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Twelfth session
GENERAL COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION OF THE TWELFTH REGULAR SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Memorandum by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to place before the General Committee the following observations and suggestions regarding the arrangements for the meetings of the General Assembly and its Main Committees during the twelfth session.

Conduct of work

2. The Secretary-General wishes to recall the extensive informal consultations which were held in the summer of 1956 with the Permanent Representatives of Members, as a result of which he put forward to the General Committee certain observations and suggestions regarding the internal operation of the Assembly to which the Committee gave general endorsement at that time. In those consultations a widespread desire was expressed that the sessions of the Assembly might be held to the normal length despite the much enlarged membership of the Assembly. The Secretary-General therefore feels that the General Committee may wish again to advise the Chairmen of the Main Committees in the following manner:

- (1) That the Committees, in determining the priority of their items, may engage in a tentative allocation of the number of meetings to be devoted to each item; arrangements might be made for extra meetings to conform to the schedule;
- (2) That the speakers' list on a given item be closed at the earliest time consistent with the interests of Members and with expediting the consideration of the item;
- (3) That, after the general debate on an item, a limitation of ten minutes on the time allowed for subsequent interventions and for explanations of vote should be the general practice;

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(4) That discussions of procedure be kept thoroughly in hand by appropriate and timely clarifications;

(5) That, on points of order, the Chairman shall immediately consider whether an intervention is a point of order and, if he so considers it, shall give an immediate ruling in accordance with rule 73(114).

As a matter of course, the secretariat of each Committee will give the Chairman full assistance in organizing the work of each meeting and in clarifying the problems anticipated.

Schedule of meetings

3. It is suggested that both plenary and committee meetings should begin at 10.30 a.m. and 3 p.m. In view of the desirability of an effective use of the time available, it is hoped that special efforts will be made to ensure that each meeting shall begin at the scheduled hour.

4. It is proposed that a five-day working week be established, it being understood that extended morning meetings on Saturdays may be scheduled should this prove necessary.

5. The Secretary-General wishes to urge that committees co-operate to the fullest extent possible in the scheduling of committee meetings in such a way as to ensure the maximum utilization of committee rooms and services.

Closing date for the session

6. Rule 2 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provides that: "On the recommendation of the General Committee, the General Assembly shall, at the beginning of each session, fix a closing date for the session". The Secretary-General wishes to suggest that the General Committee propose to the General Assembly 14 December 1957 as the closing date of the twelfth session.

Verbatim records of Main Committees

7. The Secretary-General has the honour to recall that in previous years, in accordance with a recommendation made by the Fifth Committee at the second session,^{1/}

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Annexes, p.1499, document A/498.

verbatim records have been authorized "for one Main Committee at a time, a committee which, in the opinion of the General Committee, has the most important items on its agenda". The Secretary-General suggests that, as in previous sessions, verbatim services be provided for the First Committee; in addition, as a consequence of internal procedures which have been developed, the Secretary-General will also be in a position to transcribe the debates of the Special Political Committee.

Seating arrangements

8. In accordance with the practice followed with regard to previous sessions of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General caused lots to be drawn for the purpose of choosing the Member to occupy the first desk on the Assembly floor from which the alphabetical seating order will begin. Mexico was the name drawn and, consequently, Mexico will sit at the first desk at the extreme right of the President. At the initial meetings of the Main Committees, the same seating order will be observed. There will be, however, a weekly rotation of five places in the Main Committees thereafter.
