

Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

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30th meeting of the General Committee

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ticipants would be able to decide whether a convention was a realistic goal or whether efforts would have to be abandoned.

36. His delegation supported the idea of making the duration of the Conference eight weeks. Agreement on that point should be reached as soon as possible, so that the work could be organized more satisfactorily.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that it would be regrettable if the Committee were to embark on a long procedural debate because of a restrictive interpretation of his note of 27 April 1977. In his view, it would be preferable to avoid scheduling any meetings of the Second and Third Committees during the first three weeks; however, if it appeared imperative to hold meetings of those Committees, they would be held. He added that the absence of some members of delegations should not be allowed to hold up informal negotiations.

38. Mr. TURKMEN (Turkey) said that he strongly welcomed the emphasis on the interrelationship and interdependence of issues being dealt with by the three Committees. No general progress could be made without parallel progress in the Committees and he therefore agreed that the Second and Third Committees should organize consultations. A revised single negotiating text would be possible only after the initial five-week period.

39. Mr. JEANNEL (France) said that it was important not to delay the work by a long procedural debate. To that end, it was preferable to abide by the decisions taken

at the end of the fifth session. He therefore endorsed the observations relating to the retention of the collegiate method. As for the concern expressed regarding the continuation of some of the work relating to the Second and Third Committees, a one-week delay might be considered for the sake of delegations which, on the strength of the latest information available before the opening of the session, had not brought their qualified experts.

40. Mr. MARSIT (Tunisia) agreed with the views expressed by the representatives of Peru and France. Tunisia had acted on the assumption that the Conference would be dealing with First Committee matters and settlement of disputes, and had prepared accordingly. It therefore felt that the French proposal to allow one week to enable delegations to send their experts on Second and Third Committee matters to New York was reasonable.

41. Mr. MWANGAGUHUNGA (Uganda) supported the President's proposals but wished to stress that the questions before the Second and Third Committees were extremely important to land-locked and disadvantaged countries such as Uganda. The Second Committee, in particular, should meet as soon as possible and intensify its efforts to resolve outstanding issues prior to producing a composite text. Allowing one week to enable Second and Third Committee experts to reach New York was a good idea, and he favoured any method which might further expedite matters.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

30th meeting

Monday, 13 June 1977, at 10.45 a.m.

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

Organization of work

1. Mr. ENGO (United Republic of Cameroon), speaking as Chairman of the First Committee, said that the decision to devote the first three weeks to First Committee matters had been a very wise one indeed: the discussions had been extremely fruitful and there were indications that a compromise was likely to be reached at some stage in the near future. The final, negotiating stage had now been reached.

2. A negotiating group known as "the Chairman's working group", with Mr. Evensen, Chairman of the delegation of Norway as its special co-ordinator, had now concluded work on the system of exploitation, the first and most delicate item assigned to it. Later that day he would be receiving a full report from Mr. Evensen concerning the work accomplished. He would report to the Committee on the basis of that report, and delegations would then be given a day in which to focus on the outstanding problems. The negotiating group would now be able to proceed to the next item, namely institutional questions.

3. Subsequently, he would consult as widely as possible to ensure that the composite text to be prepared reflected what he believed to be a very valid basis for a consensus.

4. Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela), speaking as Chairman of the Second Committee, said that an informal meeting of the Second Committee would be held that afternoon to consider the organization of its work for the session. During the past few days he had conducted a round of consultations on methods of work with a number of delegations and with the officers of the Second Committee. In the light of those consultations it was agreed that work should be resumed from the point reached at the end of the previous session.

5. With regard to methods of work, it would be useful to continue consideration of the remaining items in informal meetings of the Committee, passing immediately to examination of the items by negotiating groups which should be sufficiently representative of all interests but at the same time small enough to enable them to function efficiently.

6. It had also been agreed in the consultations that work should be confined to the submission of concrete alternative formulas amending the revised single negotiating text. The time for long policy statements had passed; strict methods of work were now called for so that negotiations could produce the desired results.

7. Mr. AL-IMAM (Kuwait) said that he broadly agreed with the statement by the Chairman of the Second Com-

mittee but strongly objected to the idea that the Second Committee should meet in small groups. Experience had shown that such groups did not represent a cross-section of the Conference and that any agreements reached were later disrupted when presented to the Second Committee. Furthermore, small delegations found it extremely difficult to send representatives to a number of small groups.

8. Finally, he agreed that delegations in the Second Committee should confine themselves to alternative concrete formulas which they could submit in plenary meetings of the Second Committee. The Chairman could always ensure that delegations avoided making long policy statements.

9. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Chairman of the Second Committee did not intend to rely exclusively on negotiating groups, since formal or informal plenary meetings of the Second Committee would also be held.

10. Mr. YANKOV (Bulgaria), speaking as Chairman of the Third Committee, said that during the three weeks devoted to First Committee matters, informal consultations had been carried out in connexion with the organization of work of the Third Committee, consideration of priorities and itemization of the negotiations. The Bureau of the Third Committee had held two meetings to consider the organization and methods of work, outstanding issues, a tentative time-table, and the question of coordinating its work with that of the other Committees. At a meeting that afternoon the Third Committee would consider the organization of its work.

11. Expressing a personal view, he said that he thought the positive outcome of the work of the Third Committee during the fifth session had helped to create a feeling of confidence and optimism for future deliberations. Despite the limited time available, and without underestimating the difficulties ahead, he was very confident that further significant progress would be made in the negotiations. He also felt that the work of the Third Committee should follow the same lines as it had at the fifth session. There was no reason to alter the established pattern of negotiations, which had yielded positive results. As had been agreed at the previous meeting of the General Committee, the negotiations in the Third Committee would as a rule be conducted in informal meetings of the Committee and in smaller negotiating groups. Negotiations would as a rule be open to all interested delegations, without precluding the possibility of recourse to negotiations between delegations particularly involved in certain issues. Furthermore, the informal negotiations should be con-

ducted with the knowledge of the Chairman of the Third Committee and, as in the past, the final results should be brought to his attention.

12. The revised single negotiating text should continue to be the basis for the negotiations and all proposed amendments, both oral and written, should be submitted to the Chairman. He would appeal to the members of the Third Committee to concern themselves with substance rather than language. He would also suggest adoption of the well-established procedural pattern whereby negotiations on the protection and preservation of the marine environment would be under the chairmanship of Mr. José Luis Vallarta, of Mexico, while he himself would guide the negotiations on marine scientific research and transfer of technology. In his view, it was high time for the Chairman of the Committees to become more involved in the practical conduct of the negotiations.

13. In view of the limited conference facilities, informal meetings of the Committees should have priority over the meetings of other groups, and every effort should be made to avoid conflicts in scheduling.

14. It was his intention that the Third Committee should begin where it had left off at the fifth session and to proceed as expeditiously as possible. It would be a great setback if the progress made at the fifth session was lost, since the issues had been successfully narrowed down.

15. In conclusion, he expressed his readiness to assist the President of the Conference in preparing the composite negotiating text.

16. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that there had always been a clear understanding that meetings of the Committees, whether formal or informal, should have absolute priority over all other meetings; that the results of all informal negotiations should be communicated to the Chairmen of the Committees to enable them to retain control at all times over the work of the Committees; and that the revised single negotiating text should remain the basis for the negotiations, it being open to any delegation to suggest any alternative formulations which it felt would best serve its interests or lead to a compromise.

17. Mr. WITEK (Poland) suggested that, as in the past, the General Committee should meet not less than once a week.

18. The CHAIRMAN replied that there should be no difficulty in complying with that request, provided such meetings continued to be short and business-like.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

31st meeting

Monday, 20 June 1977, at 10.20 a.m.

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

Organization of work

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Chairmen of the three Committees to report on the work of those Committees.

2. Mr. ENGO (United Republic of Cameroon), Chairman of the First Committee, said that the Chairman's

working group, which had been renamed the Chairman's negotiating group, had held fruitful and detailed discussions on the second item before it, namely institutional questions. Those questions were closely linked with the system of exploitation of marine resources, since decisions on voting systems and other matters would depend on