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AGENDA ITEM 76

Appointments to fill vacancies in the membership of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly (*continued*):*

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(c) Board of Auditors;

(e) United Nations Administrative Tribunal

REPORTS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE
(A/8111/Add.1, A/8112, A/8113, A/8115)

1. Mr. EL BARADEI (United Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour on behalf of the Fifth Committee to submit its reports on the action it has taken on agenda item 76. These reports are contained in documents A/8111/Add.1, A/8112, A/8113 and A/8115. In each report the Fifth Committee has recommended a draft resolution which it is hoped will meet with the unanimous approval of the General Assembly.

Pursuant to rule 68 of the rules of procedure, it was decided not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee.

2. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly will now consider the draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee.

3. The draft resolution of the Fifth Committee concerning agenda item 76 *a* appears in paragraph 5 of its report [A/8111/Add.1]. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly adopts the draft resolution.

*Resumed from the 1861st meeting.

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 2620 B (XXV)).

4. The draft resolution of the Fifth Committee concerning agenda item 76 *b* appears in paragraph 5 of its report [A/8112]. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly adopts the draft resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 2629 (XXV)).

5. The draft resolution of the Fifth Committee concerning agenda item 76 *c* appears in paragraph 5 of its report [A/8113]. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly adopts the draft resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 2630 (XXV)).

6. The draft resolution of the Fifth Committee concerning agenda item 76 *e* appears in paragraph 5 of its report [A/8115]. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly adopts the draft resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 2631 (XXV)).

AGENDA ITEM 92

Rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly

7. Mr. BEAULNE (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): The revised draft resolution contained in document A/L.601/Rev.2 entitled "Rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly", has been sponsored by 32 Member States from various regions of the world. The following countries should be added to the list of sponsors of the original draft: Argentina, Barbados and Burundi [see A/L.601/Rev.2/Add.1].

8. The way in which the United Nations, and particularly the General Assembly, have been carrying out their work has given rise to sharp criticism in recent years. The number of Member States of the United Nations has more than doubled in the past quarter of a century, and the United Nations has assumed its responsibilities in the field of social and economic development of a magnitude not foreseen when the Charter was adopted. Practices, on the other hand, have continued almost without change since the earliest days of the Organization. While changes in procedure

and organization cannot of themselves improve the quality of the General Assembly's performance, they can enable the will of the Assembly to be translated into action more swiftly, accurately and effectively.

9. We recognize that the fundamental problems of peace and security and economic development will remain the most important among those with which the United Nations must deal in the future, as in the past. But the General Assembly must also devote increasing attention to other problems of immense concern to peoples everywhere. In the last few years we have taken up the whole complex of issues raised by the peaceful uses of the sea-bed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, the peaceful uses of outer space, and the progressive development of international law. It is to be expected that problems of population and the environment, to mention only those, will demand more and more of our time and energies.

10. In December 1969 the Canadian delegation requested the inscription of an item on the agenda of the present session, the purpose of which would be to study ways and means of making the General Assembly a more effective instrument for dealing with the problems of the 1970s.¹ Over the past six months, the co-sponsors of the present draft resolution consulted the permanent members of the Security Council and subsequently met with representatives of all regions. They have reason to believe that this revised draft resolution, the original text of which has been repeatedly modified to take into account views of the majority of delegations, will meet with general approval.

11. In the preamble of the draft resolution the General Assembly recognizes that the Organization has grown in responsibilities and in membership and that the United Nations is being called upon increasingly to meet new challenges and undertake new initiatives. At the same time it reminds us of the need to ensure that, whatever measures of rationalization may be adopted, all important political and developmental items are discussed in appropriate forums and continue to receive full consideration.

12. In operative paragraph 1 the President of the General Assembly is asked to establish a special committee of 31 representatives of Member States to study ways and means of improving the procedures and organization of the General Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, and to submit a report to the Assembly at its twenty-sixth session. In considering the size of the proposed committee, the co-sponsors considered 15 members to be the minimum number required to provide reasonable geographic balance and effectiveness. Other groups felt that a larger committee would be necessary to provide proper representation, and the co-sponsors amended their draft resolution to accommodate those views by increasing the size of the proposed committee to a maximum of 31 members. The interest shown in this initiative has been overwhelming, and the co-sponsors

have tried to reconcile as far as possible the views expressed by individual Member States and the various regional groups. In regard to the composition of the proposed committee the sponsors recommend that the President of the General Assembly consult the regional groups in order to achieve a reasonable balance between them.

13. In operative paragraph 2, the General Assembly invites the Governments of Member States to give the Committee all assistance and to submit their views and suggestions to the Committee by 28 February 1971.

14. In operative paragraph 3, it requests the specialized agencies to provide relevant information regarding their procedures.

15. In operative paragraph 4, it requests the Secretary-General to give the Committee every assistance in the performance of its task.

16. Finally, in operative paragraph 5, it authorizes the Committee to maintain and circulate summary records.

17. I want to make it abundantly clear, on behalf of the sponsors, that there is no intention of seeking any revision of the Charter by means of this procedure. Without prejudging the working arrangements of the proposed committee, we would envisage that it would proceed by consensus. Its recommendations would in any case be subject to endorsement by the next session of the General Assembly.

18. It is also necessary to add, in case there should be any apprehension on this point, that the sponsors have no preconceived ideas concerning any possible recommendation to the General Committee for reallocation of agenda items. They are fully aware of the delicacy of some of the issues that reallocation of items could raise. They have, for example, no desire to disrupt the distribution of responsibility in the Secretariat for the various main Committees or other bodies of the General Assembly.

19. Nevertheless, the sponsors consider that, despite these sensitive issues, there remains ample scope for constructive work, which the experience of this crowded session makes it all the more apparent is vitally needed.

20. This proposal is a very modest one; it being understood that Member States would provide the members of the proposed committee at no cost to the United Nations, and if the committee schedules its meetings subject to availability of Secretariat staff resources there should be no requirement for additional appropriations. Under these conditions, the sponsors hope that all delegations will find it possible to support the revised draft resolution.

21. Mr. MOJSOV (Yugoslavia): In the opinion of my delegation, the draft resolution as revised in document A/L.601/Rev.2 reflects the wishes and the efforts of its sponsors to contribute to a more effective perfor-

¹ See document A/7633.

mance by the United Nations by improving the procedures and organization of the General Assembly, one of its main organs. This action has also as its aim to elaborate further and implement more consistently the prevailing concurrence of views of all Member States of the Organization so adequately spelled out in paragraph 11 of the Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, solemnly adopted at the special session [*resolution 2627 (XXV)*], namely:

“It is furthermore desirable to find ways and means to strengthen the Organization’s effectiveness in dealing with the growing volume and complexity of its work in all areas of its activities.”

22. Obviously we are asked to examine a very significant and complex issue. The General Assembly has on three different occasions in the past established special organs and resorted to other measures with a view to evolving the most suitable procedures, methods and organization of its work.

23. This problem, however, was never so urgent or so pressing as it is today. Our Organization is continuously faced with the growing and challenging tasks, as well as with increased responsibility. The contemporary development in the world is so rapid and so widespread, furthermore, that international relations are becoming more interdependent. This calls for greater democratization of international relations and securing of a more equitable participation of States in dealing with the present-day world issues. Given the situation, it has become imperative to strengthen the role of the world Organization in international life, in particular of its most representative body, the General Assembly.

24. In these circumstances, it is vital to undertake, simultaneously with the intensified United Nations efforts aimed at resolving the major issues appearing on its agenda, measures for the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly and other organs. We are convinced that we are expressing an overwhelming conviction that the twenty-fifth anniversary session represents an auspicious moment to initiate actions in both directions.

25. It is with this idea in mind that I should like to quote from a document of the Lusaka Non-Aligned Conference,² on the United Nations, which, in part, reads:

“The Non-Aligned Heads of States or Governments are resolved to take such measures as will make the United Nations more effective and to this end agree to participate in the forthcoming commemorative session and call upon all Member States to examine proposals for improving the procedures and working methods of the United Nations.”

26. Proceeding from those considerations, the Yugoslav delegation has, from the very outset, attached great

importance to the Canadian initiative. It has also, with keen interest and great attention, studied all aspects of the twenty-one-Power draft resolution circulated on 21 October of this year [*A/L.601*]. In our efforts we were guided by the desire to have this far-reaching action, from the very beginning, so conceived that in its basic approach it meets the needs of the largest number of Member States of the United Nations and that it attain the broadest possible support. Only the initiation of an action within such a framework, an action which transcends the nature of a procedural-technical question, can bring the desirable success. We believe that it is clear that the goal before us cannot be reached within a short time period, nor that solutions once agreed upon can remain valid for all times.

27. In question is a continuous need of adapting methods of work and the functioning system of the Organization to new conditions, to new requirements. Basically, it is a matter of adapting more sophisticated methods and more perfected performance style of the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations system of organizations.

28. It is in this spirit that the Yugoslav delegation, in co-operation with many other delegations, has made an effort to contribute to the clarification of certain fundamental aspects of the draft resolution so as to render it more precise and to bring it in line with the views prevailing in our Organization. My delegation wishes to express satisfaction over the fact that in consultations and contacts with a large number of the non-aligned and developing countries, it has found broad understanding and support for the need to introduce certain improvements in the original text of the draft resolution. Our satisfaction is even greater since the proposals formulated in the course of these consultations have been favourably received by the sponsors of the draft resolution. In fact, they have found reflection in the revised text of the draft resolution which my delegation, together with some others, is now also sponsoring. Such an approach and expressed readiness to co-operate have made it possible to avoid the formal amending of the original text of the draft resolution and, at the same time, to assure wide support among the delegations for the revised text.

29. The Ambassador of Canada, in his introductory statement on the draft resolution, has indicated some differences existing between the original and the revised text and pointed out the main motivations by which we were guided when incorporating these changes. The substituting of the second preambular paragraph for a new text served a double purpose: firstly, to express more clearly and unequivocally the basic motivation of this action—that is to say “that the United Nations is being increasingly called to meet new challenges and undertake new initiatives”—and secondly, to remove every doubt that this action, either directly or indirectly, is aimed at restricting the present activities or limiting the resources of our Organization.

30. The inserting of the word “developmental” after the word “political”, in the third preambular paragraph, is undoubtedly in full conformity with the provi-

² Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held from 8 to 10 September 1970.

sions of the Charter of the United Nations, whose fundamental purposes are to safeguard international peace and promote development throughout the world. In this context, we wish to underscore that the proclamation by the General Assembly, on 24 October 1970, of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade [*resolution 2626 (XXV)*] constitutes one of the most important achievements of the current session and a major event in the life of our Organization in general. The implementation of the International Development Strategy, in fact, will be a matter of continuing concern and direct responsibility of the General Assembly itself.

31. The first change in operative paragraph 1 relates to the increase in the number of the proposed committee members. If it is our intention to have the work of the committee reflect various schools of thought and adequately to represent different regions, then, obviously, a committee composed of 15 members does not suffice. I should like to add that it is difficult to find in the annals of the General Assembly a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, established in more recent years on an intergovernmental level, numbering 15 or less members. Not only that, we all appreciate the fact that a mere number, or a smaller number, of this or that United Nations organ is not a guarantee for a successful performance of that particular body. Other conditions are necessary, and above all a possibility of a more adequate and equitable representation of Member States, thus creating a more appropriate political atmosphere for the work of the committee.

32. In our opinion, the proposed number of 31 covers the foregoing considerations and objectives and, at the same time, secures the necessary flexibility in operation and efficiency of work.

33. The second change introduced in this paragraph is self-explanatory. It simply states that the Committee shall be established "on the basis of equitable geographical distribution", which is one of the guiding principles of the Charter in regard to the composition of different bodies of the United Nations.

34. The change in operative paragraph 2 has a dual meaning. Above all, it is designed to engage the largest possible number of Member States in the work of this General Assembly committee and, from the very beginning, to add more weight and introduce a more successful dialogue on issues of great concern to all Member States. At the same time the proposed procedure assumes the necessary democratization of the work of the General Assembly organs. These two aspects, in the opinion of my delegation, constitute a vital precondition for the successful work of the proposed committee.

35. The Yugoslav delegation is confident that the revised text of the draft resolution reflects the feelings and views of a large majority of delegations and we sincerely hope that it will be accepted without opposition.

36. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I should like to remind members that the representative

of Canada has announced that Argentina, Barbados and Burundi have become sponsors of the draft resolution. I should like to add that two other States, Colombia and Guyana, are now also sponsors [*see A/C.601/Rev.2/Add.1*].

37. Mr. BORCH (Denmark): Our Organization, whose twenty-fifth anniversary we have been celebrating these past weeks, has lived through greater changes in its environment than most other political organizations have experienced within an equivalent lifetime. The United Nations can enter the second quarter of a century of its life as a viable and relevant organization chiefly because it has shown a high degree of flexibility and of adaptability to these changes which have manifested themselves in its growing membership, its expansion of old and new programmes, and its responsiveness to the manifold challenges posed to it. The past few years particularly have been marked by an increasing consciousness on the part of both the membership and the Secretariat of the need for keeping procedures and practices, and rules and customs under constant review in a spirit of constructive self-criticism and appraisal. The work of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Secretariat, the *Ad Hoc* Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, the Joint Inspection Unit, the deliberations going on concerning the improvement and strengthening of the working procedures of the Economic and Social Council, and the Jackson report on the capacity of the United Nations development system,³ which has triggered off important reforms of the United Nations Development Programme, are all manifestations of this healthy trend. So is the initiative taken at the last session by the Canadian delegation, which has now led to the inclusion in the agenda of this session of the item which we are now debating.

38. My delegation welcomed this initiative with particular satisfaction and along with other delegations has sponsored the draft resolution before us [*A/L.601/Rev.2*], in the hope that its adoption will ultimately lead to a further rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly, and eventually to a strengthening of the Organization as a whole. Ever since 1946, when the first committee to deal with this issue, the Committee on Procedures and Organization, was established [*resolution 102 (I)*], with the Danish permanent representative as its Rapporteur, my Government has attached great importance to the question of improving the performance of the General Assembly through improvements of its organizational machinery. In 1948 my delegation, along with the Norwegian and Swedish delegations, took the initiative which led to the establishment of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures of the General Assembly [*resolution 271 (III)*], and we took an active part in the work of the other Committees which in the 1950s and 1960s carried out examinations of the working procedures of the Assembly and made various recommendations for improving those procedures.

³ *A Study of the Capacity of the United Nations Development System* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.70.I.10).

39. Since the last of those Committees finished its work in 1962 to 1963, the workload of the Assembly has grown considerably in quantity and in complexity. The proposal before us therefore seems very timely if we are, at the threshold of the 1970s, to create the best possible conditions for the General Assembly to cope with this increased, and steadily increasing, workload as efficiently and effectively as possible.

40. We are, of course, fully aware that the General Assembly is primarily a political mechanism, whose level of performance is decided not by mechanical "tune-ups" but by the use to which Member States can agree to put it. We thus fully agree with one of the main premises of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Improvement of the Methods of Work of the General Assembly as stated in its report of 1963,⁴ that there should be no question of hampering the diplomatic process, negotiation, or the decision-making process through which the Assembly works. This proposal before us is based upon exactly the same premise. The question facing us, however, is whether the present procedures and organization of the General Assembly offer the optimum basis for promoting this process and for translating its results into meaningful common action. We, for our part, are convinced that there is need for further improvement and refinement of the organizational machinery of the Assembly, and that the adoption of the proposal before us would be a step in the right direction. We, for our part, shall be ready to make our contribution to make it so.

41. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I should like to inform the Assembly that Lebanon has become a sponsor of the draft resolution [*see A/L.601/Rev.2/Add.1*].

42. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*):

"My term of office as President of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly has obliged me to grapple with the difficulties of organizing the Assembly's work and has made me conscious of the urgent need to consider certain changes in the Assembly's procedure in order to ensure that its work produces rapid and fruitful results."⁵

43. It was with these words that in 1962 the late Mongi Slim, who had just presided over the sixteenth session of our Assembly, began the memorandum which he addressed to the Secretary-General and to all the Member States of our Organization. That memorandum was to form the basis of one of the attempts of our Assembly to rationalize its procedure and the organization of its work.

44. In 1970, in other words eight years after those words were spoken they are still as relevant as ever in view of the multiplicity of the problems which we attempt, with varying degrees of success, to deal with, and considering also the growing accumulation of docu-

ments which we demand of the Secretariat, some of whose sections are obviously overworked.

45. In its intervention in the general debate a few weeks ago [*1859th meeting*], the Tunisian delegation pointed out the merit of the Canadian initiative to which 31 other delegations have now subscribed and which made it possible for us to discuss these particularly important problems today.

46. We are all the more aware of the acuteness of this problem as our delegation is among the very large number of those which have only a rather limited staff to cover the various meetings taking place during the sessions of our Assembly.

47. Moreover, in addition to the fact that it is necessary to rationalize the working methods so as to make it possible for delegations better to carry out their tasks, it is also essential to try to reduce the costs incurred by our Organization in regard to conference services.

48. In order to reach these goals, the Canadian delegation accompanied by several others, presented for our consideration a draft resolution contained in document A/L.601/Rev.2 proposing the establishment of a special committee which would be responsible for presenting recommendations in this field to the General Assembly.

49. The mandate which would be issued to that committee is very wide because it encompasses all the aspects of our work, including the rules of procedure which have prevailed thus far. This constitutes a new outlook because the Committee established in 1962 to improve the working methods of the General Assembly [*see 1162nd meeting, para. 109-115*] decided, without any directions from its higher organs, that respect for the rules of procedure would be its rule; we hope that any changes that may result from the work of the committee that is to be established will be limited both in number and in substance.

50. My delegation would also wish to point out that numerous decisions and resolutions have been adopted in several of the committees of the General Assembly either to improve their own procedure or to introduce fruitful changes in the organization of the work of the Assembly. These decisions are, for the most part, likely to help us, provided they are applied in a responsible manner. One of the primary tasks of the committee will, therefore, be to take stock of all these decisions, to attempt to unify them and, finally, to find a way to see to it that they are actually put into practice.

51. Another aspect of the mandate entrusted to the special committee is the distribution of agenda items. That is a field where rather limited logic prevailed. If this state of affairs is sometimes a result of political causes it is in certain other cases due to the fact that the disease which affects the work of our Assembly affects also a large number of other United Nations organs.

52. There is no question that the reorganization of the working methods of organs such as the Economic

⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 25, document A/5423, para. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, *Seventeenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 86, document A/5123, para. 1.

and Social Council would first instill new life into them and would also make it possible for the Assembly to carry out more expeditiously the tasks entrusted to it. The Tunisian delegation has taken part in a number of informal meetings of members of the Economic and Social Council which were devoted to this subject. Some of the delegations have raised the problem in the Second Committee as well and other delegations have made statements of principle concerning the need for reforming the work of the Council, but very few have dealt with the concrete problem itself. There is virtual unanimity concerning the principles but few concrete proposals have been made. We know that some of the transformations proposed may be considered quasi-revolutionary and that others are much less so. We hope, nevertheless, that the various solutions proposed will finally be combined in a synthesis which will be harmonious not only from the political point of view but also and especially from the point of view of the effective working of the Council.

53. If agreement is finally reached in this field, we consider that, the work of the Economic and Social Council having become more effective, the General Assembly will, for its part, have made definite progress in its working methods for dealing with economic and social matters.

54. This desire for reform of our meeting procedures is, therefore, reflected at several levels and we must offer our congratulations to the Canadian delegation for the efforts it has exerted at these various levels. This action is completely supported by my delegation which has voiced the same preoccupations and which wishes to say that it would like to be a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2 [see A/L.601/Rev.2/Add.1].

55. Nevertheless, all of these reforms, however urgent they may be and however effective they may become, could only facilitate our work; they are not likely to provide solutions to problems which depend upon complex political factors. Political will alone to achieve the objectives of our Organization as defined in the Charter will make it possible for us to make progress in our work.

56. We must not forget that we are frequently obliged to resort to procedural artifice in order to make up for faltering political will, and that we are frequently compelled to submit the same question to several different forums in trying to pry open the doors of the conscience of nations.

57. Mr. MUNIRUZZAMAN (Pakistan): During the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations it is only natural that we, its Members, should pause for a while to evaluate its achievements and take stock of its shortcomings. It is apparent that during the past 25 years the Organization has changed, not only in its complexion, but also with regard to the complexity of the issues with which it is confronted. The membership of the Organization, although still far from universal, has increased more than two-fold; and

the dimensions of the challenge to the fulfilment of the aims of the Charter have greatly enlarged.

58. The United Nations has not been very successful in its foremost political tasks—that is, the prevention of the use or threat of the use of force in international relations and in promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes. In this field there has been a noticeable increase in the responsibility of the General Assembly, which, composed as it is today mainly of the smaller nations, has found it difficult to adjust to the realities of the conflicting interest of power politics.

59. The United Nations role in the field of development has burgeoned. The continuing increase in the gap between the standards of living in the rich and poor countries has elevated this problem to the point where it is of crucial importance for peace and security in the world. Unfortunately, while the problems in this field have multiplied geometrically, the concerted endeavours of the international community to resolve them have not even found adequate arithmetical solutions. The International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade has, for the first time, established the concept of international planning in perspective. It seems important to elaborate adequate review and implementation machinery for the Decade which would ensure the United Nations a dynamic role in development.

60. During the past few years the United Nations has undertaken additional responsibilities in seeking solutions to problems of a global nature. For instance, at the initiative of the Swedish Government it has established the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. It is faced with a need to establish new machinery to rationalize the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution.

61. It is obvious that causes more fundamental than mere defects in organization and methods are responsible for the failure of the United Nations to perform its tasks adequately. The regeneration of the effectiveness and prestige of the United Nations does not turn on the improvement of its machinery alone. It depends on the will of Member States to provide the machinery with motive power. Such will, at crucial stages in the Organization's history, has been sadly lacking. However, it cannot be denied that despite the significant changes that have occurred in its procedures, organization and working methods have not been substantially revised. Such revision is necessary if only—I quote from the statement of the Ambassador of Canada—to “enable the will of the Assembly to be translated into action more swiftly, accurately and effectively”.

62. Pakistan's commitment to work for a meaningful role for the United Nations, is rooted in our history. Thus, we would ignore no effort which may be capable of increasing its effectiveness. We have welcomed the timely initiative taken by Canada on this item as one such effort, and have co-sponsored the resolution in document A/L.601/Rev.2, which has been so ably introduced by the Canadian Ambassador.

63. The improvement of the General Assembly's procedures has already been considered by a number of Committees set up in the past. The suggestions and comments made by the Special Committees in 1949 and 1953 and the *Ad Hoc* Committee in 1962 to 1963 are still relevant and cover some of the major areas where reforms could be implemented. Nevertheless, the developments and experience since 1963 may provide some fresh insight into the practicability of the ideas and suggestions of these past reviews.

64. Without prejudice to the decision of the proposed committee, I should like to indicate what we conceive should be the scope and purpose of the review. We believe that the committee should consider reforms in three broad areas.

65. Firstly, it should review the purely mechanical aspects of the functioning of the General Assembly, the efficacy of the rules of procedure, the inclusion and allocation of agenda items, the working methods, the increase in the volume and cost of documentation, the need for issue of reports on a definite time-schedule, the organization of the general debate and other related matters.

66. Secondly, it should undertake a consideration of the adjustments required due to the changes and reforms in the structure and work of its subsidiary and related organs. As the first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution states, there has been a considerable growth in the "responsibilities" of the United Nations. In the past few years a number of new subsidiary organs have been created, such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, the sea-bed Committee,⁶ the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, and the Committee on Natural Resources. With the increase in the number of subsidiary bodies reporting to the Assembly, the need for adequate co-ordination within and between the political, economic, social and human rights and other related fields has also become mandatory. The existing organs have, moreover, undergone substantial changes in their composition and working methods. For instance, the proposed review cannot afford to ignore the reforms being implemented in the United Nations Development Programme, those being contemplated in the budgetary practices of the United Nations, the suggestions for the reorganization of the Economic and Social Council, and the proposed establishment of the review and appraisal necessary for machinery for the implementation of targets for the Second Development Decade. These would, individually and collectively, affect the future organization and working methods of the General Assembly.

67. Thirdly, the review should take account of the "new challenges" and "new initiatives" facing the United Nations which are referred to in the second preambular paragraph. It seems important that the Organization should not be allowed to grow in the same haphazard manner as it has done in the past. The reforms should stress the changes necessary, not only

⁶ Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction.

in the light of past experience, but also in the perspective of future expectations, and be such as would adjust to a dynamic and progressive increase in the volume and complexity of items before the General Assembly.

68. Today the interests of the majority of the Members of this Assembly, including Pakistan, are against any kind of immobilism—whether in the political or economic fields. The third preambular paragraph of the draft resolution in document A/L.601/Rev.2 is intended to reflect these interests. We do not believe that the proposed review of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly would involve, nor would we allow, any diminution in the importance of political and economic issues, or a shift of the Organization's emphasis away from these areas.

69. At this twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations it is possible that meaningful proposals for change can gain broad acceptance. This may especially be so for those which merely advocate procedural reforms to enhance efficiency. The Pakistan delegation has sponsored the draft resolution in document A/L.601/Rev.2 with a wish to reiterate its willingness to contribute as much as possible towards making the United Nations an organization which could truly serve the aims for which it was created. We recognize at the same time that ultimately its effectiveness depends on a concurrent increase in the commitment by all Member States to utilize the Organization to its optimum capacity.

70. Mr. BARNES (Liberia): Aiming at making the United Nations a more effective instrument for the performance of its responsibilities, a number of delegations, including my own, are associated with the delegation of Canada in submitting draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2 on the subject of the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly, whose objective is to provide an opportunity for a comprehensive look at the procedures and organization of the General Assembly—an organ of the United Nations.

71. It is quite true that since the rules of procedure of the General Assembly were formulated and adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 173 (II) on 17 November 1947, those rules over the years have been subject to amendments, additions and revisions. Nevertheless, the need has existed for a comprehensive review of those rules and other documents with regard to procedures and organization of the Assembly so as to assure practical means of improving the United Nations ability to become responsive to the needs of the international community.

72. In this twenty-fifth anniversary year of the United Nations, it is generally agreed that the time is now ripe to launch initiatives aimed at the renewal and reformation of our Organization. As pointed out by the Foreign Minister of Canada in his statement at the 1848th meeting of the General Assembly on 24 September 1970, the question of a comprehensive look at the General Assembly's procedures and organization is neither an original nor a new idea.

73. The United Nations is not a static organization. It goes either forward or backward. With the growth of the responsibilities of our Organization and the large increase in its membership, no one can be indifferent to the urgent need to streamline and improve the procedures of the General Assembly. I would not wish to consume the precious time of the Assembly by listing what, in the opinion of my delegation, should constitute those reforms and improvements or in what manner they should be considered. Time for this purpose is provided for in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution. What the draft resolution contemplates is the establishment of a special committee on the basis of equitable geographical distribution to study ways and means of improving the procedures and organization of the Assembly in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and to report to the Assembly at its twenty-sixth session. Under the terms of reference of the special committee, this study is to embrace matters relating to the allocation of agenda items, the organization of work, documentation, rules of procedure and related questions, and methods and practices of the General Assembly.

74. It is to be recalled that by resolution 362 (IV) of the General Assembly, various recommendations of the Special Committee on Methods and Procedures, which had been established under resolution 271 (III), were approved by the General Assembly, and those recommendations were made available for use by the General Committee and by the delegations of Member States. One of those recommendations with the purpose of lightening the task of any given main Committee, and of saving time, was the consideration directly in plenary without preliminary reference to a Committee, of certain questions which fall under the terms of reference of the Main Committee. As stated in that recommendation, this procedure would moreover have the great advantage of reducing to a notable extent repetition of debate. Notwithstanding this rule, our experience has been that we engage in the consideration of certain items in a Main Committee and then in plenary repeat consideration of items of the same substance.

75. That is one of the many anachronisms—and I use that word in the broadest sense—that have been permitted to creep into our procedures. Measures designed to strengthen procedures and improve the level of the work of the Assembly are highly important if we are to meet the challenges confronting this Organization.

76. It is therefore in that spirit that I express the wish that draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2 will merit the Assembly's approbation.

77. Mr. OGISO (Japan): The General Assembly has heard this afternoon the cogent remarks made by the representative of Canada in introducing draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2, sponsored by a number of countries including Japan. I have little to add to what has been said by Ambassador Beaulne and other speakers preceding me. However, I wish to make a brief statement in order to express our full support for this draft resolu-

tion and, at the same time, to set forth the thoughts of my delegation with regard to certain aspects of the question before us.

78. What has motivated the sponsors to put forward the present draft resolution is self-explanatory, as set forth in its preamble. I am convinced that, in view of the great increase in the number of States Members of the United Nations and the steady growth of its responsibilities with regard to numerous and complex problems, it is the common concern of us all to ensure the efficient and effective performance of the General Assembly. It is therefore in the interests of all the Member States, I am sure, to contemplate a review of General Assembly procedures and the organization of its work, in order to study ways and means to improve, wherever necessary and practicable, such procedures and organization of work.

79. My delegation has referred on several occasions to the need for us to endeavour to strengthen further the organization and functions of the United Nations and, for this purpose, to explore possibilities for adapting the United Nations constantly to this ever changing world, including a review of the Charter. My Government attaches, however, as much importance to the enhancement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly's performance within the framework of the present Charter. I should like to make it quite clear at this juncture that the study of ways and means of improving the procedures and organization of the General Assembly contemplated in draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2 is intended to bring about improvement within the purview of the existing provisions of the Charter, as is indicated in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution.

80. I understand that the Secretariat has some working papers which have been used on previous occasions for a similar study and contain various interesting ideas. I am sure that these papers, if circulated, will offer a very useful basis for the study to be undertaken by the committee proposed in the draft resolution. Moreover, according to the amended operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, all the Member States would be requested to submit their views and suggestions in this regard for the consideration of the committee. My delegation feels that this amendment represents a substantial improvement, since each Member State, whether or not it becomes a member of the proposed committee, will be able to have its views considered by the committee.

81. Having said that, I should now like to point out by way of example, and to express our views on, some additional problems which are not specifically mentioned in those working papers but which in the view of my delegation might nevertheless be made subjects of study by the proposed committee were the present draft resolution adopted. I am presenting these views solely on behalf of my own delegation and have no intention of prejudging or prejudicing the position of any other sponsoring Governments in this matter.

82. The first of these possible problems concerns the value of a resolution adopted with a large number of

abstentions. The General Assembly has in the past witnessed a number of cases in which a resolution was adopted by a small number of affirmative votes but a large number of abstentions. The effectiveness of such a resolution is questionable, although there is no doubt about its legality. Under the present rules of procedure an abstention is considered as not voting but it does not affect the existence of a quorum. My delegation wonders whether, in so far as the voting on substantive proposals and amendments is concerned, an abstention should be regarded not only as not voting but also as the equivalent of absence from the voting procedures. If this new interpretation is accepted it can lead to a further interpretation—that the quorum, with regard to voting, should not include the number of abstentions and, consequently, in the event that the number of abstentions plus actual absences exceeded the majority of Members of the General Assembly, any vote taken on a proposal or amendment in such circumstances should be regarded as null and void because of lack of a quorum.

83. The second question I have in mind is the one regarding the organization of the work of the General Assembly. It is notable that the remarkable progress in science and technology in recent years is giving rise to new hopes for the future of mankind and at the same time to problems of a complexity hitherto unknown. The General Assembly is already seized of some of those problems: the sea-bed, outer space, the environment, to mention a few. Although all those problems have important political significance, some scientific and technical knowledge on the part of delegations is required for them to be considered properly and in depth. My delegation therefore believes that one of the important tasks of the proposed committee might be to study how best to organize the work of the General Assembly, whether in terms of the reallocation of items among its main Committees or in some other appropriate manner, so as to enable the General Assembly to cope with the new situation and, in particular, to utilize available expertise more efficiently.

84. A third question my delegation considers appropriate for the proposed committee to examine has certain political implications. While noting the growing significance of scientific and technological questions, my delegation wishes to emphasize the primary importance of the consideration of political matters by the General Assembly. It is in that context that my delegation wishes to see the proposed committee undertake a study on how to facilitate closer contacts and more regular exchanges of views between Heads of State or Government, to take place during the consideration of important political questions in the General Assembly. As we are all aware, the General Assembly greatly profited from the attendance of a number of Heads of State or Government at the commemorative session this year, which provided a unique opportunity for the top leaders of various countries to come together and exchange views. It would be extremely useful, in the view of my delegation, if, as a result of the committee's study, practicable means could be found for the General Assembly to provide more frequent

opportunities for the meeting of Heads of State or Government to discuss questions of political importance. One possible way of achieving that objective might be every year to set aside a week of the general debate solely for statements by Heads of State or Government.

85. Those are some of the questions my delegation feels could be included among the subjects to be studied in the proposed committee in addition to the points raised on previous occasions. As I said earlier, I have mentioned those three possible problems only on behalf of my own delegation and by way of example. Other sponsors, as well as many other delegations, may naturally have different preoccupations. However, in one respect we all have a common interest. The sponsors consider it desirable to review the procedures and the organization of work of the General Assembly with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its performance. I believe this common concern of the sponsors is shared by all Member States.

86. My delegation is fully aware of the complexity of the problems to be dealt with in undertaking the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. In order to realize such a rationalization and to bring about necessary improvement careful and detailed study of the matter will be needed. It would, however, be most appropriate and meaningful for the General Assembly to start working on this undramatic but none the less extremely important question on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. In view of the common interest of all delegations, to which I referred earlier, my delegation expresses the hope that draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2 will meet with the unanimous approval of the General Assembly.

87. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) (*interpretation from French*): The importance of the question we are now considering has been emphasized by the many speakers who have come in succession to this rostrum and presented arguments in favour of the proposal of Canada and the other sponsors of draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2.

88. It is easy to understand why the interest of Members of the United Nations has been aroused in the rationalization of the procedures and the organization of work of the General Assembly. This task is very important and very useful because the rationalization of the procedures of the General Assembly and the rationalization and improvement of its work might facilitate all the work to be done in future sessions of the various organs of the United Nations.

89. Nevertheless it does seem to us that this is a long-term undertaking—a permanent endeavour at each session of the General Assembly and at every moment in the development of the United Nations.

90. As some speakers have emphasized, such committees have been set up in the past, and have submitted recommendations to the General Assembly. Yet the Members of the United Nations still find it necessary

today to carry out constant work for the improvement of the procedures and organization of the work of the General Assembly. The fact that this work is permanent and necessary became especially evident in the statement of the representative of Canada, as well as in the documents submitted by the Canadian delegation when the question was submitted for the first time to the General Assembly in a more comprehensive fashion.

91. In that documentation—and I have it before me—we have a picture of the distribution of the number of meetings of the various major Committees of the Assembly. It will be seen from that table that the work has been distributed unevenly. This uneven distribution of the number of meetings of the Committees is the immediate result of the uneven and perhaps inappropriate allocation of agenda items.

92. Another task is covered by the draft resolution before us; it involves the organization of the work of the General Assembly itself. We understand full well that this is highly important work which should be done at every session, but it is a task which should probably be undertaken by the President of the General Assembly, assisted by the General Committee of the General Assembly in accordance with the rules of procedure, namely, rules 40, 41 and 42. This far, the General Committee has not carried out that work although it has existed at each session since the establishment of the United Nations. Some might even say that it has not succeeded in doing anything to improve the procedures and organization of the work of the General Assembly. That may be quite true and we would not wish to speak against it. But we would beg to differ in saying that the General Committee has worked and is working at every session towards improving the work of the General Assembly. As some speakers have already demonstrated here, there are many political considerations involved when certain items are referred from one Committee to another. These items are presented not principally for the purpose of improving the working methods involved, but because of the importance they have for certain specific countries or groups of countries.

93. That being so, it is difficult for the General Committee to allocate items in a manner different from the practice it has followed throughout its existence. If the General Committee is assigned the responsibility of doing the work that it should be responsible for—and thus far we have not asked our General Committee to do that work—one might well wonder why, in the draft resolution before us, we could not ask the General Committee to do that work at each session of the General Assembly and to present a report either during the session or at the end of the session so as to improve the work of the General Assembly in a continuing fashion.

94. This work of improvement should not stop or be limited to one session. Many committees have been set up for this purpose. It should not be done only at this or the next session. It is the kind of work that must be done at every session of the General

Assembly; it must be continuing work and it should not be interrupted. That is why we are proposing certain amendments⁷ to draft resolution A/L.602/Rev.2.

95. First, we think that paragraph 1 should be replaced by the following text:

“Requests the General Committee, in the exercise of its powers in accordance with rules 40, 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to examine ways and means of rationalizing the procedures and organization of the Assembly, taking into account the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and to submit recommendations to the corresponding sessions of the Assembly with a view to contributing to the simplification of its work”.

96. In order to be consistent with that proposal, we would propose in paragraph 2 the deletion of the words “by 28 February 1971”. The General Committee would then be dealing with the constant improvement of the work of the General Assembly and its organs, and would be responsible for the presentation of reports to the General Assembly for adoption at the appropriate time. That would be in accordance with the existing provisions of the rules of procedure.

97. If I recall correctly, the representative of Canada said that the Committee as proposed should consist of 31 members. In other words, 31 countries would have the possibility of working for a certain period of time from this session to the next on the rationalization and improvement of the work of the General Assembly. However, if the proposal of my delegation is accepted, a very large number of delegations would have the opportunity of participating in the useful and necessary work that is contemplated. It may be true that the General Committee is composed of 25 members, but every year its membership is changed.

98. Next year there will be a new General Committee, with new members, which will have the possibility and indeed the duty of operating on the basis of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly and the tasks entrusted to it. It will carry out such recommendations, with a new membership each year. We should therefore have no discontinuity in perfecting the working methods of the Organization, with virtually the whole of the membership of the United Nations involved, for over the years new Members of the United Nations would come and serve on the General Committee and make their contribution to the improvement of the work of the General Assembly and to the rationalization of procedures and the organization of the work of the General Assembly.

99. We therefore invite the sponsors to consider the proposal contained in the amendments presented by the delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. We invite the sponsors to consider the possibility of accepting it. At the same time, we request that the amendments be circulated to the Members by the Secretariat.

⁷ Subsequently circulated as document A/L.607.

100. I should like to refer to another argument that has just been touched upon: the desire of some delegations to depoliticize some of the main Committees of the United Nations. Much was made of technical, economic and other aspects. The main Committees of the United Nations, like the General Assembly as a whole, are organs of an Organization which is a political organization *par excellence*, and all the questions considered in it are viewed from the political standpoint, and political personalities and representatives from the various Governments come to discuss them. Within that framework it is really not possible to convert some of the main Committees of the United Nations, as some might wish, into specialized panels of experts which would reflect only certain technical aspects. The work involved, even in the most depoliticized Committees, still remains political in character. Therefore we feel that the proposal of the delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria should be viewed as one aimed at amelioration of the procedures and rationalizing the work of the United Nations in a steady and uninterrupted manner.

101. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The representative of Bulgaria has made a formal proposal. Rule 80 of the rules of procedure states:

“Proposals and amendments shall normally be introduced in writing and handed to the Secretary-General, who shall circulate copies to the delegations. As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting. The President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments, or of motions as to procedure, even though these amendments and motions have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day.”

102. I would therefore urgently request the representative of Bulgaria to provide the Secretariat with the text of his amendments in writing and they will be translated immediately and circulated to the Members. The names of five representatives are still on the list of speakers. At the conclusion of the debate I shall ask the Assembly whether it wishes to vote on this amendment in spite of the fact that it has been submitted after the time limit provided for in the rules of procedure. If I have correctly understood the position, the representative of Bulgaria envisaged the possibility of discussing this amendment with the sponsors of the proposal before us. At the end of the debate we shall perhaps know whether the sponsors have decided to accept the Bulgarian amendment or whether, if that is not the case, the representative of Bulgaria still wishes to press his amendment to the vote.

103. Mr. SEN (India): We are glad the Canadian delegation took the initiative last year for the inclusion of an item in the agenda of the present session for a study of the ways and means of making the United Nations a more effective instrument. Two weeks ago, on 24 October, the General Assembly, in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering on the occasion

of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, proclaimed and adopted a number of documents which set forth the various issues and problems with which the Organization will have to deal in the coming decade. It is important that, to the extent that its present organizational methods and procedures have become unsatisfactory or inadequate, a process of improvement should be initiated so that these responsibilities can be efficiently discharged.

104. Most of the procedures and organizational methods were evolved at a time when the membership of the Organization was less than half its present membership, when its scope of work and responsibility was much more limited than it is today and when the problems of the future were not as starkly defined as now. The necessity for better methods of work and organization has not only been recognized in the various forums of the United Nations; it has also received special attention at the recently held Conference at Lusaka of the non-aligned countries at the highest level.

105. It is for this reason that we decided to support the Canadian initiative and sponsor the draft resolution now before this Assembly. In doing so we are conscious of the very clear intention that it is not a procedure to seek any revision of the Charter or a procedure to reduce the political implications of the many delicate and sensitive issues before the various organs of the United Nations. It is our understanding that the primary purpose of this draft resolution is to seek rationalization and improvement of the existing working methods purely for the purpose of making the Organization a more effective instrument in the service of its Member States. In this regard we are particularly conscious of the evolving role of the Organization in the economic and developmental field.

106. It may be asked, as indeed it has been asked in private discussion and now by the representative of Bulgaria, why one of the existing Committees, for example, the steering committee of the General Assembly, could not undertake this work. The answer is simple: there is no other existing Committee which could do it. The steering committee, that is, the General Committee, has some constitutional limitations, and its composition is rather mechanically determined. All the permanent members of the Security Council are automatically represented in the General Committee, and the principle of equitable geographical distribution is not adequately followed. Besides, that Committee cannot, strictly speaking, be in session once the Assembly has completed its current session. The intention of the co-sponsors is not that the proposed committee should meet only during the session of the General Assembly. In fact it would be necessary to meet between sessions, and therefore the General Assembly, as it is constituted now, or the General Committee, as it works now, cannot possibly undertake this work between two sessions without some amendment of its mandate and terms of reference.

107. So even if we were to give it the work envisaged in the proposed draft resolution, it will require a fresh mandate and will need re-organization as soon as the

twenty-sixth session begins. In other words, if we are to follow the idea that has been propounded by the Ambassador of Bulgaria, it would simply mean that at the beginning of each session a new committee would come into existence; it would go through the same ground, over and over again, and every year we shall repeat in our report what are the deficiencies of the last session, rather than carrying out some improvements on a permanent basis.

108. These complications can be avoided by a new committee of the type we have suggested. Further, it is our understanding that the establishment of the proposed committee will not mean any extra expenditure. At any rate, even if there is any small expenditure, it will be the same whether the work is undertaken by a new committee or by any of the existing Committees. Let me explain this point a little further. If it is decided that any committee, a committee, should meet between the two sessions, obviously the number of meetings will be the same, whether it is in the committee of 31, or the General Committee, or any other committee that can be envisaged.

109. We have here the report of the Fifth Committee [A/8153]. It says, in paragraph 6:

“However, the Committee accepts the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the Secretary-General make arrangements to absorb this workload, as well as that relating to the actual meeting services costs, without additional financial provision. On this basis, no additional appropriation will be necessary in 1971.”

110. Therefore, there is no additional expenditure involved in the proposed committee. If there is any, as I said, it will be the same whether this committee does the work or some other committee does the work. Secondly, while the General Committee can and should look at these matters every year, before the start of each session, this exercise is of a different nature, and seeks to look at things in the light of the experience of the past 25 years, bearing in mind the requirements of the future.

111. The proposed committee will not deal only with the procedure of the Assembly's work or its agenda allotment.

112. In view of those comments, I would suggest that whatever existing Committee can be considered will also have similar deficiencies or handicaps. It will first mean establishing a new mandate, new terms of reference. It will not save money in any matter and will also not have the kind of geographical distribution we have in mind. We hope that the committee that is envisaged will come up with appropriate suggestions contributing to greater efficiency and in this spirit we join the other sponsors in commending to the Assembly the draft resolution before it.

113. Finally, the Delegation of Canada has spared neither time nor efforts in finding the largest measure

of agreement on the ideas which are at the back of the draft resolution, which my delegation, together with nearly thirty others, have found it worthwhile to sponsor. We must not exaggerate its importance; on the other hand, we must not underestimate the good work that the proposed committee can do in making our debates and deliberations more comprehensive, more efficient and more effective. We expect that the draft resolution will receive a very wide if not unanimous support.

114. Mr. NJINE (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): It is fitting that we should be considering at this session the draft resolution contained in document A/L.601/Rev.2 on the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly, which has just been introduced with clarity and precision by the Ambassador of Canada, and which is sponsored by the Cameroon. It is particularly fitting that we should be doing it at this period which is one of stocktaking.

115. After 25 years of work, when the General Assembly had become even more universal as a result of the growing membership and the world has been transformed, it is safe to say that the Assembly can now judge, in perspective, its working methods with a view to greater effectiveness.

116. We have just heard what is wrong with the way our work is organized and how it is frequently obstructed. All too frequently three Committees deal with the same problem at the same time, although each one considers a separate aspect of it. All too frequently, items, seemingly unjustifiably, keep cropping up on the agenda of the General Assembly without recent events shedding any new light.

117. This overlapping and duplication of work harms the effectiveness of the General Assembly. They are distracting, a waste of time and divert our attention from new and urgent problems. The net result is that sessions often end in a confusing rush, and some over-worked Committees have to complete their agenda in a hurry just before the closure of the Assembly. Not surprisingly then, some delegations go away with the feeling that there is some unfinished business. I know from experience that this impression prevails, especially in small delegations which cannot use their staff very efficiently the way things are arranged now.

118. In view of all this, the Canadian initiative deserves only praise, especially since the draft resolution before the General Assembly is remarkably modest. Its purpose essentially is to promote effectiveness. It is not as ambiguous as other earlier resolutions, which were ineffective due to the excessively large membership which they advocated, which made them cumbersome and unwieldy. The Canadian draft resolution is both flexible and precise with regard to the mission to be assigned to the committee to be set up. It has not been asked to do anything to the Charter, which would exceed its authority, but to work in accordance with it. Made up of 31 members, who have long experience of the General Assembly, the committee will be called upon to consider a system of commit-

tees and the allocation of agenda items, the organization of the work of the Assembly, documentation and rules of procedure, to study whatever recommendations may be submitted to it to improve the working methods of the Assembly, and to submit to the next session a report containing whatever recommendations it deems useful.

119. My delegation does not have any doubts about the fact that the committee will successfully carry out its mission. We hope that the General Assembly, without having to bother with what is irrelevant, will concentrate on what is essential to the greater benefit of all delegations.

120. Mr. CUBILLOS (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The important and increasingly complex tasks of the United Nations and of the General Assembly have made it necessary to consider, review and study the present procedures and organization of the General Assembly. The United Nations has the primary responsibility in the international community for the settlement of the economic, social, cultural and political problems of the world. The United Nations is responsible for the future of each and every man.

121. The General Assembly, because of its representative nature and its terms of reference, is the body which most directly has this responsibility in the United Nations. It is in the General Assembly that the small countries have a chance to make known their views and to propose solutions to the problems with which the Charter of the United Nations has said that the United Nations must deal.

122. The Chilean delegation has sponsored draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2. We have done so because of the urgent need to modify the procedures of the Organization, and in particular those of the General Assembly. We want to be confident that the smaller countries of the world will be able actively and effectively to participate in the solution of all the problems before the United Nations, bearing in mind at the same time the need for greater efficiency in the procedures of the General Assembly. It was also for those reasons that my delegation, as a sponsor of this draft resolution, immediately supported the proposal made by the Yugoslav delegation that the special committee which it is proposed that we set up should comprise 31 members. In our opinion, a smaller membership would not guarantee that all regions represented in the United Nations would be properly represented in the special committee.

123. If we want our Organization to be genuinely representative, then any machinery designed to consider any changes or modifications in procedure, should also represent the various opinions of all Member States, due account being taken particularly of the representation of the smaller States. Furthermore, we believe that the special committee should effectively represent the Governments of Member States so that it would be a committee which would be genuinely inter-governmental.

124. For that reason my delegation could not agree with the amendment proposed a few moments ago by the representative of Bulgaria that responsibility for changes in the procedures of the General Assembly be assigned to the General Committee of the Assembly. The delegation of Chile could not support such a move, since the General Committee of the General Assembly does not represent all Governments; it includes members who are there in their personal capacity, such as the Chairmen of Committees. That fact alone means that the special committee which is proposed in the draft resolution would lose its intergovernmental nature.

125. For that reason, as I have said, we cannot support the amendment introduced by the Bulgarian representative. In so far as is possible the work to be done by the special committee should reflect the opinions and views of all Governments of Member States. For that reason, the Chilean delegation can support the proposal concerning operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution made by the Yugoslav delegation.

126. Suggestions by Governments, in our opinion, should have priority over any other documents which may be presented. Similarly, my delegation is of the opinion that the special committee should have summary records so that there may be a record of the reasons which the special committee may have for reaching its conclusions or recommendations. The work of the special committee will be of very great importance indeed, and it would be wrong if delegations were deprived of the opportunity to familiarize themselves with its discussions.

127. We are convinced of the importance of the work which will be done by the proposed special committee, and we are also convinced of the importance of the discussions which will take place in the General Assembly itself when it deals with the report of the special committee.

128. We believe that this is the right time to begin its work. Next year, 1971, the international development strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade [*resolution 2626 (XXV)*] will begin to operate, and whether the strategy is effective or not, the assessment of it will be a matter before the General Assembly.

129. Problems of economic and social development have been of primary importance for the international community. This is reflected in the various tasks before the General Assembly, as well as in the political issues which come before the General Assembly every year. Political items and items concerning development are closely related, particularly in view of the growing influence of under-development on the general political situation. For that reason the proper consideration of economic and social problems by the General Assembly would have a direct effect on the political problems which affect all mankind.

130. Mr. ISSRAELIAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): The proposal to

rationalize the procedures and organization of the General Assembly is unquestionably of interest. In considering this question, the Soviet delegation is guided by the consideration that the main task of the United Nations, as defined in its Charter, is the maintenance of international peace and security, and it is in this light that any proposals to improve the machinery and working procedures of the General Assembly should be examined.

131. Since some streamlining of the work of the General Assembly would help to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in its activities for the strengthening of universal peace, the Soviet delegation considers that a certain rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly is, in principle, worthy of attention and should be undertaken. It might, for instance, be possible to arrange for some re-allocation of agenda items between the Main Committees of the General Assembly, to consider the question of a possible reduction in the number of items considered at each session of the General Assembly, and so forth.

132. The question arises as to how this streamlining of the General Assembly's work should be achieved. The draft resolution submitted by a group of delegations in document A/L.601/Rev.2 contains a proposal for the establishment of a special committee on the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. It should be noted that this is not a new idea. In this connexion we may recall that as long ago as the seventeenth session of the General Assembly a similar *ad hoc* committee was established [1162nd meeting] to consider the improvement of the methods of work of the General Assembly. Nevertheless, despite the fact that such a committee existed and accomplished a certain amount of work and submitted its report⁸ to the following—that is, the eighteenth session of the General Assembly, we are now once again considering the question of improving the organization of the General Assembly's work. It is quite clear that the question of a further rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly will undoubtedly arise again in future as well. Political life develops and some improvements in the methods of work of the General Assembly must obviously be made in order to keep pace with these developments. In these circumstances one wonders whether the best course would really be to set up some new *ad hoc* committee, knowing that in a few years' time we should obviously have to come back to the idea of an *ad hoc* committee and once again establish some kind of *ad hoc* committee. Would it not be better to make use of the existing constitutional machinery of the United Nations?

133. In our opinion—and in this we support the views of the Bulgarian delegation—practical proposals for streamlining the work of the General Assembly could, and should be considered by the General Committee. In exercise of its powers under rules 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the

General Committee could study ways and means of improving the procedures and organization of the Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, and could submit to the following session of the General Assembly its recommendations for furthering the progress of the Assembly's work.

134. Allow me to quote some extracts from those rules. Rule 41, for instance, states that the General Committee shall assist the General Assembly in the co-ordination of the proceedings of all committees of the General Assembly. Rule 42 states that the General Committee shall meet periodically throughout each session to review the progress of the General Assembly and its committees and to make recommendations for furthering such progress—that is to say, to do precisely what is proposed in the draft resolution before the General Assembly at today's meeting.

135. Consideration by the General Committee of the question of rationalizing the procedures and organization of the General Assembly would, in the Soviet delegation's view, have yet another important advantage. It would make it possible systematically to renew and widen the circle of delegations participating in this exceptionally important and responsible work, instead of limiting the number of delegations only to 31. Moreover, if we entrusted this important work to the General Committee, the work would be undertaken regularly from year to year, and not on a one-time basis, as proposed by the sponsors of the draft resolution. It should also be noted that the draft resolution before us does not contain any sufficiently clear indication of the objectives to be pursued by the committee in studying ways and means of improving the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. One cannot exclude the possibility that this circumstance might be exploited by those who are seeking to curtail and reduce the activities of the United Nations in the political field.

136. We are firmly convinced that the primary objective in streamlining the work of the General Assembly should be to create more favourable conditions for discussing important political problems such as the strengthening of international peace and security, and also disarmament problems, and other important political questions.

137. For the foregoing reasons, the Soviet delegation considers it would be inadvisable to establish yet another *ad hoc* committee of the General Assembly, and believes that questions relating to the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly's work should be discussed comprehensively and in detail by the General Committee on a permanent basis.

138. The Soviet delegation accordingly supports the amendment submitted by the Bulgarian delegation and will vote for it.

139. Mr. FINGER (United States of America): I believe that all of us are keenly aware that many of our procedures and practices in the United Nations

⁸ Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

are very seriously in need of re-examination and reform. Speaker after speaker at this rostrum in the general debate last year and this year referred to the flood of words and paper which threatens to overwhelm us. Procedures which were appropriate, or at least tolerable, when the United Nations had only 50 or 60 Members and when it concerned itself with a relatively limited number of questions become burdensome and intolerable when we are 127 Members, when we rightly concern ourselves with the vast array of issues which are of interest to the modern international community, when our General Assembly agenda includes over 100 items.

140. We are all conscious that critics of the United Nations reproach us more and more for being a mere debating society. We know that this criticism is unjust because the concrete accomplishments of the United Nations are great and varied, even though they are neither so great nor so well publicized as they should be. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that we provide far too much ground for this criticism. More important, we impede our own ability to act concretely and decisively, we get in our own way, by the time we devote to public debate, particularly on issues we have gone over again and again, year after year, on issues concerning which we have only to re-read last year's debate to know exactly what will be said this year.

141. This is not an easy problem to deal with. One of the virtues of the United Nations is that it offers a platform for every nation, large and small, to set forth its policies and views where they can be heard and judged by all other nations. This right must not be abridged. On the other hand, it must be recognized that, if we all debate without any self-restraint and at increasing length, our meetings will grow longer and longer and still we will have less and less time in which to act.

142. New problems are constantly arising in this changing world with which the United Nations must deal if it is to remain relevant and effective. Yet, if it continues to deal at the same or increasing length with the old problems, and deals with the new ones also at equal length, our committees and councils will proliferate more and more, the torrent of documentation will become a flood which no one has time to read, and our General Assembly will be meeting 12 months a year.

143. Of course what we need are not longer and more verbose Assemblies, but shorter and more productive ones; not more and longer papers, but fewer and more cogent ones; not new committees and commissions piled on top of old ones, but new and relevant committees substituted for old and outmoded ones. We need procedures geared to action and achievement which will revive and reinforce the prestige of the United Nations rather than procedures geared merely to unlimited debate and verbal self-indulgence which will further undermine the prestige of our institution and indeed of us who labour in and for it. So the United States delegation welcomes most heartily the Canadian initiative which would establish a committee to

examine and recommend measures for streamlining and rationalizing the procedures and organization of the General Assembly.

144. If the Assembly is to cope effectively, efficiently and expeditiously with these critical issues, it is axiomatic that new ways and means must be developed to establish agenda priorities and to allot time available for debates in a rational and equitable manner. We hope that all Members will make their ideas for improvement available to the committee to be established under the Canadian draft resolution.

145. My Government has already initiated a new study of the Assembly's procedures. We hope to be in a position to present to the committee some concrete suggestions for procedural reform. One step was taken by the Assembly this year, on the General Committee's recommendation, which we believe the new procedural committee should examine with a view to its expanded use in future years. I refer to the Assembly's decision, pursuant to rule 40 and in the light of its over-all workload, to postpone consideration of some items and to include them in the provisional agenda for next year. This type of pruning of the very lengthy agenda with a view to highlighting priorities seems to us essential if the Assembly sessions are to be kept within reasonable length and focused on the most relevant current problems.

146. The proposal before us also asks the Secretary-General to give every assistance to the committee in the performance of its task. No doubt the Secretariat, with its experience and accumulated wisdom, can provide many helpful suggestions. We would also hope that the Secretary-General might call on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, which is now engaged in research on the effectiveness of United Nations procedures, to make relevant studies available.

147. The United States strongly believes that all efforts should be made to ensure that the General Assembly completes its work within the agreed time for the session. This can only reflect credit upon the Organization in the eyes of Governments and of world opinion; conversely, ever lengthening sessions, with their accompanying flood of unread documentation, discredit the United Nations. In fact, I even wonder whether the time currently allocated for sessions is not too long. A substantially shorter session, carefully organized and planned, would be more productive and certainly would encourage attendance by the most senior government officials.

148. Is it really necessary to repeat year after year so many resolutions on perennial items which are virtually identical with their predecessors, adopted seriatim for many years before and which are by now so numerous that almost no one remembers them? Is it worth while for delegations to reiterate at length views and philosophies which they have expressed many times before? Must each General Assembly automatically take up all the perennial items regardless of whether there is any real prospect of progress during a given

session? The danger of all this burdensome repetition is not just the time spent on it alone; in the process we lose the eyes and ears of the world. The attention of the press and other media and, most important of all, the attention of governments tends to stray the more we persist in repeating ourselves, whether in speeches or in resolutions. The possibility of a time-limit on plenary speeches and on explanations of vote might well be considered. A more balanced allocation of the workload among the committees offers another promising avenue of approach, as the representative of Bulgaria noted earlier. Less voluminous, more-to-the-point documentation would lift a heavy burden from our shoulders. Does this mean that the Assembly would accomplish less? On the contrary: I am convinced that the Assembly could, in a shorter, better-organized session, talk less and do more.

149. My Government is aware that procedural innovations, bearing as they do on rules governing Members' participation in the Assembly, may present delicate problems to the committee on procedures. But we are confident that the committee will come up with a worthwhile programme to increase the Assembly's effectiveness. We believe that, in the case of some measures which may give rise to concern, these might be put into effect on an experimental basis and be subject to review in the light of experience. Indeed, we see this whole problem of streamlining not as a one-shot effort restricted to next year, but rather as a continuing and dynamic effort to enable the Assembly to adjust to its growing responsibilities and importance in the years ahead.

150. It seems appropriate, Mr. President, in concluding my remarks, to note that the last effort to reform the Assembly's procedures was undertaken at the initiative of another distinguished Assembly President, our late friend Mongi Slim of Tunisia, nearly a decade ago. A new effort is certainly necessary and timely.

151. We congratulate Canada and the other sponsors on their initiative. We urge adoption of the draft resolution before the Assembly and look forward to participating actively in the new committee.

152. Mr. FACK (Netherlands): The question of the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly has been with us almost as long as the General Assembly itself. Many studies have been made, during the last 25 years, on possible improvements; documentary material on the subject is available in vast quantities; suggestions and proposals have been legion.

153. In spite of all that, it seems no exaggeration to contend that in essence the procedures and organization of the first annual session differed little from those of the twenty-fifth. *Tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis* appears to have had little significance so far as the procedures and organization of the General Assembly are concerned.

154. The question may be asked: if the General Assembly's procedures have remained substantially

the same for so long, why do the sponsors of draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2 think that the time has now come for a reappraisal? The answer is that the sponsors feel that the iron should be struck while it is hot. During the commemorative session of the General Assembly world leaders expressed their views on the activities of the United Nations during the past 25 years and on its future tasks. Opinions often differed, but on one point all seemed to agree: the desirability to strengthen the Organization and to render it more effective. However, it is one thing to recognize the existence of the desire; how to fulfil it is quite another thing.

155. Certain facts are incontrovertible: membership of the United Nations has increased from 51 to 127; likewise, the number of items on the agenda of the General Assembly's annual sessions has steadily grown, from about 60 to over 100, without any lessening of the intensity of our debates. These figures alone, it seems to me, would justify a thorough examination of our working methods. We feel indebted to all those who have in the past 25 years presided over the Assembly and its Committees, to our distinguished Secretary-General and to the members of the Secretariat for the remarkable feats of efficiency often performed in quite disconcerting circumstances. But it seems to us that we have now reached a situation which is taxing to the limit the inventiveness and energy of all concerned.

156. The representative of Canada has given the Assembly a clear exposé of the background and intention of draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2, which we have the honour to co-sponsor. I subscribe fully to his statement and only want to add the following brief remarks in support.

157. We are proposing the establishment of a special committee with the task of submitting to the next annual session a report on possible rationalization. Now, it is never easy to find generally acceptable solutions to procedural problems. If it were, no special committee such as the one proposed in our draft would be needed. Procedure, of course, is not an item we can deal with in isolation. It is closely connected with views and opinions on matters of policy. This may be a complicating factor in the activities of the special committee we propose. However, I suggest that in our discussions on this item we keep our eyes firmly fixed on the sole object of our proposal: the efficiency of the General Assembly's work.

158. It is not our intention to depoliticize the Assembly, nor to accentuate certain subjects before the Assembly to the detriment of others, nor to deflect attention from agenda items considered important by some Members. Our only purpose is what the title of the agenda item says: the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly. Many of us have accumulated a vast experience within the framework of the United Nations. Moreover, the special committee, as I said, would not start from scratch: many useful ideas have already been suggested and many more will undoubtedly be advanced. The Netherlands will, at the appropriate time, make its own contribution in this regard.

159. As to the suggestions put forward by the representative of Bulgaria, we agree with him that the rules of procedure make it clear that the General Committee's task is to facilitate the Assembly's work during the session, but evidently in accordance with the existing procedures. What we are proposing, however, as the representative of India has pointed out, is the establishment of a special committee to examine critically those procedures themselves, and to do this between the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions, without pressure of other work. The Bulgarian suggestions consequently do not commend themselves to my delegation.

160. We are convinced that the proposed special committee would do valuable work for the eventual rationalization of our work, and therefore we confidently expect that our proposal will find widespread support.

161. Mr. DESCHAMPS (France) (*interpretation from French*): This twenty-fifth anniversary session gives us a chance to pause and ponder the ways and means of increasing the effectiveness of the Organization in which the peoples of the United Nations have placed their hopes.

162. In the course of the commemorative session many Heads of State and other distinguished governmental figures endeavoured here to define the circumstances in which the United Nations could achieve the noble purposes enshrined in the Charter. Our purpose today is of course more modest. The initiative of the delegation of Canada in calling for the inscription on our agenda of an item entitled "Rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly" is of particular importance. The effectiveness of the United Nations very largely depends on the smooth functioning of the complex and delicate machinery of the United Nations and of the General Assembly, which, under Article 7 of the Charter, is one of the main bodies of the Organization. The drafters of the Charter very clearly defined the machinery of the United Nations and its roles. The rules of procedure very carefully outline the procedures applicable to each body.

163. After 25 years the construction handed down to us by our predecessors is still relevant. The Charter, in particular, is still most relevant, and drawbacks in the functioning of the Organization do not arise from the Charter's having become outdated but from the fact that we have not made full use of the document signed at San Francisco.

164. In the circumstances it is only fair to recognize, as is indeed recognized by the co-sponsors of the draft resolution now before us [A/L.601/Rev.2], that the growth of the responsibilities of the General Assembly and its membership makes desirable a review of its procedures and the organization of its work.

165. The question before us is, then, not a new one, as the representative of Tunisia reminded us earlier.

Your predecessor, Mr. President, Mr. Mongi Slim, in his memorandum of 26 April 1962,⁹ stressed that two aspects of the working methods of the General Assembly seemed to require reconsideration. The first was the sharp increase in the number of Members, the second, the increase in the quantity and complexity of problems regularly submitted to the General Assembly for consideration. In response to the initiative of the President of the sixteenth session, the General Assembly created a special committee to improve the working methods of the General Assembly. It is well known that that Committee, of which France was a member, in March 1963 submitted a report¹⁰ the conclusions of which were taken up in resolution 1898 (XVII). As the representative of France said at the time, that could only be considered the first step. We welcome the fact that today it is being recommended that we continue along the same lines. The developments referred to in Mr. Mongi Slim's memorandum of eight years ago have continued: there were 110 Member States in 1962; there are 127 today; and the number of items on the agenda have increased apace. The slowness of General Assembly procedures has rendered it impossible for the Assembly efficiently to consider all the items on its agenda.

166. We think it important at this anniversary session, when, in the light of acquired experience, we have a chance to revitalize the Organization, for us to study the problems, remedy deficiencies, increase discipline and expedite our proceedings.

167. My delegation has thoroughly studied the steps we believe could achieve those objectives. We have wondered whether it might not be possible for us to decrease from one half to one third the quorum required for opening an Assembly meeting. As the President has pointed out, last year the General Assembly and its Committees lost 223 hours due to meetings not beginning on time. In the plenary alone 40 hours were lost. If the required quorum were reduced, that regrettable waste of time would be obviated. Of course, the majority required for a vote on a proposal would be maintained.

168. We wonder whether it might not be appropriate to consider having the conference of chairmen, which might make an important contribution to co-ordinating the work of a session, play a more important, definite and official role.

169. At this stage we do not propose to go into detail concerning these or other proposals that might be referred to the special committee it is suggested we establish. We should like that committee to do useful work and to contribute effectively to the improved functioning of the General Assembly.

170. We therefore support the thirty-two Power draft resolution contained in document A/L.601/Rev.2. We would welcome the setting up of a specialized body, and are fully prepared to participate in it.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 86, document A/5123.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Eighteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 25, document A/5423.

171. Mr. BEAULNE (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): I have asked for the floor at this stage of our deliberations to make a few comments on the amendments presented by our colleague from Bulgaria [A/L.607]—the text of which I have just received—which has been supported by the representative of the Soviet Union.

172. I am pleased that the speeches made from this rostrum by the representatives of Bulgaria and the Soviet Union have shown that they acknowledge the logic behind our draft resolution and recognize the usefulness of our initiative, differing only on one important point, namely the membership of the committee we have suggested.

173. I would point out that we came up against this difficulty from the very outset, a year ago. From the very outset we consulted all the great Powers and the majority of delegations present here this evening. Views varied and the figures suggested to us also varied. We started with one. We were told: "Give us a committee like the Pearson, Jackson, Tinbergen or Prebisch committees." Others said, "Three wise men would be much better." We gradually went from 5 to 7 to 12 to 14 to 15. From 15 the jump was made to 31. And 31 is just about the most we could accept.

174. During that examination other proposals were made to us: why not take membership that have already been established? Why not be content with what has already been done? Why not, for instance, the membership of the Security Council? We considered the figure of 15, and we suggested that the membership of the Security Council might be acceptable. But a large number of delegations pointed out that that would exclude a certain number of regions that wished to participate in this work. And we encountered similar obstacles in respect of all formulas.

175. The one proposed by the representative of Bulgaria—the membership of the General Committee—seems to be based on rules 40, 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure. But I should like to point out that under rule 31 of the rules of procedure, the General Committee is elected only for the session in progress. The President and Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly are elected only for the duration of the session concerned; when that session concludes its work they have no further authority and their mandate is not extended.

176. Secondly, the Chairmen of some of the Committees are elected not only for geographical reasons, but very frequently because of their personal qualities. Therefore, that is not always necessarily a useful criterion for setting up the kind of committee that we have in mind.

177. The representatives of Bulgaria and the Soviet Union are entirely correct when they say that rules 40, 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure do provide that the General Committee should exercise certain responsibilities with respect to procedural matters and the organization of work. However, the General Com-

mittee has never done so. Why has it never done so and why would it be impossible for it to do so now? It is not because the members of the General Committee lack a sense of responsibility with respect to work that has been assigned to them, or because they do not have any mandate to do so. On the contrary, it is simply because they are elected at the very beginning of the session of the General Assembly and they have only two days before getting down to work. During the session they are too overloaded with work to be able to deal in any reasonable fashion with questions that we would wish to entrust, as we suggest, to a special committee.

178. What is needed is not a General Committee which is harassed throughout the session and which, up to the very end of the session, has to see to the normal work of the session, but a Committee which might meet between sessions, and which might hear and examine suggestions presented to it by the majority of delegations present here, as well as by those not present here at a particular time. That work can only be done between sessions. If the interests of all delegations are to be taken into account, that work must be done in a more leisurely manner and in an atmosphere with less tension than that which usually prevails during the General Assembly.

179. The highly useful and wise proposal made by the representatives of Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, namely, to make fuller use of the provisions of rules 40, 41 and 42 of the rules of procedure, which have not been applied since they were adopted, refers precisely to those matters that we propose should be entrusted to the special committee.

180. The sponsors of the draft resolution have been in consultation for a whole year with delegations and they tried many times to change the original text of their draft to take account of all the difficulties and fears and other ideas in the minds of those who studied it. Moreover they know that by now they have the acquiescence of the overwhelming majority of the Members of the General Assembly. I would therefore urge the representative of Bulgaria to withdraw his amendment. The committee that we suggest would make it possible for more disciplined work to be carried out. It is not necessary to extend the debate on this subject.

181. I have made my statement with far less eloquence than have some of the other sponsors, such as the representatives of Chile, India and the Netherlands. I say this very candidly, however, and I venture to hope that my colleague from Bulgaria will heed my appeal on behalf of the sponsors. I feel also that I am making this appeal on behalf of all members.

182. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) (*interpretation from French*): We have followed the discussion with considerable attention. It is a fact that the question before us was raised at the beginning of this year by the delegation of Canada. But it is also true that during the whole of that period we have not had sufficient material to study the proposal as it stands.

183. The representative of Canada has emphasized the fact that the delegations of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Soviet Union have contributed to strengthening the argumentation in support of his proposal. Certainly the delegation of Bulgaria has never refused to do anything that would improve the work of the United Nations. We have always tried to contribute to the improvement of the work of the various committees and commissions in which we have taken part.

184. The representative of Canada went on to say that this was only a matter of numbers. At one time when 25 was being considered a general inquiry had been made and a figure of 31 was deemed to be more appropriate.

185. In any event 31 is quite adequate—or should it be raised to 127, if really high numbers are desired? I do not think that this is a matter of numbers. It is rather a question of what type of committee should be entrusted with this kind of work. The General Committee, as is well known, is also a committee, and the General Committee has been in existence throughout the whole of the work of the Organization. It is true that it does not sit between sessions, but, of course, it could be authorized to do so. However, we do not propose that. We feel that there is no need to establish a new committee of the United Nations. I shall come back to this point a little later.

186. During the session, as the General Committee considers the procedures of the General Assembly and how to improve its work, it could deal with the difficulties and note many of the errors that are committed. If that information were transmitted to the session in progress, or to the subsequent session, very useful work would be done by the General Committee, which the General Committee of the next session could also benefit from. The Secretariat, of course, could be requested each time to draw the necessary conclusions and make the necessary suggestions.

187. The representative of India, Mr. Sen, said that each General Committee could only record the difficulties and it could do no more than take note of them or set them down. And yet, if it can note them, it can make recommendations for improvements immediately at the end of the session which would then remain in its records and these would be shown to the subsequent General Committee, so that the General Committee has an opportunity to work in that direction.

188. Other delegations have suggested that we should not wish to have a public debate on this question, or should not wish to have a public debate which would be too generalized and prolonged throughout the whole year, for the General Assembly session might become extended throughout the whole year if we operated on that basis. Yet, if we were to set up committees that worked throughout the year, and special committees at that, we should have debates throughout the whole of the year. They might perhaps not be public—they might perhaps be secret—but this would be

General Assembly work throughout the year, and delegations would be responsible for doing it throughout the year, and the General Assembly through its organs would in fact be engaged in work throughout the year. What we suggest is that this be done only at the sessions.

189. On the other hand, the representative of the United States, in speaking of the proposal, also indirectly supported the proposal that we have just made. Indeed in his intervention he said:

“My Government has already initiated a new study of the Assembly's procedures. We hope to be in a position to present to the committee some concrete suggestions for procedural reform. One step was taken by the Assembly this year, on the General Committee's recommendation, which we believe the new procedural committee should examine with a view to its expanded use in future years. I refer to the Assembly's decision, pursuant to rule 40 and in the light of its over-all workload, to postpone consideration of some items and to include them in the provisional agenda for next year. This type of pruning of the very lengthy agenda with a view to highlighting priorities seems to us essential if the Assembly sessions are to be kept within reasonable length and focused on the most relevant current problems.”¹¹ [*See para.145 above.*]

190. Therefore this indicates that the General Committee could do the work, as was pointed out by the representative of Canada, Mr. Beaulne. That is why we feel that this proposal is worthy of consideration. We know that delegations have indicated that they are against the proposal we have made, but we feel that it deserves more detailed consideration.

191. The representative of the Netherlands, for instance, said that the General Committee would not have any possibility other than to comply with the existing procedure, under the rules of procedure. First, I would ask whether we have already exhausted all the possibilities of the rules and the existing procedures.

192. Have we exhausted those possibilities? I am not at all certain that we really have exhausted all the possibilities. I am not at all certain that the General Committee has sought and has been asked to do so. Thus this already represents something. It is not true that the General Committee has not the right to look into procedures from time to time as was asserted by some representatives. Of course, if the General Committee is asked, it can make recommendations concerning procedures to be followed and concerning changes to be made, even in the rules of procedure. The General Committee is an organ of the General Assembly. It reports to the General Assembly and, especially if the General Assembly asks it to do so, it can do so itself.

193. Then there is another question that has arisen here, and I wonder whether we should immediately hurry into a decision to study all the rules of procedure

¹¹ Quoted in English by the speaker.

and to change them quickly. Have we in fact exhausted all the possibilities offered by the rules of procedure? Have we tried to do so?

194. I think it would be well for the General Committee, within the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to be asked to study all the possibilities that are offered to improve, rationalize and render more expeditious the procedures of the General Assembly. If it runs into any difficulties, it should take note of them, take appropriate decisions and report accordingly to the General Assembly, offering proposals for consideration.

195. We feel that in that way our proposal is definitely worthy of consideration and it should be considered by the sponsors of the draft resolution as well as by the membership of the Assembly as a whole.

196. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker on the list. The General Assembly can now vote on the proposals. Inasmuch as the amendments proposed by Bulgaria [A/L.60] has been circulated in three languages and has been amply discussed, the Assembly might perhaps be ready to take a decision on those amendments. Furthermore, the report of the Fifth Committee [A/8153] on the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2 and Add.1, has been distributed and discussed. Therefore the General Assembly is in a position to take a vote.

197. According to rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly will vote first on the amendments proposed by Bulgaria. We will vote on the first amendment.

The amendment was rejected by 56 votes to 17, with 24 abstentions.

198. If the President has properly understood, it is not now necessary to vote on the second amendment which is consequential upon the first, which the Assembly has just rejected.

199. The General Assembly will now vote on draft resolution A/L.601/Rev.2 and Add.1.

The draft resolution was adopted by 88 votes to none, with 12 abstentions (resolution 2632 (XXV)).

200. Paragraph 1 of the operative part of the resolution states that the General Assembly:

“Requests the President of the General Assembly to establish during its present session a Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly, consisting of thirty-one Member States . . . ”

I shall announce in due course the composition of the Special Committee.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.