth	23 September - 15 October 1965	118	101	28
Twenty-first	22 September - 18 October 1966	119	108	27
Twenty-second	21 September - 13 October 1967	122	109	29
Twenty-third	2 October - 25 October 1968	125	111	30
Twenty-fourth	18 September - 8 October 1969	126	112	29
Twenty-fifth	17 September - 2 October 1970	126 <sup>a/</sup>	70 <sup>b/</sup>	17 <sup>b/</sup>

a/ The admission of Fiji, on 13 October 1970, increased the membership of the United Nations to 127.

b/ See paragraph 18.

19. The improvement mentioned above would appear to be the result of a better utilization of available time rather than a reduction in the length of statements. As will be seen from table 9, the average length of the speeches delivered in the general debate has decreased only very slightly in comparison with previous sessions.

TABLE 9

Length of speeches delivered in the  
general debate at plenary meetings

Session	Minimum length	Average length	Maximum length
Nineteenth	10 min.	36 min.	73 min.
Twentieth	12 min.	36 min.	70 min.
Twenty-first	9 min.	36 min.	59 min.
Twenty-second	11 min.	33 min.	82 min.
Twenty-third	15 min.	36 min.	90 min.
Twenty-fourth	11 min.	35 min.	88 min.
Twenty-fifth	15 min.	34 min.	61 min.

## V. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### A. Commencement and completion of work of the Main Committees

20. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the methods of Work of the General Assembly considered "that the Main Committees should begin their work promptly" and that "all the Main Committees, except the First Committee, should begin work at the latest two working days after they have been notified of their agenda".<sup>4/</sup> Table 10 shows that there has been a general improvement with regard to the date of the first organizational meeting. On the other hand, the results appear to be less uniform as regards the number of days from the opening of the session to the commencement of actual work.

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<sup>4/</sup> Ibid., para. 22.

TABLE 10

Commencement and completion of work of the Main Committees

	<u>First organiza- tional meeting</u>	<u>Commence- ment of actual work</u>	<u>Number of days from opening to commence- ment of actual work</u>	<u>Comple- tion of work</u>	<u>Number of days from completion of work to last plenary meeting</u>
<u>Fifteenth session</u> (20 Sept.-19 Dec. 1960) <sup>a/</sup>					
First Committee	18 Oct.	19 Oct.	29	19 Dec.	1
Special Political Committee	17 Oct.	18 Oct.	28	19 Dec.	1
Second Committee	6 Oct.	12 Oct.	22	14 Dec.	6
Third Committee	5 Oct.	6 Oct.	16	16 Dec.	4
Fourth Committee	3 Oct.	6 Oct.	16	19 Dec.	1
Fifth Committee	4 Oct.	6 Oct.	16	20 Dec.	1/2
Sixth Committee	5 Oct.	11 Oct.	21	14 Dec.	6
<u>Sixteenth session</u> (19 Sept.-20 Dec. 1961) <sup>a/</sup>					
First Committee	6 Oct.	19 Oct.	30	19 Dec.	1
Special Political Committee	6 Oct.	16 Oct.	27	19 Dec.	1
Second Committee	3 Oct.	5 Oct.	16	18 Dec.	2
Third Committee	2 Oct.	3 Oct.	14	14 Dec.	6
Fourth Committee	2 Oct.	3 Oct.	14	20 Dec.	3 hours
Fifth Committee	2 Oct.	4 Oct.	15	19 Dec.	1
Sixth Committee	3 Oct.	4 Oct.	15	15 Dec.	5
<u>Seventeenth session</u> (18 Sept.-20 Dec. 1962)					
First Committee	5 Oct.	10 Oct.	22	18 Dec.	2
Special Political Committee	3 Oct.	8 Oct.	20	14 Dec.	6
Second Committee	26 Sept.	3 Oct.	15	17 Dec.	3
Third Committee	27 Sept.	2 Oct.	14	14 Dec.	6
Fourth Committee	2 Oct.	3 Oct.	15	19 Dec.	1
Fifth Committee	1 Oct.	3 Oct.	15	20 Dec.	1/2
Sixth Committee	27 Sept.	1 Oct.	13	12 Dec.	8
<u>Eighteenth session</u> (17 Sept.-17 Dec. 1963)					
First Committee	8 Oct.	15 Oct.	28	11 Dec.	5
Special Political Committee	1 Oct.	8 Oct.	21	16 Dec.	1/2
Second Committee	25 Sept.	27 Sept.	10	10 Dec.	6
Third Committee	25 Sept.	26 Sept.	9	11 Dec.	5
Fourth Committee	27 Sept.	1 Oct.	14	13 Dec.	3
Fifth Committee	25 Sept.	2 Oct.	15	16 Dec.	1/2
Sixth Committee	24 Sept.	26 Sept.	9	12 Dec.	4
<u>Twentieth session</u> (21 Sept.-21 Dec. 1965)					
First Committee	6 Oct.	18 Oct.	27	21 Dec.	3 hours
Special Political Committee	1 Oct.	11 Oct.	20	17 Dec.	4
Second Committee	29 Sept.	5 Oct.	14	17 Dec.	4
Third Committee	29 Sept.	1 Oct.	10	15 Dec.	6
Fourth Committee	28 Sept.	5 Oct.	14	20 Dec.	1
Fifth Committee	29 Sept.	30 Sept.	9	21 Dec.	1/2
Sixth Committee	28 Sept.	29 Sept.	8	17 Dec.	4

TABLE 10 (continued)

	<u>First organiza- tional meeting</u>	<u>Commence- ment of actual work</u>	<u>Number of days from opening to commence- ment of actual work</u>	<u>Comple- tion of work</u>	<u>Number of days from completion of work to last plenary meeting</u>
<u>Twenty-first session</u> (20 Sept.-20 Dec. 1966)					
First Committee	6 Oct.	20 Oct.	30	17 Dec.	2
Special Political Committee	5 Oct.	17 Oct.	27	16 Dec.	3
Second Committee	28 Sept.	4 Oct.	14	15 Dec.	4
Third Committee	28 Sept. <sup>2</sup>	29 Sept.	9	16 Dec.	3
Fourth Committee	26 Sept.	27 Sept.	7	17 Dec.	2
Fifth Committee	28 Sept.	28 Sept.	8	19 Dec.	1
Sixth Committee	29 Sept.	3 Oct.	13	14 Dec.	5
<u>Twenty-second session</u> (19 Sept.-19 Dec. 1967) <sup>a/</sup>					
First Committee	13 Oct.	17 Oct.	28	18 Dec.	1
Special Political Committee	16 Oct.	19 Oct.	30	16 Dec.	3
Second Committee	28 Sept.	2 Oct.	13	12 Dec.	6
Third Committee	29 Sept.	2 Oct.	13	15 Dec.	4
Fourth Committee	2 Oct.	4 Oct.	15	18 Dec.	1
Fifth Committee	29 Sept.	9 Oct.	20	19 Dec.	1/2
Sixth Committee	26 Sept.	26 Sept.	7	14 Dec.	5
<u>Twenty-third session</u> (24 Sept.-21 Dec. 1968) <sup>b/</sup>					
First Committee	18 Oct.	28 Oct.	34	20 Dec.	1/2
Special Political Committee	17 Oct.	21 Oct.	27	18 Dec.	2
Second Committee	1 Oct.	4 Oct.	10	13 Dec.	7
Third Committee	1 Oct.	2 Oct.	8	17 Dec.	3
Fourth Committee	1 Oct.	7 Oct.	13	16 Dec.	4
Fifth Committee	1 Oct.	8 Oct.	14	20 Dec.	1/2
Sixth Committee	1 Oct.	2 Oct.	8	17 Dec.	3
<u>Twenty-fourth session</u> (16 Sept.-17 Dec. 1969)					
First Committee	10 Oct.	10 Oct.	24	12 Dec.	4
Special Political Committee	13 Oct.	16 Oct.	30	10 Dec.	6
Second Committee	23 Sept.	6 Oct.	20	12 Dec.	4
Third Committee	24 Sept.	29 Sept.	13	12 Dec.	4
Fourth Committee	24 Sept.	3 Oct.	17	12 Dec.	4
Fifth Committee	24 Sept.	2 Oct.	16	16 Dec.	1
Sixth Committee	24 Sept.	25 Sept.	9	9 Dec.	7
<u>Twenty-fifth session</u> (15 Sept.-17 Dec. 1970)					
First Committee	21 Sept.	28 Sept.	13	16 Dec.	1/2
Special Political Committee	22 Sept.	2 Oct.	17	11 Dec.	5
Second Committee	18 Sept.	21 Sept.	6	11 Dec.	5
Third Committee	22 Sept.	28 Sept.	13	11 Dec.	5
Fourth Committee	21 Sept.	5 Oct.	20	11 Dec.	5
Fifth Committee	21 Sept.	5 Oct.	20	16 Dec.	1/2
Sixth Committee	21 Sept.	23 Sept.	8	4 Dec.	12

<sup>a/</sup> First part of the session.<sup>b/</sup> Opening of the session delayed one week.

B. Establishment of schedules in the Main Committees

21. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly recommended to the Assembly "that each Main Committee should, as soon as possible after the beginning of its discussions, prepare a work schedule which would indicate the approximate dates when the various items allocated to it would be discussed".<sup>5/</sup> A brief description of the practice followed in this regard by each of the Main Committees is given below.

First Committee

22. At the beginning of its work, the First Committee establishes an order of priority for the discussion of the items referred to it. This order of priority is given in a document of the Committee.

23. Following the establishment of the order of priority, the Chairman presents to the Committee in a document a tentative time-table for the consideration of the various items. On the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee takes note of that time-table. In the course of the session, every effort is made to organize the work, as far as possible, on the basis of the proposed time-table.

24. At the twenty-fifth session, the Committee approved the order of priority on 3 October 1970 (A/C.1/1005). It took note of the tentative time-table on 5 October (A/C.1/1006).

Special Political Committee

25. At the beginning of its work, the Special Political Committee establishes an order of priority for the discussion of the items allocated to it. No special document is generally issued regarding the number of meetings set aside for each item or the calendar of meetings.

26. At the twenty-fifth session, the Committee decided on the order of priority for two of its four items on 22 September 1970 (A/SPC/139). On 3 November, the Committee decided to take up one of the two remaining items. No documentation was issued on that occasion. On 18 November, the Committee was allocated an additional item (A/SPC/137/Add.1), which it took up after completing its consideration of all other items.

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<sup>5/</sup> Ibid., para. 24.



## Second Committee

27. At the beginning of the session, the Chairman of the Second Committee circulates to the Committee a note containing the proposed plan of work or calendar drawn up by weeks rather than by specific days. The calendar also includes the dates of meetings of concern to the Committee (e.g. pledging conferences and resumed sessions of the Economic and Social Council), during which the Committee normally does not meet. The basic documentation for the items allocated to the Committee is listed in a separate document.

28. At the twenty-third session, in connexion with its report on item 12 (Report of the Economic and Social Council), the Committee included a section regarding the organization of its work at future sessions.<sup>6/</sup> These suggestions were reproduced at the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions as an annex to the Chairman's note on the organization of work (A/C.2/L.1056 and A/C.2/L.1103/Add.1). They have formed useful guidelines for the Committee in its attempt to streamline its work.

29. At the twenty-fifth session, the Committee adopted the proposed plan of work on 28 September 1970 (A/C.2/L.1103).

## Third Committee

30. At the beginning of the session, the Chairman of the Third Committee circulates a note similar to that prepared by the Chairman of the Second Committee. This note also informs the Committee of the number of meetings devoted to each item at the last two sessions.

31. After considering the Chairman's note, the Third Committee, usually on the recommendation of the Chairman, approves a programme of work, establishes the order of priority and the number of meetings to be devoted to the various items on its agenda.

32. At the twenty-fifth session, the Committee, after considering the note circulated by the Chairman (A/C.3/L.1762), approved its programme of work on 25 September 1970 (A/C.3/621).

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<sup>6/</sup> Ibid., agenda item 12, document A/7426, paras. 28-38.

#### Fourth Committee

33. At the beginning of its work, the Fourth Committee decides which items it will take up first as well as the manner in which it will discuss them. At a later stage, it takes similar decisions concerning the remaining items. No special document is generally issued regarding the number of meetings set aside for each item or the calendar of meetings.

34. At the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions, the Committee decided to hold only two general debates: the first on three items relating to southern Africa, the second on all the remaining items. In each case, the Committee took these decisions on the understanding that individual draft resolutions on matters covered by the items would be considered separately after the conclusion of the general debate.

35. At the twenty-fifth session, the Committee took decisions on three of its items on 1 October 1970. It took decisions on the remaining items on 5 November. The Secretariat issued a note (A/C.4/732), which listed the remaining items and indicated the basic documents relating to each of them.

#### Fifth Committee

36. At the beginning of the session, the Chairman of the Fifth Committee draws up a document containing suggestions for a tentative programme of work. Although it does not include a time-table for the consideration of the items allocated to the Fifth Committee, this document lists, for each such item, the documentation already issued and the anticipated date of availability of the balance of documentation still to be produced.

37. At the twenty-fifth session, the programme of work suggested by the Chairman (A/C.5/L.1038) was accepted by the Committee on 21 September 1970.

#### Sixth Committee

38. At the beginning of the session, the Secretariat prepares for the Sixth Committee a note on the organization of work. That note:

- (a) Suggests a date for concluding the work of the Committee;
- (b) Lists the items allocated to the Committee and the relevant documents;

(c) Suggests an order of consideration of items with an indication of the approximate dates and the number of meetings to be allocated to each item;

(d) Recalls relevant recommendations set out in resolution 1898 (XVIII). The note is usually circulated on the same day as the letter from the President of the Assembly to the Chairman of the Committee concerning the allocation of agenda items.

39. On the basis of the Secretariat's note, the Committee adopts a programme of work indicating a target date for the conclusion of its work, the order and approximate dates of consideration of items and the number of meetings to be allocated to each item. This programme of work is issued as a document.

40. At the twenty-fifth session the note by the Secretariat on the organization of work (A/C.6/L.792) was issued on 19 September 1970. The programme of work was adopted by the Committee on 21 September (A/C.6/401).

#### C. Maximum utilization of available time

41. Under existing arrangements, meetings are scheduled from 10.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Therefore, two and a half hours are available in the morning and three in the afternoon for meetings of the plenary and the Main Committees. In addition to the General Assembly Hall, only five conference rooms (Conference Rooms 1 to 4 and the Trusteeship Council Chamber) can accommodate the membership of the Organization, making a total of six meetings available in the morning and six in the afternoon. Theoretically, during a thirteen-week session, a total of 780 meetings could be held by the plenary and the Main Committees. In practice, however, the number of such meetings, including night and Saturday meetings, reached an average of less than 600 during the past six sessions. This is partly due to the fact that the Main Committees do not meet at the very beginning and the very end of the session.

42. Table 11 shows the duration of the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Main Committees from the sixteenth to the twenty-fifth session, excluding the nineteenth session. It also gives an indication of the time lost because of the late starting or early ending of meetings.

TABLE 11

Time not utilized

	Average duration of meetings	Late starting (Average)	Early ending (Average)	Average time lost per meeting	Total time lost per session
<u>Eighteenth session</u>					
Plenary meetings	2 hrs. 18 min.	8 min.	23 min.	31 min.	41 hrs. 15 min.
First Committee	1 " 43 "	11 "	45 "	56 "	42 " 30 "
Special Political Committee	1 " 44 "	18 "	43 "	1 hr. 01 min.	53 " 55 "
Second Committee	2 " 18 "	19 "	18 "	37 min.	46 " 20 "
Third Committee	2 " 17 "	12 "	14 "	27 "	34 " 50 "
Fourth Committee	2 " 15 "	15 "	21 "	36 "	51 " 30 "
Fifth Committee	1 " 51 "	19 "	31 "	50 "	44 " 30 "
Sixth Committee	1 " 52 "	18 "	26 "	45 "	44 " 30 "
<u>Twentieth session</u>					
Plenary meetings	2 hrs. 20 min.	26 min.	21 min.	47 min.	59 hrs. 50 min.
First Committee	2 " 11 "	19 "	31 "	50 "	62 " 50 "
Special Political Committee	1 " 57 "	29 "	24 "	53 "	56 " 35 "
Second Committee	1 " 31 "	20 "	16 "	36 "	41 " 15 "
Third Committee	2 " 22 "	16 "	13 "	29 "	42 " 35 "
Fourth Committee	2 " 04 "	24 "	23 "	47 "	62 " 05 "
Fifth Committee	1 " 28 "	25 "	46 "	1 hr. 11 min.	69 " 10 "
Sixth Committee	1 " 38 "	29 "	35 "	1 " 04 "	65 " 55 "
<u>Twenty-first session</u>					
Plenary meetings	2 hrs. 18 min.	12 min.	22 min.	35 min.	53 hrs. 55 min.
First Committee	2 " 01 "	24 "	24 "	48 "	53 " 50 "
Special Political Committee	1 " 42 "	22 "	44 "	1 hr. 06 min.	59 " 40 "
Second Committee	2 " 11 "	11 "	25 "	36 "	51 " 35 "
Third Committee	2 " 31 "	18 "	09 "	28 "	41 " 20 "
Fourth Committee	2 " 31 "	25 "	12 "	37 "	52 " 20 "
Fifth Committee	1 " 53 "	23 "	16 "	40 "	36 " "
Sixth Committee	1 " 48 "	25 "	28 "	53 "	50 " 10 "
<u>Twenty-second session</u>					
Plenary meetings	2 hrs. 03 min.	21 min.	30 min.	51 min.	69 hrs. 55 min.
First Committee	1 " 48 "	21 "	38 "	59 "	60 " 50 "
Special Committee	1 " 35 "	23 "	48 "	1 hr. 11 min.	54 " 05 "
Second Committee	1 " 57 "	22 "	24 "	46 "	55 " 25 "
Third Committee	2 " 20 "	28 "	07 "	36 "	53 " 20 "
Fourth Committee	2 " 12 "	28 "	21 "	49 "	61 " 45 "
Fifth Committee	1 " 53 "	30 "	17 "	46 "	45 " 35 "
Sixth Committee	1 " 46 "	15 "	45 "	1 hr.	70 " "

TABLE II (continued)

	Average duration of meetings	Late starting (Average)	Early ending (Average)	Average time lost per meeting	Total time lost per session
<u>Resumed twenty-second session</u>					
Plenary meetings	1 hr. 04 min.	32 min.	1 hr. 08 min.	1 hr. 39 min.	49 hrs. 40 min.
First Committee	1 " 41 "	17 "	52 min.	1 " 08 "	30 " 45 "
<u>Twenty-third session</u>					
Plenary meetings	2 hrs. 10 min.	30 min.	27 min.	57 min.	75 hrs. 40 min.
First Committee	1 " 48 "	40 "	23 "	1 hr. 03 min.	70 " 25 "
Special Political Committee	1 " 40 "	32 "	38 "	1 " 10 "	53 " 25 "
Second Committee	2 " 21 "	29 "	12 "	41 min.	49 " 05 "
Third Committee	2 " 20 "	26 "	07 "	33 "	51 " 20 "
Fourth Committee	1 " 38 "	33 "	46 "	1 hr. 19 min.	76 " 05 "
Fifth Committee	2 " 09 "	31 "	07 "	38 min.	41 " 20 "
Sixth Committee	2 " 02 "	38 "	13 "	51 "	63 " 10 "
<u>Twenty-fourth session</u>					
Plenary meetings	2 hrs. 01 min.	28 min.	27 min.	55 min.	79 hrs. 10 min.
First Committee	2 " 15 "	20 "	15 "	36 "	43 " 15 "
Special Political Committee	1 " 53 "	26 "	44 "	1 hr. 10 min.	57 " 15 "
Second Committee	2 " 36 "	11 "	10 "	21 min.	20 " 05 "
Third Committee	2 " 19 "	27 "	06 "	33 "	49 " 15 "
Fourth Committee	1 " 29 "	29 "	40 "	1 hr. 08 min.	64 " 50 "
Fifth Committee	2 " 04 "	21 "	15 "	36 min.	34 " 55 "
Sixth Committee	2 " 05 "	29 "	15 "	44 "	55 " 55 "
<u>Twenty-fifth session</u>					
Plenary meetings	2 hrs. 17 min.	12 min.	25 min.	37 min.	59 hrs. 20 min.
First Committee	1 " 56 "	24 "	23 "	47 "	62 " 25 "
Special Political Committee	1 " 36 "	29 "	44 "	1 hr. 13 min.	75 " 25 "
Second Committee	2 " 28 "	26 "	05 "	31 min.	29 " 50 "
Third Committee	2 " 07 "	33 "	12 "	45 "	64 " 15 "
Fourth Committee	1 " 35 "	32 "	38 "	1 hr. 10 min.	53 " 50 "
Fifth Committee	2 " 13 "	17 "	06 "	23 min.	26 " 30 "
Sixth Committee	2 " 05 "	18 "	28 "	46 "	52 " 30 "

43. Although no figures are available regarding the time not utilized, when no meetings were scheduled and when meetings were cancelled or had risen early because of a lack of speakers, it should be noted that such time was often used for consultations, meetings of working groups and informal meetings of regional groups. Table 12, which shows a comparison of the number of meetings held by the plenary and the Committees from the twentieth to the twenty-fifth session, also gives an indication of the considerable number of such informal meetings and meetings of working groups.

TABLE 12

## Number of meetings

## A. Regular meetings

	Twentieth session	Twenty-first session	Twenty-second session	Twenty-third session	Twenty-fourth session	Twenty-fifth session
Plenary meetings	77	93	83	79	86	95 <sup>a/</sup>
General Committee	3	3	3	6	7	4
Credentials Committee	1	1	1	1	1	2
First Committee	75	68	62	67	73	79
Special Political Committee	65	54	46	46	49	62
Second Committee	68	85	72	72	58	58
Third Committee	87	90	89	93	89	85
Fourth Committee	79	85	76	58	57	46
Fifth Committee	58	54	59	65	58	69
Sixth Committee	62	57	70	74	76	69
Total	575	590	570	561	554	569

a/ Seventeen of these meetings were devoted to the commemorative session.

## B. Other meetings

	Twentieth session	Twenty-first session	Twenty-second session	Twenty-third session	Twenty-fourth session	Twenty-fifth session
Working groups of the Main Committees	18	24	12	28	55	96
Informal meetings of the regional groups, working groups of the "Group of 77" and groups of aligned countries	197	222	256	236	241	143
Total	215	246	268	264	296	229

44. Table 13 shows the time spent during the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions on tributes and expressions of sympathy.

45. The table also indicates the time devoted to congratulatory speeches at the completion of the work of the plenary and the Main Committees. It does not include, however, the complimentary remarks made at the beginning of speeches in the general debate nor does it take into account the traditional concluding observations of the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the Main Committees.



TABLE 13

Time spent for tributes and congratulatory speeches

	<u>Twenty-fourth session</u>		<u>Twenty-fifth session</u>	
	<u>Tributes and expressions of sympathy</u>	<u>Congratulatory speeches at completion of work</u>	<u>Tributes and expressions of sympathy</u>	<u>Congratulatory speeches at completion of work</u>
Plenary meetings	3 hrs. 39 min.	31 min.	5 hrs. 18 min.	51 min.
First Committee	1 hr. 22 min.	11 min.	2 hrs. 12 min.	29 min.
Special Political Committee	1 hr. min.	33 min.	55 min.	21 min.
Second Committee	1 hr. 10 min.	27 min.	42 min.	23 min.
Third Committee	2 hrs. 25 min.	1 hr. 5 min.	2 hrs. 46 min.	50 min.
Fourth Committee	2 hrs. 29 min.	24 min.	2 hrs. 22 min.	41 min.
Fifth Committee	44 min.	37 min.	13 min.	23 min.
Sixth Committee	3 hrs. 56 min.	57 min.	3 hrs. 27 min.	26 min.
Total:	17 hrs. 44 min.	4 hrs. 45 min.	17 hrs. 55 min.	4 hrs. 24 min.
Total per session:	22 hrs. 29 min.		22 hrs. 19 min.	

## VI. REPORTS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

46. Rule 48 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly specifies that the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization must be communicated to Member States "at least forty-five days before the opening of the session". Regulation 3.4 of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations stipulates that the Secretary-General must transmit the budget estimates for the following financial year "at least five weeks prior to the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly". With the exception of these two specific cases, no time-limit is set for the submission of the Secretary-General's reports.

47. Table 14 shows the number of reports issued for the four most recent sessions. It should be noted that the period indicated is the date of actual circulation of the documents in the four working languages of the Assembly and not the date which may appear on the first page of the documents.

TABLE 14

Number of reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly

Session	March	April	May	June	July	August	September		October		November		December		TOTAL
							First half	Second half	First half	Second half	First half	Second half	First half	Second half	
Twenty-second	-	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	5	5	3	4	4	-	39
Twenty-third	1	-	1	-	3	6	2	4	6	5	1	3	1	1	34
Twenty-fourth	-	-	-	-	1	3	3	8	5	5	10	2	3	-	40
Twenty-fifth	-	-	-	2	-	3	1	12	13	2	5	2	3	-	43

48. Table 15 shows the number of reports submitted to the General Assembly by the other principal organs of the United Nations (Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council and International Court of Justice) and by the subsidiary organs of the Assembly. The issuance of the reports is necessarily dependent on the meeting dates of the parent bodies.

TABLE 15

Number of reports of principal and subsidiary organs  
submitted to the General Assembly

<u>Session</u>	<u>Principal organs</u>	<u>Subsidiary organs</u>
Twenty-second	3	23
Twenty-third	4	24
Twenty-fourth	4	28
Twenty-fifth	4	25

#### VII. SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

49. Article 22 of the Charter states that the General Assembly "may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions". The General Assembly has established a very large number of subsidiary organs since the Organization was founded and a study covering all these organs would be far beyond the scope of this document.

50. For practical reasons, table 16 lists, in the order in which they were established, all the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly which met, either regularly or for a limited period, between the eighteenth and twenty-fifth sessions. The table therefore includes:

(a) Organs established before the eighteenth session which continued to meet during the period in question;

(b) Organs which were established and which met during that period, irrespective of whether they are still in existence.

The first column indicates the number of the resolution or the date of the decision establishing each subsidiary organ. The other columns give a certain amount of information on the membership, terms of reference and functioning of the organs.

TABLE 16

Subsidiary organs of the General Assembly which met between the  
eighteenth and twenty-fifth sessions

List of abbreviations used in this table

<u>Functions:</u>	A - Administrative assistance organs
	J - Judicial bodies
	O - Operational agencies
	P - Political commissions
	S - Study committees
<u>Membership:</u>	E - Individual experts
	I - Single individual
	S - States
<u>Method of appointment:</u>	D - Decision of the General Assembly
	E - Election by the General Assembly or a Committee on behalf of the Assembly
	I - Indirect means
	P - Appointment by the President of the General Assembly
	SG - Appointment by the Secretary-General
<u>Duration:</u>	I - Organs established for an indefinite period
	L - Organs established for a limited period
	S - Standing or "permanent" bodies
<u>Method of termination:</u>	C - Considered to have lapsed with the completion of their mandate
	R - Replaced by a new subsidiary organ with broadly similar functions
<u>Place of meeting:</u>	F - In the field
	G - Geneva
	H - Headquarters
<u>Method of reporting:</u>	D - Directly to the General Assembly
	ESC - To or through the Economic and Social Council
	SC - To the Security Council
	SG - To or through the Secretary-General

TABLE 16 (continued)

Title of subsidiary organ	Resolution No.	Functions	Membership	Method of appointment	Duration	Method of termination	Place of meeting	Method of reporting
International Civil Service Advisory Board <sup>a/</sup>	13 (I)	A	E	SG	S	-	-	-
Committee on Contributions	14 (I)	A	E	E	S	-	-	D
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary questions	14 (I)	A	E	E	S	-	-	D
Board of Auditors	14 (I)	A	E	E	S	-	-	D
United Nations Children's Fund <sup>b/</sup>	57 (I)	O	S	D/I	I/S	-	-	ESC
United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board	82 (I)	A	E	I	S	-	-	D
United Nations Staff Pension Committee	82 (I)							
Investments Committee	82 (I)	A	E	SG	S	-	-	-
International Law Commission	174 (II)	S	E	E	S	-	G	D
United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine	194 (III)	P	S	D	I	-	F	D/SG/ SC
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	302 (IV)	O	I	SG	I	-	-	D/SG
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	319 (IV)	O	I	E	L	-	G	ESC
United Nations Administrative Tribunal	351 (IV)	J	E	E	S	-	-	-
United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea	376 (V)	P	S	D	I	-	F	D/SG
Disarmament Commission	502 (VI)	S	S	D	I	-	-	SC/D
United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation	913 (X)	S	S	D	I	-	-	D/SG
Committee on Applications for Review of Administrative Tribunal Judgements	957 (X)	J	S	D	I	-	H	
Committee on Arrangements for a Conference for the Purpose of Reviewing the Charter	992 (X)	S	S	D	L	-	-	D
Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	1166 (XII)	A	S	I	I	-	-	-

TABLE 16 (continued)

Title of subsidiary organ	Resolution No.	Functions	Membership	Method of appointment	Duration	Method of termination	Place of meeting	Method of reporting
Governing Council of the Special Fund	1240 (XIII)	O	S	I	S	-	-	ESC
Consultative Board of the Special Fund	1240 (XIII)	A	E	D	S	-	-	-
United Nations' Scientific Advisory Committee	1344 (XIII)	S	S	D	I	-	-	-
Committee for Industrial Development	1431 (XIV)	S/A	-	I	-	-	-	-
United Nations Panel of External Auditors	1438 (XIV)	A	E	I	I	-	-	-
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	1427A (XIV)	S	S	D	I	-	-	D
Committee on a United Nations Capital Development Fund	1521 (XV)	S	S	P	L	-	-	ESC
Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples	1654 (XVI)	P/S	S	P	I	-	H/F	D
United Nations/FAO Inter-governmental Committee of the World Food Programme	1714 (XVI)	O	S	I	S	-	-	ESC
Conference of the Committee on Disarmament <u>c/</u>	1722 (XVI)	P/S	S	D	L	-	-	D
<u>Ad Hoc</u> Committee of the whole Assembly for the announcement of voluntary contributions to the two refugee programmes	1729 (XVI)	-	S	D	L	C	-	-
United Nations Representative for West Irian	1752 (XVII)	P	I	-	L	C	F	SG
Special Committee on <u>Apartheid</u> <u>d/</u>	1761 (XVII)	P/S	S	P	I	-	-	-
Working Group on the Administrative and Budgetary Procedures of the United Nations	1880 (S-IV)	S	S	P	L	-	-	D
Committee for the International Co-operation Year	1907 (XVIII)	S	S	P	L	-	-	D
<u>Ad Hoc</u> Committee on Oman	1948 (XVIII)	S	S	P	L	-	-	D

TABLE 16 (continued)

Title of subsidiary organ	Resolution No.	Functions	Membership	Method of appointment	Duration	Method of termination	Place of meeting	Method of reporting
Special Committee on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States	1966 (XVIII)	S	S	P	I	-	-	D
Special Committee on Technical Assistance to Promote the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law	1968A (XVIII)	S	S	D	I	-	-	D
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	1995 (XIX)	O	S	-	S	-	-	ESC
Trade and Development Board	1995 (XIX)	O	S	I	S	-	-	ESC
United Nations Representative for the Supervision of the Elections in the Cook Islands	2005 (XIX)	P	I	SG	L	-	F	D
Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations	2006 (XIX)	P/S	S	P	L	-	-	D
Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme	2029 (XX)	O	S	I	S	-	-	ESC
Inter-Agency Consultative Board of the United Nations Development Programme	2029 (XX)	A	E	D	S	-	-	-
<u>Ad Hoc</u> Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies	2049 (XX)	S	S/E	P	I	-	-	D
Committee of Trustees of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa	2054B (XX)	A	S	P	I	-	-	-
Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Human Rights	2081 (XX)	S	S	P	L	-	-	D
<u>Ad Hoc</u> Committee on the United Nations Organization for Industrial Development	2089 (XX)	A	S	D	L	-	-	ESC/ D
Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law	2099 (XX)	S	S	D	I	-	-	D
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	2106A (XX)	J	E	I	I	-	-	D
<u>Ad Hoc</u> Committee for South West Africa	2145 (XXI)	S/P	S	P	I	-	-	D



TABLE 16 (continued)

Title of subsidiary organ	Resolution No.	Functions	Membership	Method of appointment	Duration	Method of termination	Place of meeting	Method of reporting
Joint Inspection Unit	2150 (XXI)	S	S	P	I	-	H/G	SG/ ESC/D
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	2152 (XXI)	O	S	-	S	-	-	ESC
Industrial Development Board	2152 (XXI)	O	S	E	S	-	-	ESC
Preparatory Committee for the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States	2153B (XXI)	S	S	P	L	C	-	D
Group of Consultant Experts on the Effects of the Possible Use of Nuclear Weapons	2162A (XXI)	S	E	SG	L	-	H	SG
Group of Experts on the Resources of the Sea	2172 (XXI)	S	E	SG	L	-	-	SG
United Nations Special Mission on Aden	2183 (XXI)	P	E	SG	L	-	F	SG
Executive Board of the United Nations Capital Development Fund	2186 (XXI)	A	S	E	S	-	H	ESC
United Nations Commission on International Trade Law	2205 (XXI)	S	S	E	S	-	H/G	D
Special Committee to Select the Winners of the United Nations Human Rights Prize	2217A (XXI)	-	E	D	L	-	-	D
Committee on Conferences	2239 (XXI)	A	S	P	S	-	-	D
Joint Advisory Group on the UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Centre	2297 (XXII)							
Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression	2330 (XXII)	S	S	P	L	C	-	D
Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction	2340 (XXII)	S	S	D	L	R	-	D
Advisory Committee on the Granting of Subventions for the United Nations Training and Educational Programme	2349 (XXII)	A	S	P	I	-	-	SG
Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade	2411 (XXIII)	S	S	I	L	-	H/G	ESC
Advisory Committee on the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa	2431 (XXIII)	A	S	SG	I	-	-	SG

TABLE 16 (continued)

Title of subsidiary organ	Resolution No.	Functions	Membership	Method of appointment	Duration	Method of termination	Place of meeting	Method of reporting
Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories	2443 (XXIII)	S	S	P	I	-	E	SG
Group of Consultant Experts on Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons	2454A (XXIII)	S	E	SG	L	-	-	SG
Group of Experts on the Contribution of Nuclear Technology to the Economic and Scientific Advancement of the Developing Countries	2456A (XXIII)	S	E	SG	L	-	-	SG
Preparatory Committee for the Tenth Anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples	2465 (XXIII)	S	S	I	L	-	-	D
Preparatory Committee for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations	Decision of 19 Dec. 1968	S	S	D	L	-	-	D
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction	2467A (XXIII)	E	E	D	I	-	-	D
Committee for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations	2499 (XXIV)	S	S	P	L	-	H	D
Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment	2581 (XXIV)	S	S	D	L	-	H	SG
Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly	2632 (XXV)	S	S	P	L	-	H	D
Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	2656 (XXV)	S	S	P/ SG	L	-	-	D
Group of Consultant Experts on the Economic and Social Consequences of the Arms Race and Military Expenditures	2667 (XXV)	S	E	SG	L	-	-	SG
Panel of Experts on the Protein Problem of Developing Countries	2684 (XXV)	S	E	-	L	-	-	SG
Group of Experts on the Economic and Social Consequences of Disarmament	2685 (XXV)	S	E	SG	L	-	-	SG

TABLE 16 (continued)

Title of subsidiary organ	Resolution No.	Functions	Membership	Method of appointment	Duration	Method of termination	Place of meeting	Method of reporting
Panel of Experts on the Establishment of an International University	2691 (XXV)	S	E/S	P/SG	L	-	-	SG
Special Committee for the Review of the United Nations Salary System	2743 (XXV)	S	E/S	P	L	-	-	SG

- a/ Formerly "International Civil Service Commission".
- b/ Formerly "United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund".
- c/ Formerly "Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament".
- d/ Formerly "Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa".
- e/ Formerly "Advisory Committee on Technical Assistance to Promote the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law".

#### ANNEX IV

Analytical summary of views and suggestions  
submitted to the Special Committee by  
Member States, former Presidents of the  
General Assembly and former Chairmen of Main Committees

ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS SUBMITTED TO THE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE BY MEMBER STATES, FORMER PRESIDENTS OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND FORMER CHAIRMEN OF MAIN COMMITTEES

Note by the Secretary-General\*

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\* Issued previously under the symbol A/AC.149/L.8/Rev.1. The summary of views and suggestions submitted by Madagascar and Sweden (A/AC.149/L.5/Add.4), which were received too late to be considered by the Committee, has been incorporated in this annex.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document, which contains a summary of the views and suggestions submitted to the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly, was prepared in compliance with the request made by the Special Committee at its 3rd meeting, on 17 March 1971.
2. In the preparation of this document, the Secretariat has taken into account:
  - (a) Replies received from Governments of Member States (see para. 3);
  - (b) Replies received from former Presidents of the General Assembly and former Chairmen of the Main Committees (see para. 4);
  - (c) Opinions expressed during the meetings of the Special Committee (see para. 5).
3. In operative paragraph 2 of its resolution 2632 (XXV), the General Assembly requested the Governments of Member States to give the Special Committee all the assistance it might require in pursuance of the resolution and to submit their views and suggestions to the Committee. Of the 26 replies received before 26 May, the date of issue of this document, 20 deal with the substance of the matter. They have been reproduced in the following documents:

	<u>A/AC.149/</u>
Austria . . . . .	L.5/Add.2
Belgium . . . . .	L.5/Add.2
Bolivia . . . . .	L.5/Add.2
Canada . . . . .	L.5
Ethiopia . . . . .	L.5
France . . . . .	L.5
Greece . . . . .	L.5/Add.1
Ireland . . . . .	L.5 and Add.3
Italy . . . . .	L.5
Japan . . . . .	L.5
Liberia . . . . .	L.5
Netherlands . . . . .	L.5
New Zealand . . . . .	L.5/Add.2
Nigeria . . . . .	L.5/Add.2
Philippines . . . . .	L.5

	<u>A/AC.149/</u>
Romania . . . . .	L.5/Add.3
Singapore . . . . .	L.5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . .	L.5
United States of America . . . . .	L.5
Yugoslavia . . . . .	L.5/Add.1

The following replies arrived too late for consideration by the Committee but they have been taken into account in this document:

	<u>A/AC.149/</u>
Madagascar . . . . .	L.5/Add.4
Sweden . . . . .	L.5/Add.4

4. At its 2nd meeting, on 11 February, the Special Committee decided to invite all the former Presidents of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the twentieth to the twenty-fifth sessions to submit in writing to the Committee, if they so wished, any views and comments they might like to put forward. Of the 20 replies received, 12 deal with the substance of the matter. They have been reproduced in the following documents:

A/AC.149/

Replies received from former Presidents of the General Assembly

Mr. Nasrollah Entezam . . . . .	L.7/Add.2
Mr. Charles Malik . . . . .	L.7/Add.2
Mr. Corneliu Manescu . . . . .	L.7/Add.2
Mr. Alex Quaison-Sackey . . . . .	L.7/Add.1

Replies received from former Chairmen of the Main Committees

Mr. Richard Maximilian Akwei . . . . .	L.7/Add.1
Mr. Ismail Fahmy . . . . .	L.7/Add.1
Miss Maria Groza . . . . .	L.7/Add.2
Mr. Walter Guevara Arze . . . . .	L.7/Add.1
Mr. Erik Nettel . . . . .	L.7/Add.2
Mr. David Silveira da Mota . . . . .	L.7/Add.3
Mrs. Halima Embarek Warzazi . . . . .	L.7
Mr. Max H. Wershof . . . . .	L.7

Furthermore, four former presiding officers intimated that their views were incorporated in the replies of their Governments.

5. Finally, during the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th meetings, held on 17, 24 and 30 March and 29 April, several members of the Special Committee made general statements, including a number of suggestions concerning the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. At its 5th meeting, the Committee also heard a statement by Mr. Hambro, President of the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Summaries of the general statements by members of the Special Committee and of the statement by Mr. Hambro will be found in the following records:

A/AC.149/

Afghanistan . . . . .	SR.5
Austria . . . . .	SR.4
Bolivia . . . . .	SR.5
Brazil . . . . .	SR.5
Canada . . . . .	SR.4
Chile . . . . .	SR.6
France . . . . .	SR.4
Greece . . . . .	SR.3
India . . . . .	SR.4
Japan . . . . .	SR.5
Liberia . . . . .	SR.4
Netherlands . . . . .	SR.3
Romania . . . . .	SR.6
Tunisia . . . . .	SR.3
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	SR.3
United States of America . . . . .	SR.3
Yugoslavia . . . . .	SR.4
Mr. Hambro . . . . .	SR.5

## II. MANDATE OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE<sup>1/</sup>

6. The question of the Special Committee's mandate gave rise to a number of comments.
7. In their general comments on the Special Committee's role, representatives stressed the important contribution which the Committee should make towards the improvement of the General Assembly's work.
8. It was also pointed out that the Special Committee's work should form part of a broader action designed to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations as a whole (Bolivia, India, Italy, Philippines, United States, Yugoslavia).
9. Although certain amendments to the rules of procedure were suggested, most representatives stated that the procedures and organization of the General Assembly could be rationalized by better application of the existing rules of procedure.
10. The following sections of this document contain a summary of the various proposals made, arranged by subject. However, the comments also include a number of general remarks on the tasks which the Special Committee might undertake. It was suggested in particular that the Committee should:
  - (a) Address an appeal to Member States to abide by the existing rules of procedure, for the procedures of the Assembly would not be rationalized by amending the rules of procedure or by drafting new ones; the Special Committee should therefore concentrate on non-controversial issues without envisaging amendments to the rules of procedure (Mr. Fahmy); the rules of procedure should be amended only in case of absolute necessity (Chile);
  - (b) Single out the rules of procedure and the annexed provisions which had not been fully utilized by the General Assembly (Austria);
  - (c) Reconsider the proposals which had been considered by previous committees and which had not been acted upon by the General Assembly (New Zealand, Philippines, United Kingdom);

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<sup>1/</sup> In operative paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 2632 (XXV) the Committee is requested "to study ways and means of improving the procedures and organization of the Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including the allocation of agenda items, the organization of work, documentation, rules of procedure and related questions, methods and practices, and to submit a report to the Assembly at its twenty-sixth session".

(d) Determine whether recommendations adopted following proposals by previous committees were still pertinent (New Zealand, Philippines) and draw the General Assembly's attention to the report of the Special Committee for the Consideration of the Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly for Dealing with Legal and Drafting Questions<sup>2/</sup> (New Zealand);

(e) Stress a few precise ways of improving existing practices (Austria, France); perform tasks of a limited and non-political nature (Netherlands);

(f) Simplify the work of the General Assembly and of its Main Committees and contribute in strengthening the effectiveness of United Nations decisions (Italy); enhance the authority of the resolutions and other texts adopted by the Assembly, thereby strengthening the effectiveness and prestige of the United Nations (Romania);

(g) Seek to bring about greater efficiency in the procedures of the General Assembly while ensuring the democratic participation of every Member State in all aspects of discussion (Japan); ensure that the democratic structure of the Organization was not harmed (Afghanistan); seek ways of making the United Nations more democratic and giving all Member States an opportunity to express their views and take an active part in its decisions (Chile); ensure for all States, large or small, the unimpeded exercise of their full rights as Members of the Organization and participation on an equal footing in all its activities and to strengthen the role of the General Assembly as an organ for political debate, consultations and negotiations and as a democratic forum where all States might express themselves freely and make their individual contributions to the solution of such international problems as the maintenance of peace and the development of international co-operation (Romania);

(h) Ensure that the General Assembly devotes greater attention to studying and promoting peaceful means of settling disputes and to improving procedures for the full utilization of those methods (Romania);

(i) Explore, with freedom and imagination, the various aspects of the work of the General Assembly and its organs, without restricting itself to minor technical adjustments and improvements in the procedures of the Assembly; establish an order of priority for the consideration of proposals; envisage ways of improving the representation of Member States within the organs of the United Nations (Yugoslavia);

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<sup>2/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventh Session, Annexes, agenda item 53, document A/2174.

(j) Ensure that its proposals result in amendment of the rules of procedure rather than the addition of another annex (Greece);

(k) Do all it could to eliminate waste of time and money, inefficiency, duplication and disorder; consider how countries with small delegations could be helped to participate more effectively in the Organization's work; recommend measures which would enable the Organization to take more action in the economic and social fields; achieve greater efficiency in order to serve the interests of all Member States (India); recommend to Member States that they should increase their delegations' participation in the activities of the General Assembly (Chile);

(l) Encourage more frequent recourse to consultation and negotiation, in order to facilitate the formulation and adoption by the General Assembly of lasting solutions to the problems with which the Organization must deal and help to strengthen the edifice of international law (Mr. Manescu);

(m) Study the possibilities of strengthening the role of the General Assembly with regard to the organization and development of international co-operation in new spheres of human activity such as the application of modern science and technology to accelerate the process of national development (Romania);

(n) Ensure that the same concepts of organization and procedure are not applied to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council since the Assembly deals with political problems whereas the Council dealt mainly with technical problems (Brazil); ensure that the Council's role is not strengthened at the expense of the Assembly (Yugoslavia);

(o) Postpone consideration of the question of documentation until studies on that subject at present being undertaken by the Secretariat and by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions have been completed (Netherlands);

(p) Refrain from proposing basic reforms until certain populations were represented in the United Nations, since it would be unfortunate if the Special Committee completed its labours before the United Nations attained universality (Chile).

11. Several replies stressed the advisability of a periodic examination of General Assembly procedures and organization. Such an examination should be made at least every 10 years (Canada).

12. With particular reference to the Special Committee, the view was expressed that it was necessary to consider now either the extension of its mandate so that it might continue with the study of those questions which it was not able to complete by the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly, or else to explore the possibility of establishing a more lasting institutional arrangement for the reappraisal and review of the problems related to strengthening the role and improving the performance of the United Nations (Chile, Yugoslavia).

### III. GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF SESSIONS

#### A. Opening date<sup>3/</sup>

13. The following comments were made on the subject of the opening date of regular sessions:

- (a) The opening date might be the first Tuesday of September (Mr. Akwei);
- (b) The opening date should not be changed (Belgium, France, Greece);
- (c) The adoption of certain rationalization measures might enable a somewhat later opening date to be set (Japan)
- (d) If the General Assembly could be held about 15 January, the process of preparing the budget and all related documents would be more logical and efficient, and documents for the Fifth Committee could be ready in good time (Mr. Wershof).

#### B. Duration of the sessions<sup>4/</sup>

14. The Committee had before it several proposals on limiting the duration of the sessions. It was suggested, for example, that the length of the session should be:

- (a) Eight weeks (United States, Mr. Akwei, Mr. Fahmy);
- (b) Ten weeks (Liberia);
- (c) Twelve weeks (Canada).

15. A number of Member States expressed the view that the present length of the sessions -- approximately 13 weeks -- was satisfactory.

16. Two Member States urged that everything possible should be done to avoid a resumed session after Christmas (Belgium, Greece).

17. It was also suggested that each regular session should be divided into two parts: an autumn part for the consideration of the most urgent questions, and a spring part for the examination of questions whose consideration could be deferred (Mr. Malik).

18. Lastly, it was suggested that the General Assembly session should theoretically last a whole year. At the end of the "main" session, which would last two months, the session would not be closed, but adjourned. The session would end just before the beginning of the following session (Mr. Akwei).

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<sup>3/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section I A.

<sup>4/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, sections I B and XV B, and annex III, section II.



### C. Residuary sessions

19. It was suggested that a brief meeting of the General Assembly, to be called a "residuary session", might be held, at heads of mission level, about the end of April. Such a meeting would permit certain administrative and routine questions to be considered (Canada).

## IV. GENERAL COMMITTEE

20. Most of the comments submitted to the Special Committee mentioned the important part the General Committee has to play in the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. Those making the comments advanced suggestions about the composition of the General Committee, its functions and ways of facilitating its work.

### A. Composition of the General Committee

#### 1. Increase in membership<sup>5/</sup>

21. It was proposed, in view of the increased number of Member States, that the General Committee's membership should be expanded by increasing the number of Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly by five, thus giving each regional group an additional member on the General Committee (Bolivia, Canada).

#### 2. Absence of members of the General Committee elected in their personal capacity<sup>6/</sup>

22. It was suggested that, when the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a Main Committee is unable to attend a meeting of the General Committee (see paras. 73 and 74), the head of the delegation to which the Committee Chairman belongs should be empowered to appoint a representative to attend the meeting (Canada).

23. Should the outgoing General Committee be given the task of organizing the following session (see para. 35 (a)), the Governments of the members of the

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<sup>5/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, "Subject of suggestion", foot-note 14.

<sup>6/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section IV A.

General Committee elected in their personal capacity - the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees - should be empowered to designate substitutes (United States).

24. Along the same lines, it was suggested that the rules of procedure should be changed to enable Presidents of the Assembly not to be appointed primarily in their personal capacity but as country representatives not below the rank of Permanent Representative (Mr. Akwei).

#### B. Functions of the General Committee

##### 1. Importance of the role of the General Committee

25. Many Member States asserted that, in view of the functions conferred on it by the rules of procedure, the General Committee was the most suitable organ to ensure the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly.

26. The following general comments were made about the General Committee's mandate:

(a) The General Committee should be more active in performing its functions and thus act as a steering committee (Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Mr. Akwei);

(b) The functions of the General Committee could advantageously be expanded (France);

(c) The key improvement in the procedures and functioning of the General Assembly lay in a more effective General Committee with a new mandate (United States);

(d) The General Committee should be given due authority to organize work and above all to ensure that decisions on the organization of work taken in the plenary and Main Committees are implemented (Bolivia).

##### 2. Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

27. In the comments on the General Committee's functions, it was emphasized that the provisions of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, concerning the consideration of the agenda of the General Assembly, should be strictly applied.

28. It was contended that the General Committee:

(a) Should play a decisive role, since its task was to screen the draft agenda in order to ensure adequate attention to important items (United States);

(b) Should have greater authority to draw up the agenda, allocate items among the Committees, and defer certain questions until a subsequent session (France);

(c) Could review the draft agenda more stringently in order to reduce it to a length at which all items could be completed by the end of the session (United Kingdom).

29. It was also suggested that, once the General Committee had settled the agenda, the General Assembly in plenary meeting should not reopen a debate on the agenda, but should merely vote on it; if necessary, the General Committee could refer any "hot" political issues to the General Assembly for consideration and for a decision as to their inclusion in the agenda (Mr. Quaison-Sackey).

### 3. Organization of the work of the General Assembly

30. It was urged in the comments on the organization of the General Assembly's work that the General Committee should actively carry out the role conferred on it by rule 42 of the rules of procedure and, specifically, that it should meet more frequently (Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, Mr. Akwei, Mr. Fahmy).

31. The General Committee might also have a major mid-session meeting to determine whether, in the light of progress made by then, some agenda items might not be postponed until the following session (Canada).

32. Moreover, the General Committee might be given certain additional functions. It could, for instance:

(a) Be empowered to propose to the General Assembly a better organized schedule for the general debate (United States);

(b) Make better use of its wide powers with respect to the organization of work, without encroaching on the political powers which belonged exclusively to the General Assembly (Chile)

(c) Encourage the practice recommended in General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII) of drawing up a time-table at the beginning of the session and reviewing it several times during the session (United Kingdom).

(d) Make recommendations as to the order of priorities and the order in which the items should be discussed by the Main Committees (Afghanistan, Mr. Nettel);

(e) Watch the work-load of all the Committees with a view to improving co-ordination, eliminating duplication and generally streamlining the conduct of business (United Kingdom);

(f) Consider the question of time-limits on statements (United States);

(g) Take any decisions required with regard to the application of the rules of procedure by the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees, so as to have the same procedures applied in plenary meetings and in Committees (Netherlands).

33. While it was acknowledged that the functions of the General Committee could advantageously be expanded, its determination to perform fully the functions entrusted to it would be far more conducive to better-organized sessions than any amendment of existing texts (France, Netherlands).

34. It was contended, on the other hand, that the General Committee should deal only with important questions, not with the day-to-day management of the General Assembly, which should be left to the President of the Assembly, the Chairmen of the Main Committees and the Secretariat (Mr. Hambro).

#### C. Ways of facilitating the work of the General Committee

##### 1. Preparatory meetings

35. It was pointed out that the work of the General Assembly might be better organized if the General Committee could hold meetings before the session opened. The following proposals were made in this connexion:

(a) The preparatory work for the sessions could be entrusted to the outgoing General Committee, which could meet for this purpose shortly before the opening of the new session. Such an arrangement would obviate the need for the General Assembly to suspend its proceedings in order to permit the members of the General Committee to consider the agenda and questions relating to the organization of the session (United States);

(b) The General Committee should continue to function throughout the year (see para. 18) in order to be able to make recommendations to the General Committee for the following session on the adoption and allocation of agenda items (Mr. Akwei);

(c) Consideration should be given to the idea of establishing at the end of the session a whole new General Committee, which might do useful work in the weeks

preceding the new session, after the publication of the provisional agenda (Afghanistan, Canada).

2. Subsidiary organs<sup>7/</sup>

36. Some countries suggested that working groups of a certain type might help the General Committee in performing its functions. It was proposed inter alia that:

(a) The weekly meeting of the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees should be maintained, so that the progress of the work of the Assembly and the Committees could be kept under review (Chile); the meeting should be institutionalized (Bolivia, France);

(b) Informal meetings of the members of the General Committee should be held (Romania, Mr. Silveira da Mota); when the Main Committees have started their deliberations, the President of the Assembly should meet with the officers of the Committees for one hour each morning, in order to expedite the work of the Assembly (Mr. Malik);

(c) Sub-Committees of the General Committee might be set up, e.g., a "Review" or "Agenda" Sub-Committees (United Kingdom).

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<sup>7/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section II A.

V. AGENDA<sup>8/</sup>

37. Many of the views submitted to the Special Committee stressed the increase in the number of items included in the agenda of recent sessions and suggested that a more judicious examination of the draft agenda should lead to a reduction in the number of items and a better distribution of those items among the plenary Assembly and the Main Committees.

A. Presentation and preliminary consideration of the provisional agenda

38. In accordance with rule 12 of the rules of procedure, the provisional agenda is drawn up by the Secretary-General and communicated to the States Members of the United Nations at least 60 days before the opening of the session, i.e., shortly after mid-July. For several years now, the Secretary-General has also been communicating to Member States, at the beginning of June, a list of items proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda; this list is drawn up purely for purposes of information, to help delegations prepare for the session, and is not official.

39. The following suggestions were made concerning the provisional agenda and the unofficial list:

(a) In the two documents, the Secretary-General could group the items according to the likelihood that they will be allocated to the plenary or to a particular Main Committee, rather than give a numerical listing as at present; if the existing presentation is to be maintained, the Secretary-General might perhaps prepare two separate documents, one giving a numerical listing of the items, the other indicating their allocation (Bolivia);

(b) The Secretary-General might also be authorized to suggest in the two documents referred to above that certain items should be combined in a single item and that other items should be deferred (Bolivia);

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<sup>8/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section II, and annex III, section III.

(c) Since the provisional agenda is circulated long in advance, the views of Member States should be submitted to the Secretary-General, for consideration by the General Committee, prior to the opening of the Assembly (Mr. Quaison-Sackey).

## B. Reduction in the number of agenda items

### 1. Non-inclusion of certain items

40. The Special Committee's attention was drawn to the need to eliminate certain items which appear yearly on the agenda without the expectation that any progress will be made with regard to them (Belgium, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Mr. Akwei).

41. In this connexion, the following observations were put before the Committee:

(a) A thorough scrutiny of the draft agenda might make it possible to eliminate certain items (United Kingdom);

(b) It would seem advisable not to include in the agenda of each session items already dealt with unless new developments - actual or potential - warrant their continued inclusion (Italy);

(c) The General Assembly could deal with such items in one of the following ways:

- (i) Where a subsidiary body regularly deals with the item in question, the Assembly could instruct it to report to the Secretary-General or the General Assembly, as appropriate;
- (ii) The Secretary-General could be requested to present a progress report to the General Assembly, which the Assembly could take note of without discussion;
- (iii) The Assembly could decide to include the item in the agenda of a future session (Netherlands);

(d) More General Assembly resolutions might call for reports to be submitted to Member States or to United Nations organs other than the General Assembly, for example, the Economic and Social Council. That should help reduce the number of items being put on the General Assembly agenda (Canada).

42. On the other hand, it was observed that the so-called chronic items should not be deleted unless the parties directly concerned agree or the Assembly has already taken a final decision on the subject, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to the satisfaction of the parties and other interested Member States (Mr. Fahmy).

2. Staggering of items over two or more years<sup>9/</sup>

43. It was observed that the staggering of certain items over two or more years might be an effective means of reducing the number of items included in the agenda (Bolivia, Canada, France, Italy, United Kingdom, United States, Yugoslavia, Mr. Akwei).

3. Grouping of related items<sup>10/</sup>

44. It was suggested that, as far as possible, related items should be grouped under the same title in order to avoid repetition. This method would make it possible to examine the various aspects of a single problem more efficiently (Afghanistan, Austria, Chile, France, Greece, Liberia, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, Mr. Akwei).

45. In this connexion, the following observations were made:

(a) The grouping of such related items should not be subject to the consent of the countries which have proposed them for inclusion in the agenda, for the decision as to whether related items should be grouped together should be made by the General Committee when allocating items to the plenary Assembly and the Main Committees (Liberia);

(b) The Secretary General could group together such items, with an introductory text explaining the reasons for doing so (France);

(c) The Secretary-General could submit proposals along these lines (see para. 39 (b)) when the provisional agenda is issued (Bolivia).

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9/ See A/AC.149/L.2, section II B 4, and annex III, section III D.

10/ See A/AC.149/L.2, section II B 2, and annex III, section III B.



46. On the other hand, it was pointed out that no fixed rules could be applied, for, in many cases, what was considered a repetitious debate was in fact a device for attaining political goals in the consideration of a question of substance. Moreover, as experience in the Second Committee had shown, in some cases the grouping of items produced more confusion than positive results (Brazil).

4. Referral to other organs<sup>11/</sup>

47. The Special Committee was requested to consider the referral of certain items to other organs. The following suggestions on this possibility were made:

(a) The General Assembly should pay the greatest heed to the debates that have taken place in other United Nations organs, because their membership, although limited, reflects in its geographical distribution the various trends of thought within the United Nations (France);

(b) Specific items could be referred, where appropriate, to the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development functional commissions or specialized agencies (Austria);

(c) An item which falls within the competence of another United Nations organ or of a specialized agency, and which has not yet been considered by such organ or agency, might be referred directly to it for consideration and appropriate action (United States).

48. With particular reference to items falling within the competence of the Economic and Social Council, the following comments were made:

(a) These items give rise to lengthy discussions in the Second and Third Committees and to resolutions which unnecessarily duplicate those of the Council. To remedy this situation, only those items whose examination by the Assembly has been specifically requested by the Council or a Member State should be referred to the Second and Third Committees. The over-all report of the Council would be considered by the plenary towards the end of the Assembly session. Also, instead of submitting each year an over-all report on its activities, the Council might submit separate reports on topics which, in its opinion, are ready for Assembly review and require Assembly action (United States);

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<sup>11/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section II B 5.

of (b) All the items in any one Committee's agenda stemming from the report  
the Economic and Social Council might be taken as a self-contained group  
(United Kingdom).

5. Non-receivability of certain additional items

49. It was suggested that the General Assembly should exercise some discretion  
with regard to the inclusion of additional items.

50. The following are some of the observations which were made:

(a) While the General Committee cannot refuse to recommend the inclusion  
in the agenda of political questions which are of special concern to certain  
Member States, it should not recommend the inclusion of new economic, social  
and other questions unless it considers that one or another Committee will have  
the practical possibility of examining them, bearing in mind the number of items  
already included in its agenda (Greece);

(b) Additional items, which are proposed for inclusion in the agenda less than  
30 days before the opening of a session, should be included only if they qualify  
as truly "urgent and important", as provided in rule 15 of the rules of procedure;  
such items should be included in the agenda only by decision of a two thirds  
majority (United States);

(c) The General Committee should not recommend that the General Assembly  
discuss new items unless the discussion of them is really justified under the  
provisions of the United Nations Charter (Mr. Fahmy).

C. Allocation of agenda items <sup>12/</sup>

51. Many of the comments submitted mentioned the need to review the question  
of the allocation of agenda items with a view to a better distribution of the work  
among the Main Committees and to ensuring that some of them were not dealing with  
similar subjects:

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<sup>12/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section II B 1, and A/AC.149/L.4, para. 6.

1. Division of work among the Committees

52. Several of the comments submitted to the Special Committee drew attention to the importance of an efficient and balanced distribution of agenda items among the Main Committees. A review of this matter should, it was suggested, produce arrangements which would lighten the burden of those Committees whose agenda was too heavy by allocating more items to those which seemed to have too few. In that connexion, the Special Committee should avoid too strict an emphasis on subject categories and should approach the question of allocating agenda items from the purely practical point of view of the working capacities of each Committee. The Special Committee should show its flexibility by accepting that the fact that an item had been allocated to a particular Committee in one year, or for a number of years, did not mean that that item thereafter had to be allocated automatically to that Committee (Belgium, France, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, Yugoslavia, Mr. Hambro). It was pointed out, however, that it was impossible to ignore the reasons why the General Assembly had made provision for the consideration of the agenda items by the various Committees according to the nature of the questions to be discussed (Madagascar).

53. In order to facilitate the allocation of certain items, it was suggested that it might be specified in the rules of procedure or recommended that Member States which requested the inclusion of a supplementary item (rule 14) or an additional item (rule 15) should state to which Committee they intended it to be referred (Bolivia).

54. The view was also expressed that, when an item was included in the agenda for the first time, irrespective of whether the request for its inclusion was accompanied by a draft resolution, it was essential that it should previously be the subject of a debate so as to establish its proper place; the preliminary views of Member States should be ascertained and other important information secured in order to decide on the substance and the course of action (Yugoslavia).

55. Other proposals were:

(a) To curtail the number of items discussed directly in the plenary (Mr. Fahmy);

(b) To consider referring directly to the plenary more items on which extensive discussion did not appear to be necessary (United States).

2. Non-referral of certain items to two or more Committees

56. It was suggested that the General Committee should ensure, when allocating agenda items, that the same item was not considered by more than one Committee, in order to avoid repetition of discussions (Belgium, Ethiopia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liberia, Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden, United States, Miss Groza).

57. Reference was made, by way of example, to the fact that the Special Political Committee and the Third Committee both dealt with items on apartheid and racial discrimination, and items concerning refugees (Singapore).

58. In that connexion, it was proposed that an item already referred to one Committee should not be considered by another, except when certain aspects of the item were strictly within the competence of the latter Committee. When that was the case, there should be a clear indication of the aspect to be considered by each of the Committees (Greece).

59. Conflicts of competence among the Main Committees were the subject of a number of comments (see para. 71).

## VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES

### A. Functions of the individual Committees

60. A wide range of suggestions was made on the sphere of competence of certain Committees.

#### 1. First Committee

61. It was stated that:

(a) All political and security questions should be dealt with by the First Committee (Nigeria);

(b) The First Committee should be relieved of certain questions so that it might devote itself entirely to problems of peace, security and disarmament (Yugoslavia);

(c) In view of the new importance which the International Atomic Energy Agency had acquired in arms control measures through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the comprehensive annual report of the Agency might be allocated to the First Committee for consideration in the first instance or, alternatively, the Agency might be requested to prepare an annual report for the First Committee on its work in implementing the relevant provisions of the Treaty. The question whether other items concerning nuclear energy, such as the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (see para. 62 (e)), should be considered in the context of the disarmament debate in the First Committee merited examination (Ireland);

(d) One or two items be reallocated between the First Committee and the Special Political Committee to produce a more balanced work-load (Canada).

#### 2. Special Political Committee

62. There were many comments on the role of the Special Political Committee. In particular, it was pointed out that:

(a) The Committee, originally intended to be an ad hoc body which would fade out of existence in a short time, had become a Main Committee of an enduring nature (United States);

(b) The Committee did not, as a rule, have a sufficient number of items on its agenda and could have allocated to it certain items customarily referred to the First Committee (Yugoslavia);

(c) The General Assembly might use the Committee flexibly by availing itself of it to respond to the new and urgent tasks of the United Nations, and by assigning to it, for the moment, the items on the peaceful uses of the sea-bed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, the human environment (including the oceans and the stratosphere), the peaceful uses of outer space and atomic radiation (Singapore);

(d) The sphere of competence of the Committee might be extended so as to embrace the two following types of questions:

(i) Subjects which, being partly social, partly political and partly humanitarian, were of such importance as to deserve being highlighted, e.g. apartheid and the Middle East (Nigeria);

(ii) Specialized subjects such as outer space, the sea-bed, and questions relating to science and technology (Nigeria, Mr. Hambro);

(e) The report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, which currently came within the competence of the Special Political Committee, might in the first instance be sent to the International Atomic Energy Agency for evaluation of its practical implications, rather than being transmitted direct to the General Assembly (Ireland).

63. It was suggested, in the light of the comments summarized in the preceding paragraph, that the name of the Special Political Committee should be changed. It might be called:

(a) "Second Committee", the other Main Committees being re-numbered accordingly (United States);

(b) "Seventh Committee" (Mr. Hambro);

(c) "Seventh Committee" or "Special Committee" (Singapore);

(d) "Special Subjects Committee" or "Special Committee" (Nigeria).

64. It was also proposed, however, that the Special Political Committee should be abolished and its current work:

(a) Divided among the plenary and the First, Second and Third Committees (Mr. Akwei);

(b) Combined with that of the Fourth Committee, thus giving questions such as Angola and Mozambique the political importance which they deserved (Mr. Quaison-Sackey).

### 3. Second Committee

65. To the Second Committee might be allocated:

(a) The social aspects of economic development, so that the Committee would deal with the total spectrum of economic and social development (Sweden, Mr. Akwei);

(b) Social questions (Singapore);

(c) Items concerning social policy, such as housing, building and planning, natural disaster assistance, refugees and narcotics (Canada).

66. The attention of the Special Committee was drawn, in that connexion, to the Economic and Social Council's current study of measures to improve the organization of its work (Canada, Tunisia).

67. The parallel reorganization of the Second Committee's work might give it extra time for considering items transferred from the Third Committee. The measures proposed would also have the result of allowing the Second Committee more time for meaningful discussion of broad policy questions (Canada).

### 4. Third Committee

68. It was stated that, with the transfer of certain agenda items to the Second Committee, the Third Committee should continue to deal with all human rights questions and with certain other items which could then receive the more extensive consideration they deserved (Canada).

69. It was also asserted that the social, humanitarian and cultural work of the Third Committee and its working methods required thorough reorganization: social development topics and the topics involving economic development which were on the Second Committee's agenda were similar, and humanitarian problems were discussed in the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women (Yugoslavia).

70. Lastly, it was observed that very often items which touched only lightly on the terms of reference of the Third Committee were allocated to that Committee and gave rise to purely political debates which should take place in some other body of the General Assembly (Mr. Nettel). Also, the question of human rights in armed conflicts was referred to the Third Committee as being in the main a question of human rights; however, the practical solutions to be sought in this field require mainly efforts of a legal nature, and this question ought therefore to be referred to the Sixth Committee (Sweden).

## 5. Conflicts of competence among Committees

71. The following suggestions were made on the subject of possible conflicts of competence between two Committees:

(a) Consideration of the item concerned should be staggered in such a way as to have it discussed first by one Committee, the other Committee dealing with the item only when it had received a report from the Committee which first considered it (Austria);

(b) The use of joint meetings of the two Committees concerned should be encouraged and, inasmuch as all Member States were represented on the Main Committees, such meetings should result in having only one debate and one decision (Mr. Fahmy);

(c) A joint committee composed of an equal number of representatives from both Committees should meet, separately from the Committees, to consider the item (Mrs. Warzazi);

(d) Consideration might be given to the establishment of co-ordination groups in which members of the two Committees would participate (Greece).

## B. Role of the presiding officers

72. Several of the submissions to the Special Committee emphasized the role the Chairmen could play in the efficient conduct of the Committee's work and the need for them to have enough experience of the work of the General Assembly and to avail themselves, if necessary, of the experience of their predecessors. The following suggestions and comments were made on the subject:

(a) The presiding officer could not run a Committee smoothly and efficiently without the mutual confidence which must exist between him and the members of the Committee; such a relationship could not materialize unless the Chairman had formerly served on the Committee and its members were convinced of his qualities and impartiality; the presiding officers should be chosen with great care and the decisive criterion should not be that of geographical distribution (Mr. Fahmy); although equitable geographical distribution should be a primary consideration in deciding who were to be the officers of the various organs, it was debatable whether that consideration should prevail over other essential qualities, such as impartiality and competence (Mr. Entezam);



(b) It was important that Committee Chairmen should be fully conversant with the rules of procedure and apply them (Liberia); they should also be familiar with the items to be discussed in their Committees (Chile);

(c) The Chairman of a Main Committee should be chosen from among representatives with experience in General Assembly activities, and preferably he should have served previously in the Committee over which he will be called to preside (Mr. Silveira da Mota); to that end the rules of procedure might be amended to include a requirement that every Chairman should have had at least one year's experience in one of the Main Committees, preferably that over which he was going to preside (Canada); Chairmen might also be elected at the end of the previous session (see para. 35 (c)), thus giving them nine months to prepare themselves for office (Canada, Mr. Hambro);

(d) Consideration should be given to ways of enabling Committee Chairmen to exercise stronger control over the conduct of business. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly had, in paragraph 41 of its report,<sup>13/</sup> made certain suggestions which were still valid (United Kingdom);

(e) The presiding officers should ensure that the rules of procedure were obeyed, in order to expedite work. The fact that, in practice, they were unwilling to call to order a speaker who did not comply with the rules of procedure encouraged delegations to disregard those rules or agreed procedures (Nigeria);

(f) The Chairmen should have recourse as often as possible to private consultations, exchanges of views and personal contacts with the members of the Committees or the parties directly concerned regarding the organization and conduct of the work (Miss Groza, Mr. Malik).

#### C. Simultaneous absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman

73. It has been pointed out that, in the event of the simultaneous absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of a Committee, the Rapporteur has taken the Chair in some cases, even though rule 107 of the rules of procedure does not invest him with this right. The same difficulty may occur in the case of meetings of the General Committee (see paras. 22-24).

74. The following suggestions have been made for the purpose of defining the procedure that should be followed in such a case:

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<sup>13/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

(a) It might be advisable to include in the wording of rule 107 the practice whereby the Rapporteur is allowed to act as Chairman, with some provision added such as "if the Committee has no objection" or "if the Committee agrees" (Philippines);

(b) Rule 30 of the rules of procedure confers upon the Chairman of that delegation from which the President of the previous session was elected the right to preside at the opening of each session of the Assembly until a President has been elected for the session. Although the two cases may not be identical, there is some merit in having the Chairman or senior member of the delegation from which the Chairman of the Committee is elected preside at Committee meetings in the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (Liberia).

#### D. Reports of the Committees

75. It has been suggested that consistency of practice should be established as regards the reports of the Committees and, in particular, that the practice sometimes adopted of summarizing debates in reports should be examined. It has been recommended that, while certain essential points raised during debate have to be brought out, e.g. reservations or statements of interpretation, the practice of having reports which summarize debates should be resorted to only in exceptional cases. The general rule should be to have reports focus attention on the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee concerned, thus saving the Secretariat and Rapporteur work (United Kingdom).

## VII. MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE TIME

76. Many suggestions have been made for the maximum utilization of the available time by both the plenary and the Main Committees.

77. In particular, it was emphasized that time-saving methods should make possible a fuller discussion of certain major items, e.g. disarmament and the sea-bed, for which insufficient time has sometimes been available in the General Assembly (Canada).

### A. Plenary Assembly

#### 1. General debate<sup>14/</sup>

78. Although the usefulness and importance of the general debate in plenary meeting have, on the whole, been acknowledged, some suggestions for organizing it so as to avoid losing time have been made to the Special Committee.

#### (a) Frequency

79. It has been pointed out that the general debate, held every year, has become routine. A general debate held every other year and at the level of heads of State or Government or Ministers for Foreign Affairs might constitute a more notable event attracting significantly greater interest and would also permit much shorter sessions in alternate years (United States).

80. Similarly, the opinion has been expressed that it would be useful, on appropriate occasions, to hold meetings of heads of State or Government within the framework of the General Assembly (Japan).

#### (b) Organization of meetings

81. The following suggestions for improving the organization of meetings devoted to the general debate have been submitted:

(a) In order not to delay the start of work in Committees, it has been suggested that meetings should be held six days a week (Bolivia, Liberia);

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<sup>14/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section V A, and annex III, section IV.

(b) The General Committee should be authorized to propose to the General Assembly a reduction in the time allocated to the general debate so that it can be completed in 10 to 12 working days (United States);

(c) The order of speakers for the general debate should be completed within the first week from the opening of the session so as to avoid the time-consuming process whereby some meetings cannot be held because of a lack of speakers (Nigeria).

(c) Length of statements<sup>15/</sup>

82. In many of the views submitted to the Special Committee it was suggested that the statements made in the general debate should be limited in length. One of the arguments in favour of such limitation is that the First Committee does not meet while the general debate is proceeding.

83. It has, however, been pointed out that:

(a) An exception should be made in the case of a head of State or head of Government (Japan, Nigeria);

(b) Strict limits should not be set on the length of statements (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Chile).

(d) Submission of written statements<sup>16/</sup>

84. Several suggestions were made in the Special Committee to the effect that the length of statements could be limited by the submission of written statements to the Secretariat for inclusion in the records of plenary meetings (Canada, Greece, Italy, Nigeria, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, United States, Mr. Akwei, Mr. Malik).

85. The following qualifications were added on this point:

(a) If a delegation decides to submit a written statement, the oral statement should be limited to:

(i) Ten minutes (Philippines);

(ii) Fifteen minutes (Mr. Akwei);

(b) The summary would appear in the record, while the full text of the statement, as distributed, would appear as an annex to the record (Philippines);

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<sup>15/</sup> See annex III, para. 19.

<sup>16/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section IX B.

- (c) Written statements should be distributed to all delegations:
- (i) Reasonably well in advance of delivery to enable members to exercise their right of reply should that be found necessary (Philippines);
  - (ii) Before the general debate is opened, so that heads of delegations can then limit their interventions to specific points or clarifications or to summaries of their written statements (Netherlands);
- (d) The practice of submitting written statements could be provided for in the rules of procedure without, however, being mandatory (Singapore).

2. Debate on items already taken up in Committee

86. In the views submitted to the Special Committee it was stated that it is not desirable to discuss thoroughly, at the time draft resolutions are presented in plenary, items already taken up in Committee (Ethiopia, Greece, Liberia), and that the way to avoid this is strict enforcement of rule 68 of the rules of procedure (Greece).

3. Non-utilization of the rostrum

87. It has been suggested that, as the General Assembly Hall is equipped with microphones at the delegation tables, better use could be made of the time available for plenary meetings by allowing representatives to speak from their seats on points of order, explanations of vote and in exercise of their right of reply (Liberia).

4. Presentation of the reports of Main Committees

88. The suggestion, made in 1947 by the Committee on Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly, that Rapporteurs should not read out their reports in plenary meeting should be endorsed.<sup>17/</sup> The presentation of reports should be limited to brief introductory statements (United Kingdom).

B. Main Committees

1. Nomination of officers<sup>18/</sup>

89. The following suggestions were made in order to limit the time spent on electing the officers of the Main Committees:

<sup>17/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Plenary Meetings, vol. II, annex IV, document A/388, para. 26.

<sup>18/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section III.

(a) On the pattern of rule 94, rule 105 could be supplemented as follows:  
"There shall be no nominations" (Netherlands);

(b) Statements nominating officers should be confined to one per nominee, with no seconder (Canada);

(c) Nominations should be made by one delegation only, where appropriate on behalf of other delegations or regional groups (Austria);

(d) Nominations should be made in writing to the secretary of the Committee. There should be no nomination speeches or oral nominations. Thus, if the number of nominees does not exceed the number of vacancies, the nominees would be declared elected and the procedure of oral nomination and support would be dispensed with. If, on the other hand, the number of nominees exceeds the number of seats, election will be held by secret ballot (Japan).

## 2. Commencement of work<sup>19/</sup>

90. The following suggestions were made to avoid losing time because the Main Committees do not start working soon enough after the opening of the session:

(a) Except for the First Committee, Main Committees should start their work immediately after the opening of the session (Greece);

(b) All Main Committees should start their work immediately after the election of their Chairmen. Heads of delegations should ensure the representation of their delegations in plenary meetings during the general debate and in the Main Committees at the same time (Liberia);

(c) All Main Committees except the First Committee should start their substantive meetings earlier in the session than at present, e.g., by the fourth day after the session begins (Canada);

(d) All Main Committees should start their work at the beginning of the second week of the General Assembly, i.e., on the fifth day after the convening of the session (Austria);

(e) Main Committees should start their work no later than one week after the opening of the session (Nigeria).

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<sup>19/</sup> See annex III, section V A.

91. It has also been pointed out that delays have often arisen from the Committee's custom of holding organizational meetings and then recessing for a long time. Such delays are inconsistent with General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII) under which all Main Committees, except the First Committee, should begin their work not later than two working days after receiving their list of agenda items from the General Assembly (New Zealand).

3. Schedule of work<sup>20/</sup>

92. The need for the Committees, at the beginning of the session, to draw up their work programmes which they should strictly adhere to, as laid down in General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII), was confirmed (Belgium, Canada, Netherlands, Nigeria).

93. On this point it was suggested, inter alia, that work programmes should:

(a) Include a definite time-table showing when each item is to be considered and the number of meetings to be devoted to it (Belgium);

(b) Be reviewed each week by the Chairman and the Committee members (Canada).

4. General debate in Committee<sup>21/</sup>

94. The following suggestions were made in order to shorten the time spent on the general debate on the items on Committee agendas:

(a) The Committees should, if possible, dispense with a general debate on agenda items altogether (Singapore);

(b) General debates should be eliminated in the Main Committees, except in the two political Committees, on items which have been on the agenda of previous sessions (Austria);

(c) General debates in Committees should be discouraged or, if allowed, should cover only a few major items (Mr. Akwei);

(d) The preliminary debate on items recurring each session could be eliminated and consideration of such items confined to a discussion of the relevant draft resolutions (Liberia, Mr. Quaison-Sackey);

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<sup>20/</sup> See annex III, section V B.

<sup>21/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, sections V B and VII C and annex III, para. 9.

(e) Consideration should be given to the possibility of reducing the discussions on the questions which come up every year and on which the same debates are held and the same decisions are taken, and giving some priority to new items on the agenda (Mr. Entezam);

(f) General debate is necessary on political issues. While there is no need for a general debate on economic and social questions, general debate should in particular not be allowed on questions which have been previously discussed either in a principal organ of the United Nations, such as the Economic and Social Council, or in a standing or ad hoc Committee of the Assembly. Similarly, general debate should not be permitted on reports of the aforementioned organs, but rather debate should concentrate on the decisions or recommendations of these organs to the General Assembly (Mr. Fahmy);

(g) So far as possible, the Committees should hold a single general debate on each group of agenda items rather than on each item (Canada, Ethiopia, Singapore, Yugoslavia);

(h) The consideration of certain items already debated in previous sessions might, by decision of the organ concerned, be introduced by specially appointed Rapporteurs who would summarize the main issues emerging from previous debates (Italy);

(i) Since the views of Member States are already put forward in the general debate in plenary meeting, delegations wishing to clarify their views on a particular matter could submit written statements (Belgium);

(j) Delegations sharing the same point of view could use the system of designating a spokesman to express that view in a single statement (Belgium, Italy).

5. Concurrent consideration of several agenda items<sup>22/</sup>

95. It has been suggested that Committee Chairmen should be urged to alternate morning and afternoon meetings between different items when speakers and draft resolutions are slow to come forward on one item (Canada).

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<sup>22/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section II B 6.



6. Establishment of sub-committees or working groups<sup>23/</sup>

96. It has been suggested that Committees should make more frequent use of sub-committees or working groups (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Canada, France, United Kingdom, Mr. Malik).

C. Measures applicable both to the plenary Assembly and to the Main Committees

1. Opening of meetings at the scheduled time<sup>24/</sup>

97. The following views were expressed on the need to open meetings of the General Assembly and Main Committees at the scheduled time:

(a) The punctual starting of meetings was extremely important, not only because strict punctuality would result in a saving of time, but because it also would have a psychological effect on representatives and heighten their sense of discipline (Mr. Hambro);

(b) Meetings should start at the scheduled time (Belgium, Greece, Mr. Silveira da Mota);

(c) Chairmen should start meeting on time, or at least not later than 10 minutes after the scheduled time, in order to save the enormous time wasted under existing conditions (Mr. Akwei);

(d) There might be a new rule of procedure stating that meetings should start within 15 minutes of the scheduled time (Canada);

(e) The custom of starting plenary and Committee meetings considerably later than the time set should be abolished (New Zealand);

(f) The decision to open meetings at the scheduled time should be left to the discretion of presiding officers (Sweden).

98. It was also suggested that consideration should be given to extending the length of meetings by having them begin at 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. (Afghanistan).

2. Quorum

99. The following proposals were made concerning the quorum required to start plenary and Committee meetings:

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<sup>23/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section XV C, and annex III, para. 43.

<sup>24/</sup> See annex III, para. 42.

(a) Rules 69 and 110 of the rules of procedure might be revised so as to allow the President of the Assembly and the Committee Chairmen to declare the meeting open at the scheduled time, whatever the number of members then present (Italy, Sweden); a quorum should be required only for voting (Italy);

(b) It might be thought desirable to adopt the same quorum for plenary meetings of the Assembly as for the Committees, i.e., one third of the members (Afghanistan, France, Mr. Hambro); the presence of a majority would still be required for voting on an item (France, Mr. Hambro);

(c) Rule 69 of the rules of procedure might be amended to read:

"One third [or two fifths] of the Members of the General Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

The majority required to make decisions would, of course, remain unimpaired (Philippines).

### 3. List of speakers<sup>25/</sup>

100. Several of the comments submitted to the Special Committee suggested that, for the sake of the efficient conduct of the Assembly's work, the list of speakers should be closed as early as possible.

101. The following proposals and comments were made on the subject:

(a) The list of speakers for the general debate in the plenary should be closed well in advance, on the understanding that those who had not spoken on the prescribed date could speak at a meeting on the Saturday following that date (see para. 81 (a)), which should be held regardless of the number of representatives who attended (Bolivia);

(b) The list of speakers should be closed much earlier than has been customary (Greece);

(c) The President of the General Assembly and the Committee Chairmen should announce a date for the closing of the list of speakers on an item before the debate on it begins (Japan);

(d) The list of speakers should be closed at the end of the first meeting devoted to each item. On the basis of the list, the presiding officer should then propose to allocate an appropriate amount of time to the item in question (Italy);

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<sup>25/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section X.

(e) The list of speakers should be closed at the end of the first day on which an item is discussed (Nigeria);

(f) The list of speakers on each agenda item should be closed after 24 hours and no delegation which has failed to put its name on the list should be permitted to speak (Mr. Quaison-Sackey);

(g) The list of speakers for each agenda item would be closed after a certain number of meetings on that item has been held (Netherlands);

(h) The presiding officer should be able to rule on the closure of the list of speakers (Mr. Wershof);

(i) Presiding officers should be encouraged to insist that delegations who are not ready to speak when called according to the list of speakers should be placed at the bottom of the list for the meeting concerned, unless they have arranged to change places with another delegation (Canada, Italy).

102. Reference was also made to the need to discourage the practice of some speakers inscribing to speak on a particular day or at a particular meeting, and at the same time choosing an alternative day or an alternative meeting to do so if they are unable to meet their original schedule (Liberia).

#### 4. Limiting the length of speeches or number of speakers<sup>26/</sup>

103. In a number of the comments submitted to the Special Committee, support was expressed for limiting the length of statements in plenary and Committee meetings by strictly applying the rules of procedure or by amending some of those rules (Canada, Greece, Japan, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Singapore, United Kingdom, United States, Mr. Entezam, Mr. Hambro, Mr. Malik, Mr. Quaison-Sackey, Mrs. Warzazi, Mr. Wershof).

104. The following proposals were made for amending the rules of procedure:

- (a) (i) A paragraph should be added to rules 74 and 115 of the rules of procedure providing that only two Members should speak in favour of and only two against a motion to impose a time-limit on statements;

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<sup>26/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, sections VIII D, IX, XI B and XII B.

(ii) The President of the General Assembly should be empowered in rule 35, as should the Chairmen of Committees in rule 108, to propose, before or after a vote, time-limits on explanations of vote (Netherlands);

(b) Consideration might be given to whether rules 73 and 114 of the rules of procedure might not be amended to allow for the imposition of a time-limit on statements on points of order (United Kingdom);

(c) Rule 90, which provides that the President of the General Assembly shall not permit the proposer of a proposal or of an amendment to explain his vote on his own proposal or amendment, should cover the proposers of proposals or amendments whether they are introduced at a plenary meeting or have first been proposed in a Committee and adopted by it (Philippines);

(d) The rules might be changed to permit a Committee Chairman to make a ruling rather than simply to suggest to the Committee the time-limits on interventions (Canada, Mr. Wershof);

(e) As a general rule, initial statements on each agenda item, both in the plenary and in Committees, should not have to be longer than 25 to 30 minutes and much briefer statements should suffice for subsequent interventions on the same item (United States);

(f) In addition to the possibility of closing the list of speakers on any particular item in a Committee, consideration may be given to limiting the number of speakers in advance to 20 or 30 participants, either to be drawn by lot from among those who inscribed their names on the speakers' list, or to be agreed upon between the Chairman of the Committee and the parties directly concerned with the item under consideration (Mr. Malik);

(g) Time could perhaps also be saved by introducing a system according to which the speaker has to indicate in advance the length of his speech. If the speaker does not comply with this self-imposed limitation, no formal consequences would follow, but it would, of course, be considered as an "undisciplined" speaker and face a certain amount of disapproval, particularly from other speakers inscribed on the list. Such a procedure might have a certain deterrent effect and could also simplify time-planning (Sweden).

105. It was pointed out, on the other hand, that:

(a) On political problems, there was no need to curtail the freedom of representatives so far as the length or frequency of statements was concerned. Such restrictions invariably backfired and generated an adverse atmosphere which led representatives to resort to manoeuvring through the rules of procedure (Mr. Fahmy);

(b) There appeared to be an exaggerated concern about the length of speeches in plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees. Delegations should be encouraged to present their views as comprehensively as possible and measures to avoid unduly prolonged debates should be subtle and flexible (Brazil);

(c) There should be no limit on speaking time for statements, introducing draft resolutions (Japan);

(d) Restrictions on debates should be allowed only in non-controversial cases, when a consensus had already been reached (Afghanistan).

#### 5. Explanations of vote<sup>27/</sup>

106. In several of the comments it was said that the practice of explanations of vote was frequently abused by speakers who resorted to it to make statements on substance or reopen a debate.

107. It was suggested that the rules of procedure might be improved by spelling out in more detail regulations concerning points of order and rights of reply (see paras. 111 and 112) and explanations of vote (see paras. 113 and 114), to help increase the relevance and appropriateness of those types of interventions which are sometimes misused (Canada).

108. It was stated, in particular, that explanations of vote in plenary, after voting had already taken place in a Main Committee, should, as a general rule, be permitted only when delegations wished to record a change in position and give their reasons for it (France).

109. It was suggested, in that connexion, that the length of statements made in explanation of vote should be limited to:

(a) A few minutes (Greece);

(b) A maximum of five minutes (Nigeria);

(c) Ten minutes (Canada).

110. The view was also expressed, however, that no limitation should be placed on the right to speak in explanation of vote (Afghanistan).

<sup>27/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section XII.

6. Right of reply<sup>28/</sup>

111. The exercise of the right of reply was the subject of a number of comments, largely directed at preventing the abuse of that right.

112. The following proposals were made on the subject:

- (a) The Special Committee could urge Member States to use restraint in the exercise of the right of reply (New Zealand);
- (b) Statements should, as a rule, be limited to:
  - (i) Five minutes (Mr. Akwei);
  - (ii) Ten minutes (Canada);
- (c) The right of reply might be exercised:
  - (i) At the end of the meeting and then not more than twice by the same delegation (Mr. Akwei);
  - (ii) At the end of the discussion of an item, but before voting, or at the end of every second day (Canada);
  - (iii) At the end of the discussion of each item (Italy);
  - (iv) In the form of a written text forwarded to the Secretariat for inclusion in the official record (Afghanistan, Mr. Akwei).

7. Points of order<sup>29/</sup>

113. It was pointed out that a statement on a point of order was often used as an excuse for a general statement (Japan, Nigeria).

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<sup>28/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section XI.

<sup>29/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section VIII.

114. Other comments on the subject were:

(a) A statement on a point of order should be limited to, for example, 10 minutes and the presiding officer should stop the statement when he considers it irrelevant to a point of order. Rules 73 and 114 of the rules of procedure should be strictly observed in order to avoid such dubious practices as raising a "point of order" in connexion with a statement by another representative on a point of order (Japan);

(b) The rules should specify the grounds on which a presiding officer might interrupt a representative speaking on a point of order when another representative has raised another point of order (Mrs. Warzazi).

#### 8. Congratulations<sup>30/</sup>

115. In the opinion of certain Member States, the number of statements made in connexion with the election of the officers of the Main Committees should be limited.

116. The following comments were made on the subject:

(a) The rules of procedure should contain a provision to the effect that congratulations to the officers should be confined to the first speaker after the election, who would speak on behalf of all the members of the Committee (Canada);

(b) The example set by the Second Committee at the previous three sessions of the Assembly, and by the Fifth Committee at the twenty-fifth session, of largely eliminating exchanges of courtesies should be followed (New Zealand);

(c) Statements of congratulations to newly elected officers could either be dispensed with entirely or limited to one speaker after the election. In other cases, congratulatory statements should be made only by the chairmen of the regional groups, only at plenary meetings of the General Assembly, and not during the course of debate (Japan);

(d) Congratulatory speeches and remarks on the election of officers of the Main Committees and at the end of their terms of office could be dispensed with (Austria, Netherlands, Mr. Silveira da Mota).

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<sup>30/</sup> See annex III, para. 45.

9. Condolences<sup>31/</sup>

117. Several Member States observed that consideration should be given to limiting the number of statements of condolence.

118. The following proposals were made on the subject:

(a) Condolence speeches should be confined to plenary meetings, special meetings being held, if necessary, for that purpose (Canada);

(b) Condolences should be expressed at plenary meetings, only by the chairmen of the regional groups and not in the course of debate (Japan);

(c) Statements made on the occasion of the death of a Head of State or a permanent representative should be limited to a statement by the President of the General Assembly and, if desired, by the representative of the State concerned; the President might open a register of condolences (Netherlands);

(d) As a rule, condolences should be expressed to the delegation concerned only by the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the Main Committees, on behalf of all Members (Austria, Mr. Silveira da Mota).

10. Roll-call votes

119. The attention of the Special Committee was drawn to the need to review the provisions under which a roll-call vote is taken at the request of any representative (Canada, France, Mr. Wershof).

120. The following proposals were made on the subject:

(a) When a roll-call vote has taken place in a Main Committee on a draft resolution, a roll-call vote on the same draft resolution should be dispensed with in the plenary; there should instead be a recorded vote, unless the draft resolution adopted by the Main Committee was revised in the plenary (Japan);

(b) Rules 89 and 128 might be amended so that a roll-call vote could not be requested by one delegation only (Canada, Mr. Wershof); perhaps a majority or one-third vote of the Committee might be required (Canada).

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<sup>31/</sup> See annex III, para. 44.



11. Electronic devices

121. It was suggested that an electronic voting system should be used by all Committees to save time now wasted by counting hands (Mr. Akwei).

122. It was also pointed out that, since an electrical system of vote-taking had been successfully introduced and the Secretariat had developed its own equipment, some form of mechanical or electronic timing device might be perfected and installed in the General Assembly Hall and the Committee rooms (New Zealand).

VIII. RESOLUTIONS<sup>32/</sup>

A. Submission of draft resolutions

123. In a number of replies it was stressed that earlier submission of draft resolutions might facilitate the work of the General Assembly. The following proposals were made in this connexion:

(a) A draft resolution should be attached to requests for the inclusion of:

(i) Supplementary items (Bolivia);

(ii) Additional items (Bolivia, Netherlands);

(b) Specific ways should be found of encouraging delegations to submit their draft resolutions as soon as possible, preferably before the opening of debate on the items concerned (Romania, Miss Groza);

(c) It would be desirable to introduce draft resolutions at the beginning of a debate (Afghanistan, Netherlands, Mr. Akwei); a time-limit on the introduction of draft resolutions might be set (Netherlands);

(d) The President or, as appropriate, the Chairman of the Main Committees should take steps to encourage the early submission of draft resolutions (Ireland);

(e) Committees established by the General Assembly to deal with certain questions, or delegations represented on them, should draw up draft resolutions for consideration by the appropriate Main Committees; such a procedure should not preclude the right of other delegations to offer amendments or their own draft resolutions (Liberia);

(f) Where possible, Secretariat reports on technical subjects might contain suggested draft resolutions or parts thereof (Canada).

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<sup>32/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section VI.

124. On the other hand, while it was recognized that debate on a question should not be prolonged by the absence of a draft resolution, it was felt that, in general, draft resolutions should follow and not precede debate, for only thus could they reflect the consensus or at least the opinion of the majority (Greece).

125. It was suggested that proposals and amendments should be submitted only in writing (Italy).

126. In addition, the following comments were made concerning consultations on the text of draft resolutions:

(a) The Special Committee should consider measures for ensuring more time for consultations on draft resolutions (Yugoslavia);

(b) Informal consultations between interested parties before the submission of a proposal and during its discussion should be encouraged. Informal talks between the Chairman and delegations actively taking part in the discussion of a given issue generally contribute to expediting the proceedings and might be more regularly resorted to (Mr. Silveira da Mota);

(c) The officers of the Main Committees should be given the authority to receive all draft resolutions and amendments thereto, which should be submitted by any interested delegation or delegations at the commencement of the discussion on each item. The officers should propose for the agreement of the Committee a negotiating group for each item, comprising one member from each region, to negotiate generally acceptable drafts with all the groups. The aim would be to work towards more consensus and fewer minority-voted resolutions, and thus find a solution to the problem of what some have termed an "automatic majority" (Mr. Akwei);

(d) In the case of an item which is intended to result in the adoption of a resolution of particular significance, the holding of informal consultations beginning even before the session and the establishment of a working group representative of various points of view should be considered (Ireland);

(e) An ad hoc informal working group or party should be established wherever two or more competing draft resolutions are introduced on the same item, in order to explore the possibility of producing an agreed draft (Singapore);

(f) To stimulate an exchange of ideas, consideration might be given to limiting the number of sponsors of a draft resolution in the Main Committees to five or ten countries from each regional group. This - while promoting closer consultations among Member States and, therefore, a better harmonization of their

actions in the attainment of common aims - would favour the adoption of shorter, more stringent texts (Italy).

127. Finally, the following comments were made with regard to the time which should elapse between the submission of draft resolutions, as well as amendments and sub-amendments, and the vote on them:

(a) Rules 80 and 121 of the rules of procedure, dealing with voting procedures, should be amended to specify a 48-hour rule for draft resolutions, while leaving intact the 24-hour rule for amendments (Belgium, Netherlands);

(b) The provision of rules 80 and 121 that no proposal shall be put to the vote at any meeting unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting should be strictly adhered to. A similar procedure should be applied in the case of revisions of proposals, or amendments, of a substantial nature. Indeed, consideration might be given to amending the rules in order to provide that proposals should be circulated not later than two days before the day of the meeting at which they are to be put to the vote (Ireland);

(c) An express rule on subamendments would lead the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the Main Committees to apply the very useful restrictions to the submission of amendments, such as time-limits, also to subamendments (Mr. Nettel);

(d) It would not be useful to amend rules 80 and 121 of the rules of procedure, since the effect of the suggested amendment would be to delay the work of the Main Committees, which would be contrary to the objectives of the Special Committee (France).

#### B. Content of resolutions

128. It was suggested that the Special Committee should consider the question of the length of some resolutions. Eliminating the unnecessary preambular parts of some resolutions and condensing the operative part would give more precise and effective texts (Italy, Yugoslavia).

129. Moreover, it could be established as a condition for the admissibility of draft resolutions that they should not contain provisions going beyond the competence of the Committee in which they were submitted or infringing on the

competence of other Committees or other organs of the United Nations, especially of the Security Council (Greece).

C. Financial and organizational implications<sup>33/</sup>

130. The following comments were made on the question of the financial implications of draft resolutions:

(a) The financial implications of some resolutions adopted by the General Assembly were not subject to sufficient financial controls, and appropriate measures should be taken to enable the administrative and budgetary organs to play a more effective role in the approval of new expenditure. Draft resolutions having substantial financial implications should not be voted upon by the Committees until after the organs concerned had given their views on those financial implications (Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, Mr. Wershof);

(b) Financial implications of resolutions should be considered in the light of an over-all assessment of priorities and in the context of programme budgeting for the United Nations (New Zealand, United States);

(c) Resolutions involving expenditure adopted by subsidiary bodies might be scrutinized more critically by the parent bodies (United Kingdom).

131. It was pointed out that, in the context of financial controls relevant to the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions might:

(a) Meet more often in the months prior to the opening of the session of the General Assembly. This would of course imply the earliest possible presentation to the Advisory Committee of reports for its study and recommendations (Mr. Silveira da Mota);

(b) Meet more frequently during the year to provide continuing guidance, with its Chairman obtaining an increased salary commensurate with the increasing importance and demands of his functions (Canada, Mr. Wershof).

132. Furthermore, it was suggested that, taking into account the proliferation of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly (see para. 148), a new rule should be added to the rules of procedure which would require the institutional implications of any draft resolution to be examined before it was voted upon (Singapore).

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<sup>33/</sup> See A/AC.149/L.2, section XV F.

#### D. Voting procedure

133. It was pointed out that some resolutions were adopted by a small number of affirmative votes because of the large number of abstentions. To remedy this situation, it was suggested that rules 88 and 127 of the rules of procedure should be amended to give a new definition of the phrase "Members present and voting", on the basis of the following criteria:

- (a) Abstentions should be counted in deciding whether the required majority had been obtained; the same would apply to non-participation in voting, a practice followed by a number of delegations (Belgium);
- (b) One of the two following procedures might be adopted:
  - (i) Members which abstain should be considered as not present; thus, if the total number of members casting either an affirmative or a negative vote is less than a majority of the members of the Committee or General Assembly, it is considered that a quorum is not constituted and the draft resolution which is being put to the vote is regarded as not adopted;
  - (ii) The resolution is only adopted when the number of affirmative votes is more than a majority or two-thirds majority, where applicable, of all the members casting an affirmative or negative vote or abstaining (Japan);
- (c) It should be stipulated that in no case should the number of positive votes be less than one third of the membership of the General Assembly (Sweden).

134. In addition, the following proposals were made with a view to accelerating procedures in plenary meetings:

- (a) When a roll-call vote on a resolution has taken place in a Main Committee (see paras. 119 and 120), a roll-call vote on the same resolution should be dispensed with in the plenary and a recorded vote will take place in its stead, except when the resolution adopted by the Main Committee is revised in plenary (Japan);
- (b) The Assembly should not, unless otherwise decided by the President, reopen a debate on a draft resolution which has already received two thirds of the votes at the Committee stage (Mr. Quaison-Sackey).

135. Furthermore, it was suggested that, in order to strengthen the effectiveness of General Assembly decisions, consideration might be given to the possibility of establishing a rule whereby, for the final adoption of a resolution, a majority

of two thirds in the General Assembly as well as a two-thirds majority of the votes of each regional group would be required. Furthermore, such a majority might be made up of States whose total contribution to the regular budget of the Organization amounts to a minimum percentage, to be agreed upon by the regional groups, of the contributions to that budget (Italy).

136. Finally, it was suggested that the Committee should encourage the adoption of decisions and resolutions by consensus, since consensus was one of the essential factors in the effective and lasting settlement of differences and the strengthening of the authority of the United Nations, it being understood that the solutions thus adopted would take account of the legitimate rights and interests of all the parties concerned (Romania, Mr. Manescu).

#### E. Reduction in the number of resolutions

137. The Special Committee received some proposals aimed at reducing the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

138. In particular, it was suggested that:

(a) In some cases, the General Assembly need not adopt a resolution, especially when it was only taking note of a text (Canada, Mr. Wershof);

(b) In other cases the Assembly might take note of various reports and topics in an omnibus resolution (Canada).

## IX. DOCUMENTATION<sup>34/</sup>

### A. Reduction in the volume of documentation

139. It was suggested that the volume of General Assembly documentation should be reduced and that means of increasing the usefulness of documents should be studied (Austria, Canada, Greece, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, Mr. Entezam, Mr. Wershof).

140. In this context, it was pointed out that:

(a) The control of documentation could be tightened to reduce excess circulation and to avoid unnecessary duplications, e.g., by the elimination of the system whereby the same text is in some instances produced separately as a General Assembly document and as a Security Council document (Canada);

(b) The practice of producing the same document twice as a document of two different bodies should be eliminated (Canada);

(c) Limits might be set on the length of various types of General Assembly documents (Canada, New Zealand);

(d) In cases where documents exceeded a certain length, summaries furnishing predominantly action-oriented conclusions should be provided (Yugoslavia);

(e) Some organ should be given the legal power to restrict the length of reports produced by special and ad hoc committees (Mr. Wershof);

(f) The Secretary-General should be requested to shorten documents produced by him and by consultants (Mr. Wershof).

141. It was pointed out that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions were currently studying the question of documentation, and that the results of their work should be taken into account (Netherlands, New Zealand, Yugoslavia).

### B. Preparation and distribution of documents

142. The following comments were made with regard to the preparation of reports for the General Assembly:

(a) Reports should be as brief as possible and contain precise information and, where appropriate, a summary of proposals, recommendations and conclusions (Greece, Yugoslavia);

<sup>34/</sup> See annex III, section VI.

(b) Reports might be accompanied by a summary in a separate document indicating the items requiring decisions by the Assembly (Bolivia).

143. With regard to the date of issue of documents, the Committee had before it the following comments:

(a) It would be desirable for reports to be issued sufficiently in advance for Member States to consider them in good time (Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Ireland, Yugoslavia),

(b) The late issue of General Assembly documents caused great difficulties for delegations whose capitals were at a considerable distance from New York (New Zealand);

(c) Consideration might be given to the introduction of a time-limit for the issue of General Assembly documentation, such as that applied to Economic and Social Council documents (Greece, New Zealand, Mr. Akwei);

(d) The annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly should be issued in good time so that the latter body might be in a position to discharge properly its duty, under Article 15, paragraph 1, of the Charter, of considering the report (Ireland).

(e) The Secretariat should draw up a time-table for the circulation of reports before each General Assembly session and should adhere to it (Belgium);

(f) Bodies meeting between sessions of the General Assembly should submit their reports in good time. They should in no case continue to meet up to the opening of the Assembly session, let alone after that date (New Zealand, Yugoslavia).

144. Finally, the following comments were made on the distribution of reports:

(a) The distribution of reports should in principle be restricted, except in the case of reports of really general interest. A bulletin listing documents of restricted distribution might be published every fortnight or every month for the information of permanent missions. The Special Committee might also work out rules concerning the extent of the circulation of documents (Greece);

(b) The documents officer in each conference room might display and revise each day a list of documents available (Canada);

(c) The repeated complaints to the United Nations Secretariat about gross injustices in the distribution of documents in all the official or working languages of the Organization have never produced any results. The root cause of this situation is the unjustified imbalance in the distribution of senior posts in the



Secretariat. The thinking is done by English-speaking persons and even staff members who use other languages are required to draft in English because their supervisors are English-speaking. Since the translation services are overburdened with work, the other versions appear only very belatedly (Madagascar).

### C. Records of meetings

145. A number of proposals were made with regard to the records of meetings.

146. With regard to plenary meetings, it was suggested that:

(a) Verbatim records should be replaced by summary records (Mr. Wershof);

(b) Verbatim records should be replaced by summary records, except for meetings devoted to the general debate (Canada, France); delegations might be invited to provide summaries of their speeches to the Secretariat to help produce better summary records, and summary records might be combined with press summaries to avoid duplication of effort (Canada).

147. The following suggestions were made with regard to meetings of Main Committees:

(a) The length of summary records should be reduced by half (Mr. Wershof);

(b) The verbatim records of the First Committee should be replaced by summary records. Delegations making statements considered of particular value by other members of the First and other Committees might themselves assume responsibility for the distribution of the full texts (Canada).

## X. SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY<sup>35/</sup>

### A. Reduction of the number of organs

148. The Special Committee's attention was drawn to the proliferation of committees, commissions, advisory groups of experts and other intersessional organs of the General Assembly (Bolivia, Ethiopia, Singapore, United States, Mr. Akwei, Mr. Fahmy).

149. The following ways of reducing the number of those organs were suggested:

(a) The continuing need for bodies established by resolution might be reviewed by the General Assembly at, say, three-yearly intervals (United Kingdom);

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<sup>35/</sup> See annex III, section VII.

(b) Some organs might be merged. For example, consideration could be given to merging:

- (i) The functions of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the United Nations Council for Namibia, the Special Committee on Apartheid and, subject to amendment of the Charter, the Trusteeship Council under a single organ,
- (ii) The functions of some committees in the economic field (Mr. Akwei).

#### B. Composition of organs

150. The following proposals were made with regard to the composition of intersessional organs:

- (a) They should have a smaller membership (Mr. Fahmy),
- (b) In view of the difficulty of making an equitable choice of membership of certain organs, it might be possible:
  - (i) To consider open-ended membership, especially for organs of a technical nature, thus permitting all those interested to participate in their work;
  - (ii) Expand the de facto membership of existing smaller bodies by establishing two or more sessional committees of those bodies, with somewhat different membership from the main body (Canada);
- (c) A decision should be taken that members of all such committees, except ad hoc committees, should be subject to periodic re-election, perhaps biennially or triennially, so as to afford all delegations the opportunity of participating in their work (Mr. Akwei).

151. It was also pointed out that some subsidiary bodies should refrain from undertaking constant visits to distant countries, save in exceptional circumstances (Ethiopia).

#### C. Calendar of meetings

152. In the context of the organization of the work of committees, it was pointed out that many Member States made the same representatives responsible for participation in meetings of bodies dealing with legal questions. Not infrequently,

such meetings took place simultaneously in different places. A recommendation might therefore be made to the Main Committees or a provision inserted in the rules of procedure to the effect that decisions on the timing of meetings of subsidiary bodies should be left to the Secretariat, which could, by consultation between its various branches, prevent the overlapping of meetings in which the same officials were involved (Canada).

## XI. OTHER QUESTIONS

### A. Credentials of delegations

153. The attention of the Special Committee was drawn to the need to forestall the long debates on the credentials of delegations. In that respect, proposals might be considered which, while leaving the present rules of suspension intact, might nevertheless indicate other consequences which should follow from non-recognition of credentials (Mr. Akwei).

### B. Role of the Secretary-General

154. It was pointed out that the Secretary-General should have a stronger role in the organization of sessions, in particular with regard to:

(a) The inclusion of certain items in the agenda and, where necessary, their deletion (Mr. Akwei),

(b) The postponement to subsequent sessions of questions which did not need to be considered every year (France);

(c) The allocation of agenda items and, where necessary, the grouping of some of them (France, Mr. Akwei).

155. It was also proposed that the Secretary-General should:

(a) Play a leading role in drawing up the calendar of conferences (France);

(b) Be authorized to take certain necessary but unforeseen administrative actions (Mr. Akwei).

### C. Secretariat

156. It was stated that reform of the procedures alone would not accomplish much if reform of the Secretariat was not simultaneously undertaken. In that connexion,

the Secretary-General might be requested to submit recommendations after consulting a committee on Secretariat reorganization (Mr. Akwei). It was also suggested that action should be taken to restore a linguistic balance within the Secretariat. For this purpose, there should be a redistribution of posts to enable French-speaking persons to be promoted to positions of authority and the necessary French-speaking staff should be recruited in sufficient numbers (Madagascar).

D. Guidance regarding General Assembly procedure and assistance to presiding officers 36/

157. It was suggested that, in order to assist Committee Chairmen in expediting the work of their Committees, a procedural guide for Chairmen should be prepared which would discuss the problems of presiding over Committees and the precedents for dealing with them (Canada, United States).

158. It was also proposed:

(a) That the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs should be brought up to date (Canada);

(b) That consideration should be given to a repertory of practice for the General Assembly, categorized not by relevant Charter Articles but by the General Assembly's rules of procedure (Canada, Sweden); in this connexion, however, it was pointed out that the final responsibility for an efficient and correct interpretation of the rules of procedure rests with the President of the Assembly and the Chairmen of the Main Committees (Sweden).

159. It was also suggested that at the beginning of the session the President of the General Assembly should remind the Assembly of, and particularly invite the attention of the Chairmen of Main Committees to, the recommendations for improving the methods of work which were specifically approved in General Assembly resolution 1898 (XVIII) of 11 November 1963 (Ireland); in that connexion, it was considered that it would be very helpful to have a reissue or better an elaboration of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly,<sup>37/</sup> which was a most helpful commentary to the rules (Mr. Nettel).

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36/ See A/AC.149/L.2, section XIII A.

37/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

160. It was proposed that, even if he could not be present himself, the Legal Counsel should appoint someone to attend a Committee continuously whenever the situation so warranted (Mrs. Warzazi).

161. It was also suggested that the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of Main Committees should enlist several assistants under them, both from the Secretariat and, wherever possible, from the delegations themselves, to whom they would allocate items on the agenda for the purpose of closely following them up with the delegations directly concerned and expediting the progress of the Assembly. These assistants would constitute an informal staff who could be most helpful during the session of the Assembly (Mr. Malik).

#### E. Studies of the rules of procedure

162. It was suggested that a comparative study of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and those of other relevant bodies, such as the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, might be prepared (Canada).

163. It was also suggested that a comparison should be made between the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and those of the Economic and Social Council to determine whether there would be advantage in incorporating into the rules of the Assembly certain provisions which already appeared in those of the Council. For example, rule 66 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council stated that motions requiring that no decision should be taken on the substance of the proposal should be considered as previous questions and be put to the vote first. A similar rule might be adopted by the General Assembly, perhaps as an addendum to rules 93 and 132. Rule 80 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, dealing with consultations between the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies, might also be reflected with advantage in the rules of the General Assembly (United Kingdom).

164. It was suggested that a comparative study should be undertaken of the versions of the rules of procedure in the various languages to ensure their concordance (Ireland).

F. Special training programme

165. It was suggested that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research might be encouraged to arrange a special one day training programme on General Assembly procedures and methods of operation which would be of help to newly arrived members of permanent missions. It could take place at the beginning of the session to permit new non-permanent delegates to benefit also (Canada). It was also suggested that special seminars on the practical application of the rules of procedure might be organized for the officers of the General Assembly and its committees (Sweden).

G. Regional groups

166. It was suggested that the names of chairmen of the regional groups for the month could usefully be published in the Journal of the United Nations (Canada).

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