



## General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV.1  
20 September 1988

ENGLISH

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Tuesday, 20 September 1988, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)  
(Temporary President)

later:

Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina)  
(President)

- Opening of the forty-third session by the Temporary President, Chairman of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic
- Minute of silent prayer or meditation
- Address by the Temporary President
- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations
- Credentials of representatives to the forty-third session of the General Assembly:
  - (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee
- Election of the President of the General Assembly
- Address by Mr. Dante Caputo, President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session
- Organization of work

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

88-64128/A 6315V (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

ITEM 1 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

OPENING OF THE FORTY-THIRD SESSION BY THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT, CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I declare open the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

ITEM 2 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): In calling on representatives to observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation, in accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I propose that at the same time we observe on this third Tuesday of September, the International Day of Peace, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 36/67, of 30 November 1981; a day devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.

The resolution refers to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which says that

"since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;"

and that

"peace must ... be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind."

We have reason to believe that in the context of positive developments in the world it will be possible to safeguard peace, and the forty-third session of the General Assembly can make a valuable contribution in this respect. There is no doubt that peace and security can be guaranteed only through the common efforts of all States, Governments and peoples.

(The Temporary President)

I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

ADDRESS BY MR. PETER FLORIN, TEMPORARY PRESIDENT, CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): In keeping with tradition, I wish to make some remarks at the outset of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. This year, the peoples are looking with particular expectation to the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly, which takes place in the last third of a year that has been full of important political events. The forty-second session witnessed a number of significant political changes in the world. That session of the General Assembly was successful in areas where it acted in conformity with these new trends in international co-operation.

The positive factors include the acceptance of the need for closer international co-operation to address the global problems of mankind, the emerging shift from confrontation to co-operation in diverse fields and, not least, a growing role for multilateral institutions, led by the United Nations. In this connection, the report of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to the forty-third session, quite rightly points out that:

"Multilateralism has proved itself far more capable of inspiring confidence and achieving results than any of its alternatives. Millions around the world have had a gratifying demonstration of the potential of the Organization and the validity of the hopes they place in it." (A/43/1, p. 2)

(The Temporary President)

In this context the forty-third session is facing tasks of crucial importance. Fortunately, there have been a number of events that will not fail to have a favourable effect on the proceedings of this session. The fourth summit meeting between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan, the entry into force - also called for by the General Assembly - of the treaty between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range nuclear missiles and the most recent meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement, in Nicosia, to name but a few examples, have provided a valuable impetus. I would also include the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

(The Temporary President)

Not least, the recent advances in the peaceful settlement of international conflicts have reinforced the hope that at the forty-third session there will be adopted resolutions propitious to the further improvement of the international situation. The new appreciation of the role of the United Nations and the restoration of faith in its ability to act successfully oblige us to make fresh efforts. The task is to mobilize and to use more effectively the potential of our world Organization to sustain the disarmament process, to strengthen international peace and security, to settle international conflicts and to promote co-operation among States in the economic, ecological, social and humanitarian fields.

Permit me to note that my own country, the German Democratic Republic, which became a Member of the United Nations exactly 15 years ago, will continue to do everything in its power fully to support those objectives, faithful to its policy of peace, mutual understanding and co-operation.

In the field of disarmament, the last session of the General Assembly and in particular the third special session on disarmament, being an integral part of the overall disarmament process, have opened up new prospects for strengthening the machinery of multilateral negotiations. The open dialogue that took place on basic issues of security and disarmament policy and the initiatives put forward on the entire range of questions associated with the disarmament process constitute a good basis for fruitful work in that field at the forty-third session. Constructive and business-like discussion should permit us to find mutually acceptable ways and means of strengthening peace and security. The physical destruction, started this summer, of the most sophisticated nuclear missiles of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America - which involved, so to speak, the first explosions of the kind for peaceful purposes - should point the way to the future. It is precisely measures such as that, rather than new missiles and old doctrines and fresh obstacles on the road to a nuclear-weapon-free world, that mankind really needs.

(The Temporary President)

Thanks to a distinct improvement in international relations, there have emerged possibilities for settling regional conflicts by exclusively peaceful means. Comprehensive, just and lasting solutions that take into account the interests of all concerned have now entered the realm of reality. In this light, the role of our Organization is growing in every respect. The commendable efforts of the Secretary-General command particular appreciation. Let us hope that the process is further advanced at the forty-third session.

The struggle to eliminate the anti-human policy of apartheid and to prevent other massive violations of human rights will remain a priority concern of our Organization, and we must also be tireless in our efforts to achieve universal respect for human rights. Likewise, the Organization is the appropriate machinery for the promotion of the development of international economic and ecological co-operation through the joint efforts of States. Questions of international economic relations will again play an important role at the forty-third session. There is growing awareness that the stable development of the world economy requires the solution of the most urgent economic problems of the developing countries. The effective analysis and resolution of those problems is possible only at the international level. I believe it is important to strive for the strengthening of confidence, predictability and stability also in international economic relations. In this complex field, too, I believe we must make greater use of the Organization's potential.

To perform these and other tasks, the United Nations must possess the necessary means, including the necessary financial resources. The critical financial situation of the Organization has repeatedly come up for discussion. The efforts of the Secretary-General to overcome this situation deserve our whole-hearted support.

(The Temporary President)

In conclusion I should like to stress that the experience gained at the last session leads me to be confident that the forty-third session will make a substantial contribution to the resolution of the major challenges of our time. I should like to assure my successor, the President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly, that I shall do everything in my power to support the new President in this responsible post.

It remains for me to wish representatives every possible success in their work.

## ITEM 121 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
(A/43/618)

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/43/618, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informs the Assembly that one Member State is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

"A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

It was so decided.

## ITEM 3 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

## CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FORTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

## (a) APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that for the forty-third session the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Bolivia, China, Luxembourg, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and Zimbabwe.

May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

## ITEM 4 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

## ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/138, the President this year should be elected from a Latin American or Caribbean State.

In this connection, I have received a communication, dated 15 September 1988, from the Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group informing me that his Group has decided to transmit to the General Assembly the candidatures of Her Excellency Dame Ruth Nita Barrow of Barbados and His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina.



(The Temporary President)

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

Ballot papers are now being distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write the name of the person for whom they wish to vote, not the name of the country. Ballot papers containing more than one name or only the name of the country will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the Temporary President, Mr. Zapotocky (Czechoslovakia), Mr. Taniguchi (Japan), Mr. Jacobovits de Szeged (Netherlands) and Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 3.55 p.m. and resumed at 4.20 p.m.

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): The result of the voting is as follows:

<u>Number of ballot papers:</u>	158
<u>Number of invalid ballots:</u>	0
<u>Number of valid ballots:</u>	158
<u>Abstentions:</u>	1
<u>Number of members voting:</u>	157
<u>Required majority:</u>	79
<u>Number of votes obtained:</u>	
Mr. Dante Caputo (Argentina)	91
Dame Ruth Nita Barrow (Barbados)	66

Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Dante Caputo was elected President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina and invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Caputo took the Chair.

ADDRESS BY MR. DANTE CAPUTO, PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-THIRD SESSION

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all to express my gratitude and praise for the manner in which Ambassador Peter Florin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, presided over the Assembly during its forty-second session, guiding its activities most effectively. We shall all remember the task carried out by Ambassador Florin during what proved to be a particularly positive year in the work of our Organization.

I wish to thank members for the honour conferred on me with this election, which I take as a sign of support and affection for my country, the Argentine Republic.

The Assembly begins this session as a witness to a different world and as a participant in it. In the past few months international relations have undergone what may be the most important transformations since the end of the Second World War, that is, since the creation of the United Nations.

We have seen an easing of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and the achievement of disarmament agreements between them, and the beginning of a solution to innumerable regional conflicts.

Who would have said at the outset of the forty-second session of the General Assembly that we should today be witnessing this international scene? Only a large measure of optimism would have allowed us to imagine what is today a reality: the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and the reasonable expectation of the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987); the possibility of a solution of some important aspects of the conflict in southern Africa, and the prospect that Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on the independence of Namibia may at last be implemented; the peace process in Afghanistan; the basis for a settlement of the dispute over Western Sahara; the dialogue in Cyprus; and the first steps in the right direction in connection with Kampuchea.

(The President)

To be sure, these are fledgling projects which must be tended and nurtured diligently; this Assembly will have to work towards that end. But they already constitute evidence of the triumph of reason and diplomacy over intolerance and force.

Our Organization and its Secretary-General are performing an essential role in all of this. For that reason - just as Mr. Perez de Cuellar rightly notes in his annual report on the work of the Organization over the past 12 months - the United Nations is enjoying growing respect and recognition from all States, including the Governments of the super-Powers. The distrust and reluctance to accept the system, which were characteristic of the cold war, are being replaced by the healthy rediscovery of multilateralism and collective responsibility as effective methods for ensuring peace, security and progress.

Another auspicious sign within this framework is that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has decided to initiate a serious process of reflection on the function it should fulfil to consolidate the present positive trends, to strengthen multilateralism and to ensure the independence of our nations.

It is true also that within this picture certain conflicts persist, with respect to which the beginning of a lasting solution has not yet been outlined.

That is true of the Middle East, where the general situation has not benefited from the positive atmosphere I have just described. The sharp deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories serves only to underline the seriousness of a situation whose persistence endangers international peace and security. It is imperative to implement the resolutions of this Organization that envisage the search for a peaceful, negotiated solution to the conflict and which acknowledge the right of all the States of the region to exist within secure boundaries as well as the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and its right to live

(The President)

in its own territory under authorities and a form of government of their own free choice. There is wide consensus on the need to convene an international conference on peace in the Middle East in accordance with the decisions of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties concerned.

The situation in Central America serves as a particularly painful contrast within the pattern of development of regional conflicts. Despite the solidarity of the great majority of the international community, the peace efforts initiated by the Contadora process, followed by the Esquipulas agreements, are today going through a difficult stage. It is necessary therefore to regain the initial momentum that once led to significant progress and showed that in Central America too peace is possible only through negotiation and diplomacy.

We also note again the lack of progress towards the elimination of the infamous practice of apartheid, which not only violates basic political principles, runs counter to the will so often expressed by the international community and threatens peace and security, but also constitutes a real affront to the moral conscience of mankind.

In spite of those difficulties and the total or partial lack of implementation of General Assembly resolutions, no one today can fail to recognize the power of our Organization and the fact that, directly or indirectly, it is an agent in the development of the central issues of our time. For that reason we must strengthen it. In more than one sense, the United Nations is going through a period of institutional transition. For three years now we have been introducing reforms deemed necessary by us all, but there is a general feeling that we must bring this period to an end, implementing the objectives outlined in resolution 41/213 and at the same time ensuring the financial stability that is indispensable.

(The President)

I believe that we may draw certain conclusions with respect to three main sets of facts relating to: the disarmament process initiated by the super-Powers; the beginning of a solution to a number of serious regional conflicts; and the conflicts still awaiting solution.

The first conclusion, seemingly a naive one, is that things are happening that were not happening before. That simply means that what seemed unchangeable can be changed. From that simple observation we must draw strength to face the future, to eliminate danger and to put an end to the unjust situations that remain.

(The President)

The second conclusion is that the shared perception of mankind, which simply dictates that there should be no wars or flagrant injustices, is prevailing. It is the historic task of our Organization to express the conscience of the world as a whole. By this I mean that, for all those reasons, we are more certain today that we may continue to change the world in which we live. The shared perception of men is our guide and the United Nations is our most important tool.

But there is a third conclusion concerning the contrast between political peace and economic injustice - the remarkable difference between all the progress that has been made towards ensuring world peace and the little or nothing we have done to prevent the continued widening of the gap between the rich countries and a large part of the developing world.

Thus, apart from those cases of mere survival in marginal, poverty-stricken conditions that offend the conscience of us all, one of the clearest examples of this impotence is probably the question of the external debt of the developing countries. There has been no structural improvement for the debtors since the outbreak of the crisis in 1982, and one has only to see the current trend of interest rates to realize that their real levels are the highest since then. These very high interest rates, together with the rigid system of successive refinancing plans and the perverse outflow of financial resources from the indebted countries to the creditors can result only in eliminating the possibilities of investment for the developing world.

Therefore, it is clear that of the three main sources of global tension - the East-West conflict, regional confrontations and the unfair North-South relationship - the third is the one on which a substantive part of our efforts must be concentrated. This conflict is not inevitable either. Like the others, it,

(The President)

too, can be solved. I believe this because the world can today, unlike in the past, overcome poverty; it is no longer a chronic factor in the planet's economy.

If in the past the colonial pattern ensured the wealth of some through the poverty of many others, our age has shown that colonialism and underdevelopment are no longer merely unfair, but are also irrational, even from the point of view of the countries of the North, which need the development of the South to consolidate their own progress. They need it because development guarantees peace in the third world and because it guarantees global security for all. They need it because the expansion of the trade of the developed countries will increasingly depend on the growth of the economies of the South. They need it as a condition for economic balance in a world that is increasingly interdependent, a world that, in order to be integrated and to function well, requires compatible levels of development.

It is no simple task, but it is no more difficult than the destruction of missiles by the Soviet Union and the United States or the meeting around one table of those who in various regions have been involved in a cruel struggle for many years.

To deal with this task it might be useful to change the focus on the problem. Instead of being treated as separate problems, questions such as the debt, restrictions on trade and the working of the multilateral financial organizations should be considered within the broader, integral framework of development.

Frequently these issues are causes of disagreement between the countries of the North and those of the South. The debt or trade, considered in isolation, become issues of confrontation between our countries. If instead we start from development as a goal shared by all, we shall be able to analyse particular issues, such as restrictions or limitations on the capacity of nations for growth. In



(The President)

other words, the problem for the South is not the debt or trade, but development, which in this light proves to be a priority for the North as well.

I believe we face a great challenge. But we also have a great tool at our disposal: the United Nations.

The Assembly at the session that we begin today must therefore assume a dual responsibility: to develop the progress achieved and to face the serious problems that still remain.

I am convinced that the immense wealth that mankind has created makes it possible today to regain the concept of development as a central objective, shared by all nations. Thus, I am sure, we shall find the everlasting foundations of peace, the consolidation of which appears nearer than ever.

And if any scepticism is felt among us, we ought to remember the words of Stendhal:

"Only after a great deed has been accomplished do most people accept it as possible."

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): As announced in the Journal, immediately following this plenary meeting, we shall hold consecutive meetings of the Main Committees for the purpose of electing their Chairmen and thereafter the second plenary meeting will be convened for the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.