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27th meeting of the General Committee

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they had produced a significant number of proposals, some of which had been withdrawn and others combined in new compromise provisions. Some issues and items were, however, still outstanding. The negotiations were serious and meaningful and had resulted in recognition of the fact that the revised single negotiating text represented a balanced and reliable basis for compromise. It had, moreover, been observed that departure from it tended to produce disagreement and to upset the existing equilibrium.

15. In the matter of marine scientific research, negotiations had concentrated on key issues such as the system for the conduct of such research and the question of consent, although other related items had not been ruled out. In addition to 13 informal meetings, there had been two meetings of the special negotiating group at the level of heads of delegations to discuss major developments. Over 40 proposals had been submitted on marine scientific research. A new consolidated text of article 57, based on various informal proposals, had been accepted as a possible compromise pending agreement on subsequent articles. It had been decided to defer discussion of articles 58 and 59 until article 60 had been considered. Article 60 constituted the focal point of negotiations regarding the conduct of marine scientific research. More than 40 delegations had made statements on the problem and 10 proposals had been submitted, which had subsequently been reduced to four. Since it had become apparent that the Committee was moving in divergent directions rather than towards a compromise, he had taken the initiative of submitting an informal text aimed at reaching a compromise by taking into consideration the various concerns of different interest groups. A significant number of delegations had expressed the view that his informal proposal in respect to article 60 could provide a useful basis for a compromise. Some delegations, however, had rejected it even as a basis for negotiation.

16. In the course of the discussions, it had emerged that many delegations held the view that the consent of the coastal States should constitute the fundamental principle of a system for regulating the conduct of marine scientific research in the economic zone and on the continental shelf, although some States could not subscribe to that principle. There was general agreement that marine scientific research should be promoted and facilitated for the benefit of mankind and that safeguards should be provided for coastal States and States conducting research. There was only limited room for manoeuvre, however, and generally acceptable solutions had to be sought.

17. Only a preliminary exchange of views had taken place on other articles, including articles 64 and 65, because of insufficient time and because priority had been attached to article 60.

18. With respect to the articles on the transfer of technology, there had been two meetings of the Committee as a whole and two meetings of the smaller negotiating group, at which attention had been focused on articles 85 and 86. Many proposals had been put forward but, although the negotiations had been very useful, no decisions could be taken until the results of the work of the First and Second Committees and of the discussions on part IV of the revised single negotiating text were known. Several more meetings might be required before a full report could be issued.

19. In conclusion, he said he himself felt that a comprehensive approach to the negotiating process, taking the convention as a whole into account, was essential and that a consensus procedure was extremely advantageous in that process.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

27th meeting

Thursday, 16 September 1976, at 10.20 a.m.

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

Date, venue and duration of the next session of the Conference

1. Mr. ZULETA (Special Representative of the Secretary-General), referring to the effect that any decisions which the Conference might take concerning the holding of the next session would have on the over-all programme of meetings for 1977 in both New York and Geneva, said that the Secretariat always tried, in so far as was humanly possible, to carry out the tasks which the Conference assigned to it. If the Conference's decisions created difficulties for United Nations organs, specialized agencies or any other intergovernmental organizations, those difficulties would have to be solved by the various organizations in co-operation with Governments.

2. He drew the Committee's attention to information provided by the Department of Conference Services which he felt the Conference should take into account when deciding when and where to hold its next session.

3. As far as physical capacity was concerned, there might not be sufficient conference rooms available in New York for the Conference to meet at the same time as the Economic and Social Council, whose spring session was, in accordance with its rules of procedure, planned for 12 April to 13 May 1977.

4. There might not be sufficient space available in Geneva for the Conference on the Law of the Sea to be held at the Palais des Nations at the same time as the Assembly of the World Health Organization, the regular meeting of the International Labour Organisation or the summer session of the Economic and Social Council.

5. The programme for 1977 was the following: the Assembly of the World Health Organization would meet from 2 to 23 May, the Conference of the International Labour Organisation would meet from 1 to 23 June, and the Economic and Social Council from 6 July to 5 August. If the Conference were held at the same time as the Assembly of the World Health Organization, the main difficulty would be lack of space for Secretariat offices; if it were held at the same time as the meetings of the International Labour Organisation or the Economic and Social Council, there would be added difficulties with regard to conference rooms.

6. In addition, the decision taken by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its fourth session concerning its programme of meetings for 1977 meant that a greater number of meetings of subsidiary bodies of that Conference would be held in Geneva in 1977.

7. As far as the provision of conference services was con-

cerned, in particular, though not exclusively, the provision of interpretation and translation services, the most difficult months for recruiting extra staff in both New York and Geneva were May, June and July. It should be remembered that three special conferences were planned for August and the beginning of September in Athens, Nairobi and Buenos Aires.

8. In view of the situation he had described, it was clear that the provision of services for the sixth session of the Conference would require an over-all readjustment in the programme of conferences for the coming year in either New York or Geneva. The extent and nature of such a readjustment would of course depend on the dates decided upon by the Conference.

9. Finally, he had been informed that the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts would meet in Geneva from 17 March to 10 June 1977 at the Geneva International Conference Centre.

10. Mr. BALLAH (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking as Chairman of the Group of 77, said that the Group of 77 had decided by consensus to propose that the sixth session of the Conference be held in New York for a period of six or seven weeks sometime between mid-May and the end of August.

11. Mr. YANKOV (Bulgaria), speaking as Chairman of the group of Eastern European States, said that he would prefer the sixth session to be held in Geneva, but that he would be prepared to support other suggestions. Although his group was flexible as to the date of the next session, it wished to state its concern that sufficient time should be allowed to elapse, to enable delegations to prepare themselves fully; mid-May might be a convenient date. He, personally, felt that the fifth session had been convened prematurely and that care should be taken not to make the same mistake again.

12. The sixth session could last six to eight weeks. At all events, his group was prepared to co-operate with the President in adopting appropriate decisions on all those points.

13. Mr. ANDERSEN (Iceland), speaking on behalf of the group of Western European and other States, said that he would prefer the next session of the Conference to be held in Geneva.

14. In his view, the duration and exact dates of that session would depend on the availability of services and facilities, but in any case there was no need to plan for a long session.

15. Should the Conference not agree to the holding of inter-session meetings to discuss the issues being dealt with in the First Committee, top priority would have to be given to those issues at the following session.

16. Mr. LEARSON (United States of America) said that his delegation would be prepared to join in whatever consensus the Conference reached as to the venue of the following session. It would do the same with regard to the duration of the session, although it agreed that a fairly long interval should be allowed to elapse before the session to enable consultations to be held.

17. The sixth session should be sufficiently long to enable negotiations to be completed. His delegation therefore felt that the Conference should for three weeks concentrate on the issues being dealt with in the First Committee and then spend between five and seven weeks on all remaining issues.

18. Mr. LOGAN (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Economic Community, said that the EEC countries would prefer the sixth session of the Conference to be held in Geneva since it was desirable that the Conference hold alternate sessions in New York and Geneva.

19. As far as the dates and duration of the sixth session were concerned, they would prefer the session to end in mid-July.

20. Mr. BALLAH (Trinidad and Tobago), replying to a

question by the President, said that the Group of 77 had held lengthy consultations regarding the venue of the next session and that, although the United Kingdom representative's arguments were valid, the holding of the next session in Geneva posed considerable practical problems for a large number of States. All delegations should be able to participate effectively in the Conference, in what could prove to be a crucial session, and that would not be possible in Geneva. Furthermore, as all States had accredited missions in New York City, if the session were held there that would involve less expenditure for delegations and communications would be easier.

21. Mr. LING Ching (China) said that at the present session many delegations, in particular those from developing countries, had participated effectively in negotiations, and the Conference's lack of progress was due to the obstructive action of the super-Powers, who were thus responsible for the fact that many questions of principle were still pending.

22. Many delegations needed time to study the various positions which had been expressed and to carry out the necessary preparatory work. He therefore supported the proposals made by the representative of the Group of 77 as to the date, venue and duration of the sixth session of the Conference.

23. The PRESIDENT urged delegations not to refer to the results of the Conference at the present meeting.

24. Mr. SHEHAB (Egypt) said that he would prefer the next session to meet for six to eight weeks in New York although his position was flexible as to the precise dates.

25. The Group of 77 planned to hold a two-week meeting before the sixth session of the Conference and he wished to ask the Special Representative of the Secretary-General whether the Secretariat would be able to provide the necessary services and facilities.

26. Mr. ZULETA (Special Representative of the Secretary-General), replying to the question dealt with by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago and originally raised by the representative of Egypt, said that, since the request had been made with ample notice, the Secretariat could provide the necessary facilities for informal meetings of the Group of 77, on the understanding that the Conference would ask the General Assembly to authorize the Secretary-General to continue to provide those services to informal groups in the intervals between regular meetings.

27. The CHAIRMAN announced that there were no speakers on his list and that there appeared to be a general consensus regarding the Group of 77's proposal as to the venue, length and date of the next session of the Conference. If there were no objections, he would take it that the General Committee agreed to hold the session in New York, beginning probably on 16 May, for a period of seven weeks, with the option of extending it for another week.

It was so decided.

Organization of the work at the next session of the Conference

28. Mr. ZEGERS (Chile) said that, in his delegation's view, it was essential to decide what was going to be done in the future in the Conference or with the Conference. The decision taken regarding the length of the next session could be accepted only provisionally. In fact, the Conference was seriously perturbed at its inability to present the participating Governments and public opinion in general with concrete results. Previously there had been some progress, as, for example, in the trend toward a political agreement which had emerged in Caracas, the single negotiating text in Geneva and, finally, the revised single text. The Conference obviously could not go on for ever.

29. His delegation suggested that the procedure to be followed at the next session should be determined then and

there. The Conference had always used the method of consensus both in matters of form and of substance. The nature of that method required a great deal of imagination and the participation of everyone. His delegation held the view that if another session was going to be held, and that session would obviously not have to be the last one, a goal would have to be set. That goal could be the preparation of a draft convention for formal consideration at the following session, using first the method of consensus and only subsequently the method of voting. On that basis, the draft and the amendments to it would be available at the 1978 session, and the convention could be signed in Caracas at the end of that year.

30. The work of the Conference had been evaluated by the Chairmen of the various Committees and in the General Committee. Their respective reports confirmed the fact that the essential problems had been identified at the current session and that progress towards the solution of those problems had been made in the Second and Third Committees, while the First Committee had fallen somewhat behind. Perhaps the informal meetings open to all the delegations could be held before the beginning of the next session. It would seem logical to devote the first stage of that session to the questions assigned to the First Committee and his delegation suggested that three weeks would be enough for that purpose. The two following weeks could be devoted to efforts to obtain agreement on the major problems still pending in the Second and Third Committees. At the end of the fifth week, the President could prepare an informal consolidated text. The last weeks—and it might be preferable to have an eight-week session—would be devoted to an examination of that text and to approval of the draft convention. His delegation suggested that if the General Committee agreed with the method of work and the objectives outlined, the Chairman should submit them at the plenary meeting so that a consensus decision might be taken on that matter.

31. Mr. CREMIN (Ireland) said that the provisional time-limit established for completion of the work of the Conference had already been exceeded, and that fact could raise legitimate doubts among Governments and peoples regarding the Conference's effectiveness. The next session could therefore be decisive, in a positive or a negative sense. His delegation felt that in order to avoid failure it was essential to conduct negotiations between the sessions so as to lay the groundwork for solving the major problems dividing the Conference, and especially those assigned to the First Committee. The negotiations should be held among those who represented the various opposing views and his delegation had an open mind as to the best forum or machinery for such negotiations.

32. Mr. FUJISAKI (Japan) agreed entirely with the statement made by the representative of Ireland and was therefore ready to take an active part in informal intersessional meetings. Even while granting that the next session would necessarily be very important, it was also essential to prepare the groundwork properly and in advance.

33. Mr. NJENGA (Kenya) said that his delegation, 'like Chile's', was extremely concerned by the lack of progress in the Conference. The General Committee should study the proposals submitted by the representative of Chile because they could provide an appropriate basis for a truly substantive next session. The possibility of conducting negotiations in informal intersessional meetings—which did not mean that they would be limited to certain delegations since they would be open to all of them—should also be studied.

34. The First Committee's failure was not, as had been stated, due to a lack of time. He did not wish to blame anyone, but there had been enough time. The reason why nothing had been done was a lack of political will. Nevertheless, the time had come for all delegations to set forth their views in a serious and definitive manner. Only political decisions could result in informal negotiations and for that pur-

pose his delegation recommended that the Conference should consider the proposal submitted by Chile with great care.

35. Mr. MHLANGA (Zambia) said that his delegation shared the concern expressed by various delegations over the lack of progress in the negotiations on the revised single negotiating text. Nevertheless, it could not accept Chile's proposals because it was not convinced that the lack of progress was due solely to inadequate procedures. Fundamental problems were still pending in each of the Committees of the Conference. Those problems had been identified and proposals for solving them had been submitted. The basic condition for moving forward was first to solve those fundamental problems.

36. His delegation did not believe that, simply because the Conference had met for a number of years and in a number of sessions, it necessarily had to agree on a convention regardless of the prospects for success. It might be possible at the next session, through consultation in regional groups or in the informal meetings mentioned by the representative of Kenya, to achieve a certain amount of agreement on the questions pending. The Conference would then have to decide on the procedure to follow in order to draw up the convention.

37. Mr. ANDERSEN (Iceland) said that his delegation fully supported the views and proposals of the delegation of Chile and Kenya.

38. Mr. LOGAN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation firmly supported the Chilean proposal that the first three weeks of the next session be devoted to the work of the First Committee. The lack of tangible progress in that Committee had been one of the main reasons why the current session had been generally disappointing. His delegation was not sure, however, that the time proposed was sufficient for the First Committee to prepare a final text, since, even if an agreement were to be reached, the process of drafting and editing could take nearly all of the time available at the next session.

39. He felt that it would be desirable to have intersessional meetings if those meetings were sure to be fruitful. Otherwise, they might only aggravate the feeling of concern now felt by the participants in the Conference. The main question was therefore how to make sure that those meetings would produce positive results.

40. Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil) supported the proposals made by the delegations of Chile and Kenya, whose plan of work could prove very useful if it were developed in greater detail and implemented with sufficient flexibility. On the other hand, one must be realistic about the current situation and realize that it would not be easy to arrive at an agreement on the future convention during the coming year.

41. He agreed completely with the Kenyan delegation that some intersessional work was very necessary. Furthermore, he was concerned that up to the present the First Committee had not adequately solved the problem of establishing a good method of work which would allow it to achieve the necessary progress.

42. Mr. KOZYREV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation was also concerned at the difficulties encountered at the current session, especially in the work of the First Committee.

43. The results of the session showed convincingly that the difficulties which had arisen at the Conference could be overcome only if the various delegations or groups of countries abandoned attempts to impose their will on the other participants in the Conference, and if all delegations proceeded from the position that truly constructive negotiations were the only possible method for arriving at mutually acceptable compromise formulae reflecting the interests of all groups of countries.

44. Delegations were now wondering what the current session had brought them and what texts they were taking away with them. His delegation had previously observed that the

best result of the current session would be the preparation of a consolidated draft convention and that it would be appropriate to prepare that draft by the collegiate method, under the leadership of the President of the Conference and with the participation of at least the Chairmen of the Committees. His delegation continued to believe that the preparation of a single text for subsequent negotiations, possibly at the next session, should be carried out in precisely that manner, namely, by the collegiate method.

45. It could only be regretted that it had not been possible to prepare such a text during the current session. Accordingly, the session might conclude its work by taking note of the reports of the Chairmen of the Committees on the work of the Committees during the session and the report of the President of the Conference on the results of the plenary meetings, at which issues relating to part IV had been discussed. Those reports should, of course, indicate all positive results, however modest, which it had been possible to achieve at the current session during the consideration of the various parts of the draft convention.

46. Accordingly, the basis for further negotiations at the next session would continue to be the revised single negotiating text and the positive results of the current session.

47. Some delegations felt that the time between sessions might well be used for negotiations in informal groups open to all participants in the Conference. His delegation shared that feeling. The groups could study First Committee matters in particular, and also outstanding issues relating to part IV.

48. However, he questioned whether it would be advisable to establish a strict time-limit for completion of the consideration of any given matter, particularly in the First Committee, as some delegations had suggested.

49. His delegation would not object to the idea that the first few days should be devoted primarily to First Committee matters. However, that in no way implied that new methods of work in the Conference should be sought, as had just been proposed. The Conference already had a tested method, namely, negotiation and the adoption of decisions on all matters by consensus and as a "package".

50. If a viable convention was to be achieved, it would have to be prepared through constructive negotiations between the delegations of States and between the various groups of States. A viable convention could be formulated only through the method of consensus.

51. Mr. AL-WITRI (Iraq) said that the procedures which had been followed at the current session were appropriate, and the difficulties which had occurred were due to the fact that the various negotiating parties had maintained their national positions too rigidly. In any case, the limit of possible concessions had been determined, and as a result it was to be hoped that the various countries would come to the next session with an exact idea of what they could give and accept, and that an agreement on all issues could be achieved which would take into account the interests and needs of the developing countries. The First Committee would have perhaps the most difficult task, owing to the fact that the participating countries had different political and economic systems, which complicated the negotiations.

52. His delegation did not consider it necessary to hold meetings between sessions, as not all delegations would be able to attend them. On the other hand, it would have no objection if the first three weeks of the next session were devoted to First Committee matters.

53. Mr. TREDINNICK (Bolivia) said that his delegation supported the proposals made by the representative of Chile and believed that it would be possible at the next session to formulate what might be final texts for some parts of the convention. However, his delegation did not agree that meetings should be held between sessions, as participation in such

intersessional meetings would be limited, which would reduce their usefulness.

54. Mr. NANDAN (Fiji) said that he shared the concern of the representatives of Chile and Kenya about the future of the Conference, since the hopes which had been placed in every session up to now had been dashed and the time might come when Governments would lose confidence in the Conference and would withdraw. He believed that the Chilean proposals were realistic and constructive, especially as they took account of the fact that the main obstacle to progress in the negotiations lay in the matters being dealt with by the First Committee. His delegation felt that the procedures and programme of work for the next session should be decided at the current session. Furthermore, he supported the idea of holding meetings between sessions, and hoped that they would be sufficiently well-attended to allow progress in the negotiations. If such meetings were held, it would perhaps be preferable to postpone the opening of the sixth session for about two weeks so that there would be time for the meetings to arrive at positive conclusions.

55. Mr. BAKULA (Peru) said that two things were needed if the objectives of the Conference were to be achieved: the will to reach agreement, and the use of appropriate procedures. In that respect, the proposals put forward by the representative of Chile constituted one of the most important contributions in recent weeks. He shared the anxiety expressed by a number of delegations regarding the future of the Conference. Failure to achieve real progress by the end of the next session would bear out that feeling of anxiety. As matters stood, the holding of intersessional meetings, in which Peru was prepared to participate, might have a salutary effect.

56. Mr. MWANGAGUHUNGA (Uganda) said that he, too, was concerned about the work of the Conference and hoped that, in the plenary, the President would put forward proposals relating to the preparation of a text which could provide the basis for serious and constructive work.

57. He pointed out that the holding of meetings between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Conference to deal with First Committee matters would pose problems, since a number of delegations would not be able to attend. However, his delegation was in favour of meetings between the various groups prior to the sixth session, which should be given the necessary publicity so that all interested States could participate in them.

58. Mr. JAYAKUMAR (Singapore), referring to the proposals made by the representative of Chile, said his delegation agreed with the idea that two or three weeks of the next session should be devoted to a thorough discussion of First Committee matters.

59. With regard to the possibility of holding meetings between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Conference, he pointed out that there were two distinct interpretations. If the intention was for interested delegations to conduct, during that time, intensive consultations and deliberations in a variety of forums, whether existing or to be established, in order to try to overcome informally the differences which existed on various issues, particularly those with which the First Committee was dealing, his delegation was in full agreement. If, on the other hand, the intention was to hold an informal session of the Conference between the two sessions, his delegation had serious reservations, since that would be tantamount to convening two sessions of the Conference in 1977, a matter on which there was no agreement, and it would also pose serious problems in view of the fact that the Group of 77 planned to hold a two-week meeting.

60. Finally, his delegation supported the proposal that the Conference should decide forthwith that the sixth session would be the last and that its primary objective would be to complete a draft convention. That would mean that the various texts which had been or would be submitted would have to be consolidated.

61. The CHAIRMAN explained that the proposal put forward by the delegation of Chile could not be interpreted to mean that a second session would be held in 1977.

62. Mr. BAILEY (Australia) said that he shared the concern expressed by other representatives regarding the progress of the Conference, and associated himself with the proposals submitted by the representative of Chile. His delegation also supported the suggestions made by the representative of Kenya regarding intersessional negotiations in open-ended informal meetings.

63. Mr. MORALES PAUL (Venezuela) endorsed the suggestions made by the representative of Chile and said that he shared his distress regarding the status of the work of the Conference. He believed that that feeling of distress had two causes: firstly, a sense of responsibility towards Governments, and, secondly, concern about the future, about responsibility to future generations if the Conference failed.

64. His delegation was of the view that future effectiveness would depend largely on the organization of work, and it therefore supported the suggestions put forward by Chile and Kenya, although it had some doubts as to how well prepared delegations were for intersessional meetings. Perhaps, as a complement to the Chilean proposal, a smaller working party could be established, comprising representatives of the two groups which had adopted opposing positions, and even representatives of those holding moderate or compromise positions. That suggestion might allay the apprehension expressed by the representative of the United Kingdom by ensuring adequate representation in the informal negotiations. It should be added, in that connexion, that at such meetings delegations should be represented at the highest political level possible, by heads of delegations or by plenipotentiaries empowered to take decisions. He also suggested that the Chairman of the General Committee should preside over that small working party and that, in the selection of its members, consideration should be given to those countries which had shown the greatest interest in the work of the Conference, subject, of course, to the sovereign right of all delegations to take a position on the working party's conclusions.

65. Mr. UPADHYAN (Nepal) said that the representative of Ireland had very aptly described the next session as a decisive one, in a positive or a negative sense. The organization of work was of basic importance for the success of the next session, and he agreed with the remarks made by the representative of Chile on that subject. With regard to assessing the progress which had been made, he pointed out that, although a number of speakers had contrasted the achievements of the Second and Third Committees with the little progress made by

the First Committee, there was no certainty that such was actually the case. It was purely subjective to assume that all difficulties would be resolved if priority were given to First Committee matters. If progress had in fact been made in the Second and Third Committees, the Conference had a right to know about it. His delegation would listen carefully to the reports of the Chairmen of the Committees in the plenary, at which time it would have a further opportunity to state its views on the subject.

66. If a draft convention was to be produced at the next session, there must be the necessary political will. It was painful to admit that there had been no evidence of such a will at the current session, which placed delegations in the position of having nothing to report to their respective Governments. If that fundamental element was missing, the work of the Conference would be jeopardized and might continue indefinitely without ever achieving positive results. Unless a decision was taken at the next plenary meeting, the outlook would not be very encouraging.

67. His delegation had doubts regarding the usefulness and seriousness of negotiations in informal meetings between sessions. Governments could not venture to send representatives to such negotiations without being certain that the political will necessary for their success would exist.

68. Mr. TÜNCEL (Turkey) said that, although some delegations were confident that the Conference would be able to conclude its work in the near future, his delegation felt that the work was not sufficiently advanced to permit forming an accurate idea of the future of the negotiations. In that connexion, his delegation did not share the optimism of the representative of Chile and believed that it was somewhat premature to expect that a consolidated final text of the convention could be drawn up in the near future. The procedure which had been followed by the First Committee for three years and which consisted of concentrating on a few, admittedly fundamental, articles and leaving aside the other outstanding issues, could not be considered satisfactory. The other Committees had proceeded in the same way. He stressed that the future success of the Conference did not depend on the time factor or the number of meetings held, but rather on the adoption of proper procedural measures and the existence of a genuine will to negotiate.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

28th meeting

Thursday, 16 September 1976, at 4.20 p.m.

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

Organization of the work at the next session of the Conference (concluded)

1. The CHAIRMAN summed up the proposals made at the previous meeting, on which a broad consensus seemed to be emerging. The proposals called for the next session of the Conference to be held in 1977 in New York, the proposed opening dates being 16, 23 and 30 May. Since some delegations had suggested that the session could last from six to seven weeks while others preferred a period of six to eight weeks, he recommended that a duration of seven weeks should be provided for with the possibility of a one-week extension.

2. The first two weeks would be devoted almost exclusively to First Committee matters so as to enable that Committee to catch

up with the other two Committees. Other meetings could, of course, take place during that period provided that they did not interfere with the work of the First Committee. In order to achieve the desired results, it was essential that the negotiations in the First Committee should be conducted by the heads of delegations themselves. The next two or three weeks would be devoted to Second and Third Committee questions, while the First Committee would, of course, continue its own work. During that period, the Conference would also meet in plenary to consider the question of the settlement of disputes, and formal discussions could take place on the preamble and final clauses of the convention. During the sixth week, the President of the Conference and the Chairmen of the Committees would draw up an informal consolidated single text, on the basis of which the