

# **United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea**

Geneva, Switzerland  
24 February to 27 April 1958

Document:  
**A/CONF.13/L.4**

**Note verbale, dated 7 March 1958, addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the President of the Conference**

Extract from the *Official Records of the United Nations Conference on the Law of The Sea, Volume II (Plenary Meetings)*

## DOCUMENT A/CONF.13/L.2

### First report of the General Committee: organization of the work of the Conference

[Original text: English]  
[27 February 1958]

1. At its first meeting, held on 27 February 1958, the General Committee considered a memorandum prepared by the Secretariat (A/CONF.13/BUR/L.1) relating to the organization of the work of the Conference. The following decisions were taken:

#### *Working schedule of the Conference*

2. It was decided to recommend that a five-day week be established; however, this schedule should be regarded as having sufficient flexibility to allow for variations when necessary.

3. It was also agreed that not more than three committee meetings should take place at the same time and that, in any case, simultaneous meetings of the First and Third Committees should be avoided.

#### *Closing date of the Conference*

4. It was decided to recommend that Thursday, 24 April 1958, be fixed as the closing date of the Conference.

#### *Discussion of the articles prepared by the International Law Commission*

5. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics suggested that a general debate be held in the plenary meeting in order to give all countries represented at the Conference, especially those with few representatives, the opportunity to present their viewpoint. He was supported by the representatives of Ceylon and Poland. The representative of India, supporting the proposal of the representative of the Soviet Union, was in favour of having a short general debate in the plenary meeting but with no general debate in the committees. He was supported by the representatives of Egypt, Czechoslovakia and, later, by the representative of the USSR, who considered such a solution a compromise.

6. The representative of Czechoslovakia, however, thought that it would be necessary to have a general debate in the Fifth Committee because the question of land-locked countries had not been studied by the International Law Commission.

7. The Soviet Union and Indian proposals were opposed by representatives of the United States of America, France, Panama, the United Kingdom, Guatemala, Italy, Australia, the Netherlands, Argentina and China, who expressed themselves generally in favour of the procedure outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of document A/CONF.13/BUR/L.1 (see below, paragraph 12, sub-paragraph (a) and (b)).

8. The Indian proposal was rejected by 11 votes to 6, with 1 abstention.

9. The Committee approved, without objection, a proposal by the representative of Mexico to add in the second sentence of paragraph 7 of document A/CONF.13/BUR/L.1, after the words "on the articles", the following: "(but would not be precluded from discussing articles referred to any other committee or committees if they consider this to be necessary in view of the connexion between such articles and those referred to their own committee)".

10. The Committee adopted, without vote, a proposal by the representative of the United Kingdom to delete in the third sentence of the same paragraph, between the words "would not" and "be made", the word "necessarily".

11. The Committee adopted, without vote, a proposal by the representative of the United States to delete the fourth sentence of the same paragraph reading "However, provisional votes could be taken when desirable and in so far as it should be necessary to take decisions of principle in order to facilitate subsequent stages of the work of the Committee."

12. The Committee therefore recommends that the main committees of the Conference organize their discussion of the articles prepared by the International Law Commission in two stages as follows:

(a) The first stage would consist of a short general debate on the articles referred to the Committee or a discussion of them article by article, or even a combination of both methods. Representatives would express their views on the articles (but would not be precluded from discussing articles referred to any other committee or committees if they consider this to be necessary in view of the connexion between such articles and those referred to their own committee), and put forward any proposals or amendments they may wish to make regarding them. A decision on the articles, or on the proposals or amendments, would not be made at this stage. The process of formulating texts or the consideration of particular problems might well be referred to sub-committees set up for those purposes. It may be hoped that this first stage would be completed by the end of the third week of the Conference.

(b) The second stage would involve taking the articles seriatim, when final decisions should be reached on the texts to be recommended to the plenary meeting. It would be desirable if, at this stage, each committee could indicate the extent to which reservations to the texts would be permissible if such texts were incorporated in a convention or other appropriate instrument.

## DOCUMENT A/CONF.13/L.4

### Note verbale, dated 7 March 1958, addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the President of the Conference

[Original text: English]  
[11 March 1958]

The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the President of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and has the honour to

inform him of the following, with the request that this information be made available to the members of the Conference:

At the request of the Government of the United Arab Republic, a note from the Government dated 24 February 1958 regarding the formation of the United Arab Republic and the election of President Gamal Abdel Nasser as President of the new republic, together with a note dated 1 March 1958, are hereby communicated to all the States Members of the United Nations, to principal organs of the United Nations and to subsidiary organs of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General has now received credentials for Mr. Omar Loutfi as Permanent Representative of the United Arab Republic to the United Nations, signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic. In accepting this letter of credentials, the Secretary-General has noted that this is an action within the limits of his authority, undertaken without prejudice to and pending such action as other organs of the United Nations may take on the basis of the notification of the constitution of the United Arab Republic and the note of 1 March 1958.

#### Annex A

##### PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 24 FEBRUARY 1958

The plebiscite held in Egypt and Syria on 21 February 1958 having made clear the will of the Egyptian and the Syrian people to unite their two countries in a single State, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Republic has the

honour to notify the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the establishment of the United Arab Republic, having Cairo as its capital, and of the election, in the same plebiscite, of President Gamal Abdel Nasser as President of the new Republic.

#### Annex B

##### PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

1 March 1958

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, in pursuance of its note dated 24 February 1958, regarding the formation of the United Arab Republic and the election of President Abdel Nasser, has the honour to request the Secretary-General to communicate the content of the above-mentioned note to the following:

- (a) All the States Members of the United Nations;
- (b) Other principal organs of the United Nations;
- (c) Subsidiary organs of the United Nations, particularly those on which Egypt or Syria, or both, are represented.

It is to be noted that the Government of the United Arab Republic declares that the Union henceforth is a single Member of the United Nations, bound by the provisions of the Charter and that all international treaties and agreements concluded by Egypt or Syria with other countries will remain valid within the regional limits prescribed on their conclusion and in accordance with the principles of international law.

## DOCUMENT A/CONF.13/L.8

### Second report of the General Committee: measures for expediting the work of the Conference

[Original text: English]  
[8 April 1958]

1. At its third meeting, held on 8 April 1958, the General Committee had before it a report by the Secretariat reviewing the progress of the work of the Conference (A/CONF.13/BUR/L.2). In the report, the Secretariat submitted for the consideration of the Committee various draft recommendations designed to expedite the proceedings in order that the Conference might be able to finish its task by the agreed closing date—i.e., Thursday, 24 April.

2. As from and including 9 April, only fourteen days (including Saturdays) remain before the closing date. In planning the remaining work, it should be borne in mind that, as from Monday, 21 April, there should be only plenary meetings and meetings of the Drafting Committee of the Conference.

3. After discussing the Secretariat's report, the General Committee unanimously approved the recommendations set out below. It should be noted that the first of these recommendations regarding the disposition of amendments is of primary importance, since without it the others of a more procedural character will lose much of their effectiveness.

(a) Delegations are urged to study carefully the amendments they have submitted, with a view to ascertaining whether those to which they attach lesser importance can be withdrawn. Delegations are also urged to consult together informally in order to combine amendments embodying substantially the same points.

(b) Each committee should, where appropriate, immediately establish a working group (or drafting committee) to which all amendments of a drafting character should

be referred for immediate study and report back to the Committee. These working groups should also deal with adopted articles the texts of which need any drafting adjustments.

- (c) (i) The Fourth Committee should finish its work by the close of business on Saturday, 12 April, in order to allow the other four committees to hold more meetings a day during the remaining week available for committee work;
- (ii) The Second and the Fifth Committees should aim at completing their agenda by the close of business on Wednesday, 16 April;
- (iii) The First and Third Committees should make every endeavour to finish by the close of business on Saturday, 19 April.

(d) Each committee should impose a time-limit on speeches of five minutes, both for proposers of motions and for other speakers.

(e) Committees should endeavour to devote as little time as possible to the discussion of procedural questions. Points of order should be dealt with immediately in accordance with the rules of procedure, without debate.

(f) Every effort should be made to utilize available meeting facilities to the full.

(g) All meetings should begin at 10 a.m. and 2.45 p.m., starting on Wednesday, 9 April.

(h) Two committee meetings should be held every night from Monday to Friday, beginning on Wednesday, 9 April.

(i) Saturday, 12 April and Saturday, 19 April, should