

Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

1973-1982

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Document:-

A/CONF.62/BUR/SR.8

8th Meeting of the General Committee

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

GENERAL COMMITTEE

7th meeting

Monday, 17 March 1975, at 11.05 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. H. S. AMERASINGHE (Sri Lanka).

Draft changes in the rules of procedure of the Conference

1. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should recommend that the Conference¹ adopt the changes in the rules of procedure of the Conference proposed in document A/CONF.62/BUR/3, namely, an amendment to rule 56 and a new draft rule which would become rule 63 A, chapter X.

It was so decided.

Officers of the Conference

2. The CHAIRMAN announced that he had received a letter from the Belgian representative informing him that Ireland would replace Belgium as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference.

3. Mr. ZEGERS (Chile) said that, in accordance with an agreement reached earlier among the members of the Latin American group, Mr. Galindo Pohl (El Salvador) would replace Mr. Andrés Aguilar (Venezuela) as Chairman of the Second Committee. In accordance with that agreement, Venezuela would replace El Salvador in the Drafting Committee of the Conference.

Organization of work

4. The CHAIRMAN observed that at the second session of the Conference it had been decided that participants at the third session would begin negotiations immediately, the general debate having been concluded. Accordingly, it

would, in his view, be advisable to allow as much time as possible for informal consultations, thus enabling the work of the committees to proceed satisfactorily and giving the individual groups the opportunity to seek ways of overcoming existing differences. He therefore proposed that the Committee should recommend to the Conference that during the coming two weeks the two Main Committees should, in principle, meet in the morning, and the groups in the afternoon.

It was so decided.

5. The CHAIRMAN suggested that during the Easter holiday period the Conference might suspend its work on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 28, 29 and 30 March, and resume work on Monday, 31 March.

6. Mr. KNOKE (Federal Republic of Germany) said that it would be preferable for the Conference not to resume its work until Tuesday, 1 April.

7. Mr. KOH (Singapore) supported that view.

8. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should recommend to the Conference that it suspend its work for four days, from 28 to 31 March inclusive.

It was so decided.

9. In reply to a question from Mr. ZEGERS (Chile), the CHAIRMAN said that the General Committee would meet every Monday at 10 a.m.

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.L.18.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

8th meeting

Monday, 24 March 1975, at 10.15 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. H. S. AMERASINGHE (Sri Lanka)

Officers of the Conference

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Group of Western European and other States had informed him that Mr. J. S. Bailey (Australia) would replace Mr. Mott (Australia) as Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Progress of work: reports by the Chairmen of the Committees

2. The CHAIRMAN invited the Vice-Chairman of the First Committee, the Chairman of which was unable to attend the meeting, to report.

3. Mr. THOMPSON-FLORES (Brazil) said that the First Committee had met briefly on Tuesday, 18 March, to organize its work. It had requested the Chairman of the 50-member Working Group set up during the second session of the Conference to resume negotiations on articles 1 to 21 relating to the principles of the régime, and in particular on article 9, which dealt with conditions for exploration and exploitation. The Working Group had held meetings throughout the week at which there had been an encouraging exchange of ideas and views. The Chairman of his Committee would be able to report at the end of the following week on the results achieved, in particular with regard to article 9, during the first three weeks' work.

4. Mr. GALINDO POHL (El Salvador), Chairman of the Second Committee, said that the Committee had held a formal meeting on Tuesday, 18 March, at which it had organized its work and had decided to hold meetings only in the mornings, reserving the afternoons for consultations. The Second Committee had also decided, for the sake of continuity, to use as a basis for its document on main trends¹ and to give it a second reading in the course of which the Committee would endeavour to reduce the considerable number of variants. It was understood that the morning meetings would be used to decide on the topics for the consultations which were to take place in the afternoon. There were often two sets of consultations, since the officers of the Committee were making proposals and delegations were holding consultations among themselves. Thus, on three consecutive days, a group of delegations had worked under the chairmanship of the representative of Afghanistan on the definition of territorial sea in an endeavour to reduce the number of variants. The officers of the Committee had also held consultations on the subject and had decided that it was better to wait until definitions had been found for archipelagic waters and plurality of régimes. Consultations had also taken place on other questions such as bays, historic waters and criteria for defining the territorial sea. The Committee had decided that it would hold formal meetings when necessary in order to hear proposals and ideas submitted by States or groups of States. So far, however, there had been no requests for such meetings.

5. Mr. YANKOV (Bulgaria), Chairman of the Third Committee, said that it had met on Wednesday, 19 April, to organize its work and had decided to start where it had left off in Caracas. For the time being, it proposed to hold informal meetings on agenda items 12, 13 and 14. Short formal meetings would be held for the submission of new draft articles on some of the issues under consideration, particularly during the current week. In addition to its formal and informal meetings, the Committee was contem-

plating the use of other methods: meetings of groups with common interests, regional groups or any other meetings within the framework of the Committee which might serve a useful purpose. He might himself take the initiative in negotiation with the object of securing agreement on the important matters under consideration. Informal meetings had been held on agenda item 12 (Preservation of the marine environment), relating to marine pollution and the Global Environmental Monitoring System, on which the United Nations Environment Programme had submitted a very interesting paper. It was likely that further important draft articles on measures against marine pollution would be submitted. With regard to agenda items 13 and 14 (Scientific research, and Development and transfer of technology), the Committee was continuing the work begun at Caracas; a new and important document on marine technology prepared by the Secretariat would undoubtedly stimulate a more thorough examination of the question of the transfer of technology.

6. In conclusion, he said that work was proceeding through negotiations, discussion groups and informal meetings of the Committee. As matters stood, what was important was the negotiations themselves; to spend a great deal of time on the choice of words—a task which should be left to the Drafting Committee—would be ill-advised.

7. The CHAIRMAN reminded the General Committee that all groups had been requested to inform the Chairman of their respective Committees as soon as possible of the results of their consultations. He thought that it would be better to wait until the end of the third week before holding a plenary meeting to assess the progress of the work and he proposed that the next plenary meeting should be on 7 April, on which day the General Committee would also meet. The next meeting of the General Committee, however, would be on Tuesday, 1 April.

8. Mr. ZEGERS (Chile) said that it would be wise to defer the assessment of the results of the negotiations for a week; he was not sure that they had really begun, at any rate at the Committee level. The work of the three Main Committees was closely linked from the political point of view, and the methods of co-ordination between them should be reviewed. At its next meeting the Committee should examine the methods of negotiation and co-ordination before proceeding, during the following week, to assess the results.

9. The CHAIRMAN agreed that the time had come to negotiate small groups, since large groups were not well suited to that type of activity. It was for the Chairmen of the three Main Committees to co-ordinate the results of the individual groups' negotiations. He would meet them in the course of the week, and he hoped that it would be possible to submit specific proposals to the next meeting of the General Committee.

¹ See *Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea*, vol. III (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.V.5), document A/CONF.62/L.8/Rev.1, annex II, appendix I.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.