

Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

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133rd Plenary meeting

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

132nd meeting

Tuesday, 19 August 1980, at 9.50 a.m.

President: Mr. H. S. AMERASINGHE

Organization of work

1. The PRESIDENT said that, in view of the considerable progress that had been made, the following revised schedule of meetings should be adopted.
2. All the regional groups should meet that afternoon and evening to consider the results achieved so far. The Group of 77 would meet on the morning of the following day, Wednesday, 20 August. On the afternoon of that day there would be a meeting of the working group of 21, followed by a meeting of the First Committee, which would continue until that Committee's work was completed. That would make it possible to start the general debate on Thursday, 21 August.
3. He urged delegations, in accordance with the decision already taken, to confine their statements in the general debate to consideration of the second revision of the negotiating text and the results of the negotiations at the current session. In view of the small amount of time available, he suggested that the time-limit for statements should be reduced from 15 to 10 minutes, on the understanding that delegations could also submit written statements if they so wished. The time-table for meetings should be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 8:30 or 9 p.m. That might enable the general debate to be concluded on Friday, 22 August, leaving time for the third revision of the negotiating text to be prepared on Sunday, 24 August. A further day would then be required for processing and reproduction of the text in all languages. The remainder of the schedule would be as already agreed. He proposed that the Conference should take up any items not yet discussed; consideration of those items could, if necessary, be completed at the next session.
4. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Confer-

ence agreed to begin the general debate on Thursday, 21 August, at 10 a.m.

It was so decided.

5. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that, in his view, 15 minutes was the optimum time for statements in the general debate; the Conference should keep to its original decision in that respect.
6. The PRESIDENT said that, if 15 minutes were allowed, it would be impossible to achieve the main purpose of issuing the third revision before the end of the session.
7. Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone) said that, if the work proceeded with undue haste, small delegations would not have time to give full consideration to the conclusions and make comments on them.
8. The PRESIDENT said that any delegations that were unable to participate in the debate on the first day could do so on the second or third day. Delegations would no doubt have a further opportunity to speak when the entire text came before the Conference in the final stages. He appealed to delegations to accept the 10-minute time-limit.
9. Mr. ATAIDE (Portugal) said that, since delegations would have an opportunity to submit written statements, 10 minutes should suffice for statements during the general debate.
10. The PRESIDENT urged the representative of Pakistan not to press his proposal. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Conference agreed to the 10-minute time-limit on the understanding that delegations could submit written statements.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.05 a.m.

133rd meeting

Thursday, 21 August 1980, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. H. S. AMERASINGHE

Organization of work

1. The PRESIDENT announced that the General Committee had just met in order to agree on a change in the work schedule of the Conference; that change had been rendered necessary by unforeseen circumstances. Negotiations of a vital nature were nearing completion and the regional groups, the Group of 77, the working group of 21 and the First Committee needed time to consider the results of those negotiations. Their deliberations should take up the whole of the present day and part of the following day. The General Committee therefore recommended to the Conference that the general debate should commence on the morning of Monday, 25 August, and continue on Tuesday, 26 and part of Wednesday, 27 August. When the general debate ended, the collegium would meet to prepare the third revision of the informal composite negotiating text. Other outstanding issues would then be discussed, possibly at an informal plenary meeting of the Conference, and the last day of the session—Friday, 29 August—would be devoted to the consideration of the work of future sessions of the Conference.
2. At the meeting of the General Committee, the question of

the status of the third revision of the text had been raised and the view had been expressed that its status was dependent on the solution of the outstanding issues. Clearly, if the third revision touched on any of those issues, its status could not be defined until the discussion on those issues had been completed.

3. The Third Committee had concluded its work and dealt with all the outstanding issues before it. The First Committee, on the other hand, still had a number of critical issues to settle and the entire package hinged on the result of that Committee's work. Time was needed for that purpose, and on the present day and part of the following day, the regional groups, the Group of 77 and the working group of 21 were due to meet. Should the necessary documents not be ready for that afternoon, the co-ordinators of the various language groups of the Drafting Committee would meet instead of the regional groups.

4. If there was no comment, he would take it that the Conference adopted the recommendation of the General Committee regarding the scheduling of the general debate.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.