

44th meeting

Friday, 28 April 1978, at 10.50 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. P. B. ENGO (United Republic of Cameroon).

Organization of work

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, in its decisions on the organization of work for the seventh session, the Conference had referred to the Committee for consideration and appropriate action the item entitled "Organs of the Authority, their composition, powers and functions" (see A/CONF.62/62, item (3) of recommendation 5 and recommendation 7).

2. As members of the Committee had been heavily occupied with the meetings of negotiating groups 1 and 2, he had taken it upon himself to hold informal consultations—in which he had enjoyed great co-operation from the majority of delegations—in order to determine what the study of that item would entail. He believed that a stage had now been reached at which fruitful discussion of the item in a formal body was possible and he therefore proposed that, as in the case of negotiating group 2, the Committee should establish negotiating group 3 as an organ which he himself would chair and which would be open to all members of the Committee.

It was so decided.

3. Mr. DE SOTO (Peru), speaking as co-ordinator of the Group of 77 on First Committee matters, said that a week had elapsed since he had first requested the Chairman of the Committee and the chairmen of negotiating groups 1 and 2 to set aside time for a meeting of the Group of 77. He understood that the chairmen had been engaged in valuable work which neither he nor the Group of 77 wished to hinder; but, if the members of the Group were to contribute fully to the Committee's efforts, it was essential that they be able to meet from time to time to co-ordinate their positions. It might be suggested that the Group should meet outside normal working hours; but, for such a meeting to be truly representative, members of the Group would have to forego attendance at social occasions, and he did not see why they should be required to make such a sacrifice when no official organ of the Committee had yet set an example in that respect. Accordingly, he requested the Chairman of the Committee to consult the secretariat and the chairmen of the negotiating groups with a view to making arrangements to enable the

Group of 77 to hold a day-time meeting at the earliest possible date.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that all possible efforts had been made to enable groups to meet; but it should not be forgotten that the Committee was under pressure from the plenary Conference to complete its work and that it had already had to request an extension of its deadline. He understood that the Group of 77 had problems in convening meetings which the smaller groups did not; and he hoped to be in a position by the end of the day to announce when facilities could be made available for it.

5. Mr. DIOP (Senegal), observing that delegations would naturally be reluctant to endorse the conclusions of meetings they had not attended, urged that care be taken to schedule the meetings of the negotiating groups and other bodies in such a way that even States with small delegations could be represented at all of them.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that, as far as he knew, there had as yet been no overlapping of official meetings of negotiating groups. He assured the representative of Senegal that the chairmen of negotiating groups 1, 2 and 3 had officially decided that no two of those bodies would ever meet simultaneously.

7. Mr. FONSECA TRUQUE (Colombia) said that his delegation welcomed the formal establishment of negotiating group 3 and would do its best to contribute to its success. For that to be possible, arrangements must be made to ensure that every text produced by a small drafting group or similar body was received by all delegations in sufficient time to enable them to join in the discussions in the full negotiating group on an equal footing with the members of the group that produced the text.

8. The CHAIRMAN said that the point raised by the representative of Colombia would be considered in detail when negotiating group 3 met. He was sure that, if any organ of the group did produce texts, they would be circulated to all delegations.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.