

Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

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A/CONF.62/BUR/SR.53

53rd meeting of the General Committee

Extract from the *Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, Volume XIII (Summary Records, Plenary, General Committee, First and Third Committees, as well as Documents of the Conference, Ninth Session)*

discussions could begin in plenary meeting at the end of the week.

19. Mr. NAKAGAWA (Japan) said that his delegation shared the view that it would be advisable for negotiations to continue for a further three days and for the General Committee to meet on 27 March to agree on procedures for future work. He stressed that an opportunity should be given to every delegation to give its opinion on the various reports.

20. Mr. AL-WITRI (Iraq) concurred with the view that the negotiations should be extended for three days but no longer. At its meeting on 27 March the General Committee should decide how discussions would proceed on the second revision of the negotiating text. All delegations should be afforded an opportunity to explain their position on the reports of the

Chairmen of the three committees, so that their views could be reflected in the official records.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the General Committee wished to recommend that the first stage of the programme of work for the ninth session should be extended up to and include 26 March, that the General Committee should meet again on 27 March, and that, unless the General Committee recommended and the Conference approved further modifications, the second stage, consisting of statements by delegations concerning the changes proposed to the first revision of the informal composite negotiating text, would commence on the morning of 28 March.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

53rd meeting

Thursday, 27 March 1980, at 11.10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. H. S. AMERASINGHE

Organization of work

1. The CHAIRMAN said that it was clear from the discussions he had had with the Chairmen of the Committees, negotiating groups and the group of legal experts that the modified schedule which the General Committee had agreed to at its previous meeting could not be adhered to. Although the Second and Third Committees would be able to complete their work the following day, the First Committee would not be able to do so. Accordingly, he suggested that the General Committee should recommend to the plenary Conference that the current negotiations should be continued until the evening of 28 March. The documents resulting from those negotiations would then be ready in all languages on the morning of 31 March, and that day could be devoted to meetings of the regional groups, the Group of 77 and the First Committee. One or more plenary meetings could then be held on the following day in which case it might be feasible for the collegium to produce a second revision to the informal composite negotiating text before delegations left New York, although it would not be possible to include the final clauses. The immediate objective was to produce the second revision; the plenary discussions must therefore be confined to those revisions which satisfied the criteria set forth in paragraph 10 of document A/CONF.62/62.¹

2. Mr. WAPENYI (Uganda), speaking as Chairman of the Group of 77, said that the changes proposed in the programme of work were acceptable to the Group; however, the members of the Group would like to have an opportunity to air their views before the discussion in plenary meeting. He assumed that the whole of 31 March could be taken up by meetings of the regional groups and the Group of 77; the First Committee could meet in the evening.

3. Mr. ARIAS SCHREIBER (Peru) said that his delegation had no objection to the time-table outlined by the Chairman. However, the General Committee should suggest in its recommendation to the plenary Conference that the general debate

on the negotiating text as a whole should begin at the start of the resumed session in Geneva.

4. The CHAIRMAN took note of the suggestion.

5. Mr. JAYAKUMAR (Singapore), supported by Mr. WAPENYI (Uganda), said that, while it was in order to give priority to the meetings of the Group of 77 and its constituent units and to meetings of the other regional groups, facilities should be made available, as they had in the past, for meetings of special-interest groups.

6. Mr. ZULETA (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) said that he had taken note of the General Committee's recommendation to the plenary Conference concerning the various bodies which were to meet the following Monday. The Secretariat would be able to provide no more than four interpretation teams that day, and he therefore appealed to the Chairmen of the various regional groups to consult with one another so that they could provide guidance to the Secretariat as to which meetings should be given priority; that was a matter outside the competence of the Secretariat.

7. Mr. DREHER (Federal Republic of Germany) said that his delegation agreed to the Chairman's suggestions. In connexion with the plenary discussion, he said that it was his understanding that delegations would have an opportunity to briefly express their views and also to submit a written statement expanding those views.

8. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, wherever possible, the submission of written statements should be postponed until the Geneva phase.

9. He further suggested that statements in the discussion on 2 April should be limited to 10 minutes.

It was so decided.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the General Committee agreed to make the recommendations which he had suggested at the beginning of the meeting and further agreed that a reference should be made to the understanding that the general debate would be held at the start of the resumed session at Geneva.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

¹ See *Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea*, vol. X (United Nations publication, Sales No. E. 79.V.4).