

Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

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44th meeting of the Third 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)*

THIRD COMMITTEE

44th meeting

Tuesday, 4 March 1980, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. A. YANKOV (Bulgaria)

Organization of work

1. The CHAIRMAN noted that the Committee's main task in the first stage of the ninth session was to reach compromise solutions on the issues left pending at the last session, and to prepare the ground for the revision of the informal composite negotiating text. The Committee had achieved positive results at the resumed eighth session when compromise formulae on which there was, in his view, a reasonable prospect for consensus had emerged with regard to articles 242, 246 *bis*, 247, 249, 253, 255 and 264. He hoped that during the first stage of the current session the resumed negotiations would lead to the adoption by consensus of compromise solutions on all pending issues.

2. With regard to the procedure to be followed at the current session, he suggested that the Committee should continue the practice followed at the eighth session of informal group consultations, the results of which would be brought to the attention of the Committee as a whole for consideration and approval. He therefore suggested that, during the first two weeks, most of the time available should be devoted to informal group consultations carried out by the Chairman, with the understanding that on 14 March there would be a plenary meeting of the Committee to consider the results achieved. Several more plenary meetings would be held in the final week. In that way, the need for flexibility could be reconciled with the responsibility of the Committee as a whole to express its views on the outcome of the informal consultations on the pending issues listed in paragraphs 6 to 8 of his last report (A/CONF.62/L.41).¹

3. Mr. MALIK (Pakistan) recalled that, at the preceding session, there had not been sufficient time for the Committee as a whole to consider the outcome of the informal consultations adequately. He therefore suggested that all the consultations and negotiations on pending issues should take place at plenary meetings of the Committee, so that all members had an opportunity to express their views and so that those views were adequately reflected in the Chairman's report.

4. After a lengthy procedural discussion, the CHAIRMAN suggested that, in accordance with the views expressed during the current meeting, the Committee should as a general rule hold informal discussions in plenary, thus obviating the need for a quorum and for the scheduling of meetings to allow working groups to report to the Committee as a whole. Meetings of smaller groups would be held only when necessary.

5. He also suggested, in accordance with the views expressed by some delegations, that certain aspects of the informal proposals referred to at the end of paragraph 4 of his report on the Committee's work during the resumed eighth session, and the articles listed in paragraphs 6 to 8 of that report, should be considered during the current session, although he appealed to delegations to exercise restraint and not reopen the debate, either on new issues or on those on which a compromise had been reached.

It was so decided.

¹Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, vol. XII (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.V.12).

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.