



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
28 January 2022

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 16th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 11 November 2021, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. González López (El Salvador)

Contents

Agenda item 51: Assistance in mine action (*continued*)Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of
Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under
other agenda items*) (*continued*)

Agenda item 122: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Agenda item 139: Programme planning

Completion of the Committee's work

This record is subject to correction.Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the
delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org),
and incorporated in a copy of the record.Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the
United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

21-16507 (E)



Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 51: Assistance in mine action
(continued) (A/C.4/76/L.15/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.4/76/L.15/Rev.1: Assistance in mine action

1. **Ms. Skoczek** (Poland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and introducing the draft resolution, said that the wording had been strengthened as compared to that of previous sessions. The main goal of the draft resolution was to express support for mine action carried out by the United Nations, Member States and other actors worldwide. In the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, for the first time, condemn attacks against mine action personnel. It would acknowledge the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and express the appreciation of Member States for mine action efforts, which had continued despite pandemic-related challenges.

2. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

3. **Ms. Sharma** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Albania, Angola, Georgia, Iceland, Iraq, Japan, Mali, Mexico and Palau had joined the sponsors.

4. **Mr. Romero Puentes** (Cuba), speaking in explanation of position before the decision, said that as a State Party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as Amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996, Cuba complied fully with the restrictions and prohibitions on mine use established under the Protocol and would continue to support all efforts to mitigate the effects of anti-personnel landmines on the civilian population and economy of many countries, maintaining the necessary balance between humanitarian and national security questions.

5. While his delegation had always participated constructively in the negotiations on the draft resolution on assistance in mine action, which had traditionally been adopted by consensus, it was alarmed by the tendency to incorporate controversial elements into a text whose aims were clear, something that hindered consensus. Moreover, instrumentalizing such a noble text for political purposes would dilute its essence. Cuba did not support the inclusion of wording from or references to documents and resolutions of the Security Council, in whose negotiations most States did not

participate. Moreover, reproducing the wording of disarmament forums in the draft resolution was not appropriate, as some of that wording had not been adopted by consensus, and other elements were already reflected in the text. The imposition of wording on human rights issues undermined the effort to achieve consensus on such an important matter.

6. His delegation could not accept a reference to the International Mine Action Standards as the sole point of reference for mine action activities, let alone the imposition of updated versions of the text not considered carefully or negotiated by Member States, which were the main parties responsible for adopting national mine action measures, striking the necessary balance between humanitarian and security matters and adapting those measures to national specificities. On such diverse and sensitive questions, one size could not fit all, and terms of reference must remain just that, rather than be allowed to become straitjackets. Dialogue and constructive negotiation should be held, taking into account equally the legitimate concerns of all States, instead of imposing a silence procedure (no-objection procedure), which did not contribute to that purpose. The concerns of all delegations must be addressed from the start of negotiations, in order to avoid submitting a consensus text for adoption while certain issues had yet to be resolved satisfactorily. To show flexibility, Cuba would join consensus on the draft resolution and follow the development of commitments arising from the text, pursuing ongoing dialogue with the main authors with a view to refining the text at future sessions.

7. *Draft resolution A/C.4/76/L.15/Rev.1 was adopted.*

8. **Ms. Henderson** (Australia) said that Australia supported action in fulfilment of a range of mine action-related instruments, including the work of several international agencies. It welcomed the convening in Geneva on 20 and 21 September 2021 of the second part of the second Review conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and looked forward to the nineteenth meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, to be held from 15 to 19 November 2021 in The Hague. It contributed to multilateral and bilateral action in such countries as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Syria. Her Government had also demonstrated its commitment through concrete actions, including an operation for the removal of explosive remnants of war in Pacific Island nations.

9. Humanitarian mine action personnel provided critical services with lasting social and economic outcomes. Australia condemned the attacks against mine action workers in Afghanistan in 2021 and called on all actors to protect and respect humanitarian workers, in

accordance with international humanitarian law. It also encouraged greater linkages between mine action and the women and peace and security agenda, for mine action assistance that was gender- and age-responsive and that afforded women and girls full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and security processes.

Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (continued) (A/76/23 (chap. XIII))

Draft resolution VI: Question of Bermuda

10. *Draft resolution VI was adopted.*

Draft resolution VIII: Question of the Cayman Islands

11. *Draft resolution VIII was adopted.*

Draft resolution IX: Question of French Polynesia

12. *Draft resolution IX was adopted.*

Draft resolution XI: Question of Montserrat

13. *Draft resolution XI was adopted.*

Draft resolution XII: Question of New Caledonia

14. *Draft resolution XII was adopted.*

Draft resolution XIII: Question of Pitcairn

15. *Draft resolution XIII was adopted.*

Draft resolution XIV: Question of Saint Helena

16. *Draft resolution XIV was adopted.*

Draft resolution XV: Question of Tokelau

17. *Draft resolution XV was adopted.*

Draft resolution XVI: Question of the Turks and Caicos Islands

18. *Draft resolution XVI was adopted.*

Draft resolution XVII: Question of the United States Virgin Islands

19. *Draft resolution XVII was adopted.*

Draft resolution XVIII: Dissemination of information on decolonization

20. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, Togo.

21. *The draft resolution was adopted by 153 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.*

22. **Mr. Fairlamb** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution. The obligation it placed on the Secretariat to publicize decolonization issues represented an unwarranted drain on the scarce resources of the United Nations and was therefore unacceptable.

23. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) said that the draft resolution should be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on decolonization, which expressly recognized that the question of the Malvinas Islands was a special and particular colonial situation involving a sovereignty dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina, as the only two parties, over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. It had been established that the way to resolve that dispute was through the resumption of bilateral negotiations with a view to achieving, as soon as possible, a just, peaceful and lasting settlement that took into account the interests of the inhabitants of the Islands.

Draft resolution XIX: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

24. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu,

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Ukraine.

25. *The draft resolution was adopted by 120 votes to 3, with 39 abstentions.*

26. **Mr. Fairlamb** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation continued to find some elements of the draft resolution unacceptable and had therefore voted against it once more. It nonetheless remained committed to modernizing its relationship with its Overseas Territories while fully taking into account the views of the peoples of those Territories.

27. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) said that visiting missions could be sent only to Territories to which the right to self-determination applied. It was clear from the doctrine of the Special Committee that such missions could not be sent to Territories where there existed a sovereignty dispute recognized as such by the United Nations. That position, as evidenced in the regional seminars of the Special Committee and its declarations that visiting missions must be sent on a case-by-case basis and carried out in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions, was also in line with General Assembly resolution [850 \(IX\)](#), which had, moreover, established the requirement that any visiting mission must be approved by the General Assembly.

Agenda item 122: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (A/C.4/76/L.16)

Draft decision [A/C.4/76/L.16](#): Proposed programme of work and timetable of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) for the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly

28. **The Chair** said that, in preparing the proposed programme of work, the Bureau had taken into account the provisions on working methods set out in General Assembly resolution [75/325](#) (Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly). In paragraph 29 of that resolution, the Chairs of the Main Committees were

invited to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly on working methods. It was thus her intention to continue to consult with members of the Bureau with a view to convening an informal meeting of the Committee in early 2022 for a discussion concerning the revitalization of the working methods of the Committee.

29. On the basis of the experience of the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth sessions, the Bureau proposed a total of 27 meetings for the main part of the seventy-seventh session. If adopted by the Committee, draft decision [A/C.4/76/L.16](#) would be annexed to the report that would be submitted to the General Assembly in plenary. Adjustments to the programme would be made, as necessary, by the incoming Bureau.

30. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that Mexico would join consensus on the draft decision but considered it essential that Member States benefit from the lessons learned during the pandemic in order to revitalize the work of the Committee. In the draft decision, 27 meetings were proposed for the Committee's following session, hearkening back to the frequency of meetings before the pandemic. However, all the matters on the Committee's agenda at the current session had been adequately discussed and addressed in only 16 meetings. He therefore called on the outgoing and incoming Bureaux to draw upon the practices developed under the current circumstances, such as the holding of a joint general debate, to enable the Committee to do its work more effectively. His delegation looked forward to the forthcoming informal dialogue, which it hoped would make it possible to overcome the remaining inertia that undermined the Committee's effectiveness.

31. **The Chair** said that a dialogue on working methods was indeed necessary, but had not been possible at the current session owing to the Committee's tight schedule. For that reason, she intended to continue consulting with Bureau members with a view to holding informal consultations to discuss the matter. Ultimately, it would be up to all delegations to determine whether any changes would be made. She therefore invited all delegations to participate actively in the discussion which she hoped to convene.

32. *Draft decision [A/C.4/76/L.16](#) was adopted.*

Agenda item 139: Programme planning ([A/C.4/76/L.17](#), [A/C.4/76/L.18](#))

33. **The Chair** said that the Committee had held an informal meeting on 8 November 2021 to hear a briefing from the Secretariat concerning programme 4, Peacekeeping operations, and programme 24, Global

communications, under the proposed programme budget for the year 2022, as referenced in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its sixty-first session ([A/76/16](#)). She intended to transmit to the Chair of the Fifth Committee a letter, to be issued as document [A/C.4/76/10](#), setting out a summary of the Committee's discussions concerning the two programmes and requesting that the views expressed by the members of the Fourth Committee be taken into consideration during the relevant deliberations of the Fifth Committee.

34. Accordingly, and in view of the statement made at the informal meeting by the representative of Brazil, in his capacity as sponsor, it was her understanding that draft decisions [A/C.4/76/L.17](#) (Approval of programme 4, Peacekeeping operations, of the proposed programme budget for 2022) and [A/C.4/76/L.18](#) (Approval of programme 24, Global communications, of the proposed programme budget for 2022) had been withdrawn.

Completion of the Committee's work

35. **The Chair** said that, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee had adapted its working arrangements and programme of work in innovative ways in order to ensure business continuity and to conduct its work as efficiently and effectively as possible during another unprecedented session. It should, however, be pointed out that, of the 131 statements made by delegations, only 34 had been delivered by women. It was essential to recognize the potential and the contributions made by women in diplomacy as well as in the areas under the purview of the Committee.

36. After presenting an overview of the activities of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), she declared that the Committee had completed its work for the main part of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.