

**REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
***AD HOC* COMMITTEE**  
**ON THE INDIAN OCEAN**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION  
SUPPLEMENT No. 29 (A/36/29)



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## **NOTE**

**Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. By resolution 35/150 of 12 December 1980, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean <sup>1/</sup> and the exchange of views in that Committee which, inter alia, indicated that: (a) following the expansion of its membership, there had been a varied and useful exchange of views on important issues regarding the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace as contained in Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI), and on other related matters, and (b) progress had been made towards harmonizing differing approaches on these issues while a number of fundamental issues remained to be resolved; requested the Ad Hoc Committee, in pursuance of the decision contained in resolution 34/80 B, to convene a Conference on the Indian Ocean during 1981 at Colombo, and taking into consideration the exchange of views thereon: (a) to continue its efforts for the necessary harmonization of views on the issues related to the convening of the Conference to achieve the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace; (b) to make every effort, in consideration of the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area, particularly recent developments, as well as the progress made in the harmonization of views, to finalize, in accordance with its normal methods of work, all preparations for the Conference, including the dates for its convening; (c) to continue the preparatory work for the convening of the Conference and to hold two preparatory sessions in 1981 totaling six weeks; and (d) to submit to the Conference a full report on its preparatory work; requested the Conference on the Indian Ocean to submit its report to the General Assembly; renewed the general mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee as defined in the relevant resolutions; and requested the Ad Hoc Committee to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session a full report on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Pursuant to resolution 35/150, the Ad Hoc Committee held two preparatory sessions (A/AC.159/SR.118-159), from 17 February to 6 March and from 1 to 19 June 1981, and held one regular session from 17 to 28 August 1981. It held 50 formal meetings as well as a number of informal meetings at United Nations Headquarters during 1981.

3. Following the appointment of Thailand as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee by the President of the General Assembly on 5 March 1981 (A/35/800), the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee is as follows:

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<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 29 (A/35/29).

Australia  
Bangladesh  
Bulgaria  
Canada  
China  
Democratic Yemen  
Djibouti  
Egypt  
Ethiopia  
France  
German Democratic Republic  
Germany, Federal Republic of  
Greece  
India  
Indonesia  
Iran  
Iraq  
Italy  
Japan  
Kenya  
Liberia  
Madagascar  
Malaysia

Maldives  
Mauritius  
Mozambique  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Oman  
Pakistan  
Panama  
Poland  
Romania  
Seychelles  
Singapore  
Somalia  
Sri Lanka  
Sudan  
Thailand  
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland  
United Republic of Tanzania  
United States of America  
Yemen  
Yugoslavia  
Zambia

In accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 34/80 B, Sweden continued to attend meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee as an observer.

4. The elected officers of the Ad Hoc Committee were the following:

- Chairman: Mr. Ignatius Benedict Fonseka (Sri Lanka) and his predecessor  
Mr. Nadarajah Balasubramaniam (Sri Lanka);
- Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Siegfried Kahn (German Democratic Republic);  
Mr. Perry Nolan (Australia);  
Mr. José Carlos Lobo (Mozambique) and his predecessor  
Mr. Hipolito Patricio (Mozambique);  
Mr. Sastrohandoyo Wirjono (Indonesia);
- Rapporteur: Mr. Henri Rasolondraibe (Madagascar).

## II. WORK OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

### A. Agenda of the Ad Hoc Committee

5. The following agenda was adopted by the Committee at its 127th meeting, on 25 February 1981 (A/AC.159/L.34):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. In implementation of resolution 35/150, and operative paragraph 2 thereof which reads, inter alia: in pursuance of the decision contained in resolution 34/80 B to convene a Conference on the Indian Ocean during 1981 at Colombo, and taking into consideration the exchange of views thereon:
  - (a) Continuation of the efforts for the necessary harmonization of views on the issues related to the convening of the Conference;
  - (b) Consideration of the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area;
  - (c) Finalization of the dates for the Conference.
5. Other preparatory work for the Conference on the Indian Ocean:
  - (a) Provisional agenda for the Conference;
  - (b) Participation;
  - (c) Level of representation;
  - (d) Organizational matters and rules of procedure;
  - (e) Documentation;
  - (f) Consideration of appropriate arrangements for any international agreement that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.
6. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the Conference.
7. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.
8. Other matters.

B. Preparatory work for the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean

6. Following the adoption of the agenda, the Chairman stated, at the 127th meeting, on 25 February 1981, that there was a divergence of views among members of the Committee concerning the formulation of the agenda. While no specific time would be formally allocated to the discussion of the different subitems of agenda item 4, the Chairman would take into consideration the desire of the Committee to have a general exchange of views on item 4 that week and early the following week and to take a decision on the finalization of the dates before the end of the current session. The Committee agreed with this arrangement and proceeded to have a general exchange of views on item 4.

7. Following the conclusion of this general exchange of views, the Committee took up consideration of agenda item 4, particularly subitems (a) and (b) regarding the harmonization of views on issues related to the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, and the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area. At the 138th meeting of the Committee, on 6 March 1981, it seemed evident that the discussion on item 4 (c) had shown that it was not possible for the Conference to be held in August 1981 as proposed, as some delegations preferred to defer to the June session the decision on the dates of the Conference. The Committee concluded therefore that it was unable to reach a consensus decision concerning the dates of the Conference on the Indian Ocean.

8. At the same meeting on 6 March, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Madagascar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka submitted a working paper entitled "Nucleus of draft agenda for the Conference on the Indian Ocean to implement the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace" (A/AC.159/L.35).

9. At the beginning of its second session, at its 139th meeting, on 1 June 1981, the Committee decided to continue with the same agenda as that adopted at its first session and, before proceeding to a further discussion of agenda item 4, to devote a few meetings to a general exchange of views. This exchange of views took place during the Committee's 140th to 143rd meetings.

10. From its 144th to 151st meetings, between 8 and 12 June, the Committee continued its consideration of item 4 (a) and (b), namely, the harmonization of views on the issues related to the convening of the Conference, and the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area. References were made to the attack by Israel on an Iraqi nuclear reactor on 7 June 1981, and at the 145th meeting, on 8 June, Iraq proposed that the Committee issue a declaration condemning the attack.

11. At the 149th meeting, on 10 June, the Chairman noted that a large number of delegations had expressed their views on the subject and that those views ranged from expressions of utmost concern to strong condemnation of the Israeli action. With respect to the Iraqi proposal concerning the issuance of a statement expressing the collective views of the Committee, the Chairman pointed out that questions of legal implications had been raised. It was not possible for the Committee to arrive at a consensus on the proposal, as one group of delegations, for reasons of procedure, had been unable to agree to the issuance of a statement or any other form of collective expression of the Committee's views. The Chairman added that the implications of the Israeli action for agenda item 4 (b) might need to be discussed further and could not be dealt with again at a later stage and, to that extent, the subject was not closed. He did not doubt that when the Security

Council took up the matter, it would not be oblivious to the strength of feeling among members of the Committee, and that it could not be unaware of the discussion in the Committee.

12. At the 151st meeting, on 12 June, in relation of item 4 (a) and (b), the Chairman noted that the Committee had not reached consensus on the question of harmonization of views. The Committee concurred with that conclusion.

13. At its 152nd and 153rd meetings, on 12 and 15 June, the Committee discussed item 4 (c) regarding the finalization of dates for the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, including a proposal by some delegations to hold the Conference in December 1981.

14. During the course of the discussion on item 4 (c), it became clear that there were two broad views concerning the dates for the holding of the Conference on the Indian Ocean. A large number of delegations in the Committee favoured the convening of the Conference in 1981 as scheduled. While conceding that further harmonization of views was preferable, these delegations felt that complete harmonization of views was not essential since the Conference itself would be a stage in the process of reaching the objective of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. These delegations also felt that the grave deterioration of the political and security climate in the area was the very reason which compelled the urgent convening of the Conference. Other delegations, on the other hand, felt that it was premature to set the dates for the Conference. They considered that before a Conference could be convened it would be necessary for adequate progress to be made on the harmonization of views. These delegations also felt that the adverse current political and security climate in the area militated against the early convening of a Conference. Their view was that a Conference convened in these circumstances would be unlikely to succeed and would therefore place in jeopardy the eventual realization of the concept of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. In the light of these differences, at its 154th meeting, on 15 June 1981, the Committee found it could not reach a consensus on finalizing the dates for the Conference to take place in 1981.

15.\* During its 155th to 159th meetings, between 16 and 19 June, the Committee considered the implications of the lack of consensus on agenda item 4 for its mandate and future programme of work. In that connexion, at the 159th meeting, the concluding meeting of the second session of the Committee, it became clear that, while there was agreement on the need to hold the Conference on the Indian Ocean, the question of fixing a new date for the Conference was open. It was noted that, unless there was a consensus for changing it, the present mandate of the Committee should be maintained. At these meetings, the question whether the Committee should proceed to the consideration of agenda item 5 or agenda item 7 was also discussed. No consensus on this was reached.

16. At that same meeting, on 19 June 1981, the representative of Sri Lanka introduced a draft resolution on behalf of the non-aligned members of the Committee (A/AC.159/L.36), while the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany on

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\* Some delegations believed that this paragraph did not accurately reflect either the range of views expressed in the Committee on the question of the Conference or the discussions in the Committee about the Committee's mandate.

behalf of, as he stated, certain like-minded delegations presented to the Committee suggestions for a draft resolution, reflected in an informal paper.

C. Work of the Ad Hoc Committee at its regular session

17. The Ad Hoc Committee held a regular session from 17 to 28 August 1981.

18. At its 160th meeting, on 17 August, the Committee took the following decisions with respect to the organization of its work: (i) to continue with the agenda adopted at its first session in February and to consider particularly item 7 concerning the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session, (ii) to meet as an informal open-ended drafting group to draft its recommendation to the General Assembly and (iii) to set aside one plenary meeting for the Chairman to inform the Committee on the outcome of his further consultations on the question of applications by States to participate in the work of the Committee. The Committee agreed to the suggestion that its Secretary contact those States which had indicated their desire to participate in the work of the previous session of the Committee and to request that they indicate to the Committee, in writing, their interest in participating in the work of the Committee.

19. At the 161st meeting, on 18 August, amendments to draft resolution A/AC.159/L.36 were presented by the representative of the German Democratic Republic (A/AC.159/L.37). Subsequently, the representative of Sri Lanka, on behalf of the non-aligned States members of the Ad Hoc Committee, submitted the preambular paragraphs, as contained in document A/AC.159/L.39, to be added to draft resolution A/AC.159/L.36. The representative of China submitted amendments to these documents (A/AC.159/L.40 and A/AC.159/L.41).

20. On 19 August, the Committee began meeting informally as a drafting group to consider its recommendation to the General Assembly.

21. The Committee's draft report (A/AC.159/L.38) was introduced to the Committee by its Rapporteur, Mr. Henri Rasolondraibe (Madagascar), at its 162nd meeting, on 25 August 1981, and the Committee began meeting informally to consider its draft report. A revised version was presented subsequently (A/AC.159/L.38/Rev.1).

D. Expansion of the Ad Hoc Committee

22. In a letter dated 31 October 1980, Thailand applied for membership in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

23. Pursuant to paragraph 1 of resolution 34/80 B, by which the General Assembly decided to enlarge the Committee by the addition of new members to be appointed by the President of the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Committee, at its 131st meeting, on 27 February 1981, decided to recommend Thailand for appointment to the Committee. On the basis of the Committee's recommendation, the President of the General Assembly, on 5 March 1981, appointed Thailand as an additional member of the Committee (see A/35/800).

24. The Committee had before it applications by the following countries for participation in its work: Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Kampuchea, Hungary, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Viet Nam and Swaziland. The Committee was unable, in the time available, to reach a consensus on these applications.

### III. RECOMMENDATION

25. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

#### Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, contained in its resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, and recalling also its resolutions 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, 3080 (XXVIII) of 6 December 1973, 3259 A (XXIX) of 9 December 1974, 3468 (XXX) of 11 December 1975, 31/88 of 14 December 1976, 32/86 of 12 December 1977, S-10/2 of 30 June 1978, 33/68 of 14 December 1978, 34/80 A and B of 11 December 1979 and 35/150 of 12 December 1980, and other relevant resolutions,

Recalling also that, at its tenth special session, devoted to disarmament, it stated that "the establishment of zones of peace in various regions of the world under appropriate conditions, to be clearly defined and determined freely by the States concerned in the zone, taking into account the characteristics of the zone and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and in conformity with international law, can contribute to strengthening the security of States within such zones and to international peace and security as a whole",

Recalling further the report of the Meeting of the Littoral and Hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, 2/

Reaffirming its conviction that concrete action for the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace would be a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security,

Recalling its decision at the thirty-fourth session, contained in resolution 34/80 B, for the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean in Colombo during 1981,

Recalling further its decision at the thirty-fifth session, contained in resolution 35/150, to make every effort, in consideration of the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area, particularly recent developments, as well as the progress made in the harmonization of views, to finalize, in accordance with its normal methods of work, all preparations for the Conference, including the dates for its convening,

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2/ Ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 45 (A/34/45 and Corr.1).

Recalling the exchange of varied views in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, and noting that, while progress has been made, a number of issues remain to be resolved,

Noting also the exchange of views on the adverse political and security climate in the region,

Noting that the Ad Hoc Committee has failed to reach consensus on the dates for the convening, during 1981, of the Conference on the Indian Ocean at Colombo,

Convinced that the continued military presence of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean area, conceived in the context of their confrontation, gives urgency to the need to take practical steps for the early achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace,

Considering also that all other foreign military presence in the area, whenever it is contrary to the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, further gives greater urgency to the need to take practical steps towards the early achievement of the objectives of the Declaration,

Considering that the creation of a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean requires the active participation of and full co-operation among the littoral and hinterland States, the permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users, to ensure conditions of peace and security based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as well as the general principles of international law,

Considering also that the creation of a Zone of Peace requires co-operation and agreement among the States of the region to ensure conditions of peace and security within the area, as envisaged in the Declaration, and respect for the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the littoral and hinterland States,

Calling for renewing genuinely constructive efforts through the exercise of political will necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace,

Deeply concerned at the danger posed by the grave and ominous developments in the area and the resulting sharp deterioration of peace, security and stability which particularly seriously affect the littoral and hinterland States, as well as international peace and security,

Convinced that the continued deterioration of the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area is an important consideration bearing on the question of the early convening of the Conference and that the easing of tension in the area would enhance the prospect of the Conference achieving success,

1. Takes note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean <sup>3/</sup> and the exchange of views in the Committee;
2. Regrets that the Ad Hoc Committee has failed to reach consensus on the finalization of dates for the convening, during 1981, of the Conference on the Indian Ocean;
3. Emphasizes its decision to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean at Colombo, Sri Lanka, as a necessary step for the implementation of the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace;
4. Emphasizes also, in pursuance of this decision, and in consideration of the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean area, its decision to request the Ad Hoc Committee to continue its efforts for the necessary harmonization of views on the remaining issues related to the convening of the Conference;
5. Requests the Ad Hoc Committee to continue its work on the necessary harmonization of views on the relevant issues including those set forth in paragraph 4 above and to make every effort to accomplish the necessary preparatory work for the Conference, including consideration of its convening not later than the first half of 1983;
6. Renews the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee as defined in the relevant resolutions;
7. Requests the Ad Hoc Committee to hold further sessions in 1982 of a total duration of six weeks, including the holding of a Meeting, at a venue outside New York to be decided upon;
8. Requests the Ad Hoc Committee to submit to the General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament and at its thirty-seventh session, reports on its work and on the implementation of the present resolution;
9. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to render all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Committee, including the provision of summary records.

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<sup>3/</sup> Ibid., Thirty-sixth session, Supplement No. 29 (A/36/29).