



General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

First Committee

1st meeting

Friday, 1 October 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Miloš Koterec (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Statement by the Chair

The Chair: The focus of today's discussion will be the organization of our work for the current session. First, I extend a warm welcome to all delegations participating in the First Committee's deliberations at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I look forward to working with you all during the coming weeks. We have a full agenda, but I am confident that we will be able to conduct our work in a cooperative and efficient manner.

I am also confident that the Committee will again receive the full support of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, headed by Mr. Sergio Duarte and Mr. Shaaban Muhammad Shaaban, respectively. Last, but not least, the Committee will benefit greatly from the assistance of Mr. Timur Alasaniya, the Secretary of the First Committee, and his experienced team of the First Committee secretariat.

Public information officers from the Department of Public Information will provide daily coverage of our formal meetings. The press releases on the Committee's formal meetings, in English and French, are usually available on the United Nations website two hours after each day's meetings. Copies will also be available in the Committee room the next day.

Agenda item 5

Election of the officers of the Main Committees

Election of Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur

The Chair: As the Committee is aware, we were unable to elect other members of the Bureau during the elections in June, because the secretariat had received no nominations for the post of Rapporteur. I am glad to report that consultations among the regional groups have now been completed, and all candidates have been nominated.

Consequently, I should like now to proceed to the election of the three Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur of the First Committee for the sixty-fifth session.

We have the following nominations for the Vice-Chairs: from the Group of African States, Mr. Hussar Ally, of Egypt; from the Group of Asian States, Mr. Carlos Sorrento, of the Philippines; from the Group of Western European and other States, Mr. Herman Shaper, of the Netherlands.

For the Rapporteur we have the following nomination, from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States: Mr. Enrique Ochoa, of Mexico.

Bearing in mind that those four candidates have been unanimously endorsed by their respective regional groups, I expect that the Committee will wish to elect them by acclamation.

It was so decided.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



The Chair: On behalf of the Committee, I congratulate the elected officers of the Bureau: the three Vice-Chairs, Mr. Hussar Ally, of Egypt; Mr. Carlos Sorrento, of the Philippines; and Mr. Herman Shaper, of the Netherlands; and the Rapporteur, Mr. Enrique Ochoa, of Mexico. I shall depend very much on their counsel and advice. I am certain that the Committee will benefit from their collective wisdom and expertise in disarmament issues.

Organization of work

The Chair: As I mentioned earlier, the agenda for this afternoon's meeting mainly concerns the organization of the Committee's work for the sixty-fifth session.

In considering the Committee's work for this session, I wish first to draw attention to document A/C.1/65/1, containing a letter dated 17 September 2010 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly. The letter draws attention to the decisions taken by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting pertaining to the allocation of items to the First Committee. At that meeting, the General Assembly decided to allocate 18 disarmament and related international security agenda items — items 89 to 106 — to the First Committee for its consideration during the session.

Before I give a more detailed account of the programme of work and timetable, as contained in document A/64/399, I remind delegations that it was adopted by the Committee on 1 November 2009, in the context of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. By meeting today, 1 October, instead of on 30 September, we are correcting the date of the organizational meeting. This is the only change in the programme of work.

The programme of work and timetable itself was prepared in keeping with past practice, and taking into account a number of initiatives proposed over the past several years, including General Assembly decision 52/416 B, on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. In this connection, I also took into account paragraph 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which reads:

“The First Committee and the Fourth Committee shall not meet simultaneously and may consider meeting in a sequential manner

during the regular session of the General Assembly.”

However, members may have noted in document A/64/399 that on Monday, 18 October, both morning and afternoon meetings have been allocated to the First Committee. That is in line with an agreement between the Chairs of the First and Fourth Committees.

In accordance with established practice, the First Committee will commence its substantive work on Monday, 4 October 2010. The General Committee recommended that the First Committee conclude its work by 1 November. Thus, including this organizational meeting, the First Committee will have a total of 24 meetings to consider the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly.

The Committee will also have to consider and take action on its tentative programme of work for the 2011 session, in accordance with agenda item 120, concerning the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

With reference to item 132, on programme planning, which has been allocated to all the Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly to enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports, we will revert to this item if the General Assembly allocates any report under this item to our Committee.

I will make every effort to complete the work of the Committee, as recommended by the General Committee. I therefore earnestly appeal for the full cooperation of all delegations on this matter. I recall that during the main part of the previous session the First Committee had 24 meetings, during which it considered 16 disarmament-related agenda items. Consequently, I believe that, with your cooperation, we will be able to accomplish our tasks in a timely fashion.

As has been done during previous sessions, consideration of the items allocated to the First Committee will proceed in three segments, as currently reflected in the proposed programme of work and timetable. The first segment, the general debate on all items, will run from 4 to 12 October, for a total of seven meetings. The rolling list of speakers for this phase is currently open, and I am aware that quite a number of delegations have already inscribed their names on the list. I invite others to do the same as soon

as possible. Additionally, in order to efficiently use the resources allocated to us, I kindly request delegations to limit their statements to a maximum of 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations.

In this connection, it is my intention to introduce the use of a timing mechanism for this first part of our work. I invite delegations that have longer statements to make the full written statement available for posting on the First Committee Quick first website and to read out an abbreviated version during the general debate. That can very much speed up our work.

I remind delegations that, as they inscribe their names on the list of speakers, a rolling list means that representatives should be prepared to intervene possibly even one meeting sooner than they had originally planned. Based on the programme of work and timetable contained in document A/64/399, I intend to close the list of speakers for the general debate on Tuesday, 5 October, at 6 p.m.

The second phase of the Committee's work will be structured thematic discussion on item subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under disarmament and related international security agenda items. For the advance information of delegations, an indicative timetable, based on the Committee's established practice for the second phase of its work, has been circulated to all delegations in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1. I believe that all members already have copies.

That segment will cover the period from Wednesday, 13 October, to Monday, 25 October. A total of 10 meetings have been allocated for that purpose. In the event that the Committee completes its general debate ahead of schedule — that is, before the end of Tuesday, 12 October — I propose that we begin the thematic segment on 12 October with the discussion on the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past session and the presentation of reports.

As indicated in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1, it is within the second thematic phase that time has been allocated for an exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international

organizations with mandates in this field. Furthermore, a number of guest speakers, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society, have been invited.

As in previous years, and as outlined in document A/C.1/65/CRP.1, the meetings during the thematic segment will be divided into two parts. The first will begin in formal mode with a panel or guest speaker, as applicable, followed by an informal question-and-answer session. The second formal part will consist of interventions by delegations on the items under consideration, as well as the introduction of draft resolutions.

The discussion on the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its past session and the presentation of reports, which will take place on 13 October, will be in informal mode. The panel on regional disarmament and security on 21 October, the panel discussion of disarmament machinery on 22 October, and the meeting with the participation of non-governmental organizations on 25 October, will all be conducted in an informal setting.

I plan to provide the Committee with a more detailed explanation of the second phase of the Committee's work during the latter part of next week.

Following discussions with the Bureau, in order to facilitate the Committee's work and give delegations sufficient time for consultations, I propose that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions be noon on Thursday, 14 October. This submission deadline is necessary in order to allow time for processing and translation of the drafts so that the "L" documents, the drafts, are available as early as possible in all languages for the consideration of delegations. I therefore appeal to all delegations to adhere strictly to the submissions deadline of noon on Thursday, 14 October. If possible, I would even encourage delegations to submit their draft resolutions and decisions before the deadline, to give delegations enough time to seek necessary instructions from their capitals. Early submission of draft resolutions or decisions would also offer all delegations the opportunity to make comments on them during the second phase of work, which is also intended for that purpose.

It is especially important that delegations submit as early as possible those draft resolutions that might

entail programme budget implications, to allow the Secretariat time to prepare the necessary statements on programme budget implications. I remind delegations that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before it can be acted upon by the General Assembly.

In this connection, I draw the attention of delegations to the guidance of the General Committee in its first report to the General Assembly (A/65/250). In paragraph 41 the General Committee recalls resolution 45/248 B, on procedures for administrative and budgetary matters, in particular reaffirming that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, and reaffirming the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the views expressed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the use of the phrase “within available resources” (see A/54/7, paras. 66 and 67). Accordingly, I kindly request delegations to avoid using the phrase “within existing resources” in draft resolutions or decisions of the First Committee. So, instead of “within existing resources” we use the words “within available resources”.

Finally, the third and last segment of the Committee’s work — action on all draft resolutions and decisions — will be from Tuesday, 26 October, to Monday, 1 November. A total of six meetings have been set aside for that purpose. It will be my aim to complete that phase of the Committee’s work by Friday, 29 October, if possible.

Last year the Committee concluded the final phase, adopting 49 draft resolutions and five draft decisions, in four meetings. I urge all delegations to take note of this fact. I count on their full cooperation so that we can take action on all draft resolutions and decisions, including those involving programme budget implications, in a timely manner.

It is my intention to retain the voting procedure that we have followed in previous years, namely, grouping draft resolutions in clusters, using as a basis the seven agreed clusters mentioned in the 5 November 2004 letter from the Chairman of the First Committee

to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, pursuant to paragraph 3 of annex C to resolution 58/316 on further measures for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. The clusters are: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction; outer space (disarmament aspects); conventional weapons; regional disarmament and security; other disarmament measures and international security; and disarmament machinery. I will provide the Committee with specific information on this final phase of our work closer to the beginning of the action period.

It is my firm belief that, based on the proposed programme of work and timetable that is now before members, the Committee will be able to consider efficiently all the agenda items allocated to it, within the available time, and to wrap up its work, as recommended by the General Committee.

I remind delegations of the need to maintain the necessary spirit of compromise and flexibility in the process of implementing the proposed programme of work and timetable.

With that introduction, may I take it that the Committee wishes to approve the proposed draft programme of work and timetable contained in document A/64/399, with oral revision I introduced previously — namely, that the organizational meeting will take place on 1 October instead of 30 September?

If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The Chair: The programme of work and timetable, as adopted, will be issued as a document of the Committee, with the symbol A/C.1/65/3.

I should now like to draw attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly affecting the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in decision 34/401, especially its provisions dealing with explanations of vote, rights of reply and budgetary and financial questions, which I intend to apply, with the cooperation and assistance of all members of the First Committee.

In order to make full use of the time and facilities allocated to the Committee, I intend, with the Committee’s full cooperation, to begin meetings promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and to end at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. respectively.

I also draw attention to agenda item 5 in document A/65/250, entitled “Election of the officers of the Main Committees”, and to rule 99 (a) of the Assembly’s rules of procedure, as amended by resolution 56/509 of 10 July 2002, which reads:

“All the Main Committees shall, at least three months before the opening of the session, elect a Chairman. Elections of the other officers provided for in rule 103 shall be held at the latest by the end of the first week of the session.”

In view of this, I propose that the First Committee, in accordance with that resolution, consider the item sometime in May or June 2011, about three months before the opening of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

The Chair: Concerning the submission of draft resolutions, we will continue with the electronic submission of drafts introduced at the sixty-third session. The secretariat will provide further details in a technical briefing directly following this meeting.

In view of the large number of petitioners in the Fourth Committee, with which we share the conference facilities, it was decided to move the First and Fourth Committees to a larger space — Conference Room 1 — for the first week, specifically from 4 to 8 October. That is not unusual. During past sessions we always had to move from Conference Room 4 to Conference Room 1 during action periods. All the main conference rooms in the new building are equipped with the voting system, which means that we can move back to Conference Room 4 from the second week, and remain there until the end of the sixty-fifth session. So the second part of the Committee’s meetings will be in Conference Room 4.

If I hear no objection, it is so decided.

It was so decided.

The Chair: The Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 4 October, at 10 a.m. sharp. I look forward to working with members in the coming weeks and to seeing them on Monday.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.