

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**747th
PLENARY MEETING**
(Opening Meeting)

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at 3 p.m.

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President: Mr. Charles MALIK (Lebanon).

Temporary President: Sir Leslie MUNRO (New Zealand).

AGENDA ITEM 1

Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of New Zealand

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I declare open the thirteenth regular session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

AGENDA ITEM 2

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I invite the representatives to stand and observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

The representatives stood in silence.

Address by Sir Leslie Munro, Temporary President, Chairman of the delegation of New Zealand

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: We begin this thirteenth session of our Assembly only a few weeks after we have met in emergency special session to consider the renewal of crisis in the Middle East.

4. May I here, at the outset of this Assembly, reiterate the hope I expressed when we ended the emergency session: may deeds flow from the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 August 1958 [resolution 1237 (ES-III)], deeds which help to make the principles of the United Nations more effective in the Middle East. It is not so much in what they say, important as words are, but in what they do, that

the Members of this Organization will prove that they adhere to their Charter undertakings.

5. The nations of the Middle East which have been most closely concerned with the crisis there, and which are primarily to be looked to for its removal, played a decisive role in our recent deliberations in enabling the Assembly to arrive at a unanimous recommendation. By this action, they emphasized their commitment to observe the injunction that States should "practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours". By this joint action they also enhanced the ability of our Organization to encourage peaceful processes of reconciliation. The solution which is now being sought, with the disinterested assistance of our Secretary-General, is a United Nations solution. All of us—not merely the Middle East countries, or the major Powers, but all the Governments represented in this Assembly—therefore have an obligation to contribute to that solution.

6. Events since the twelfth session serve to emphasize the fact that we live in an irrevocably interdependent world. They serve to remind us, also, that the imperatives of that interdependence, both within regional societies and in broader spheres of inter-governmental contact, have, unhappily, not been fully heeded. In a time of rapid change it would, of course, be pointless to expect that there should be no serious cleavages of opinion, and no conflicts of aim and policy. But when we remember the manifold opportunities offered, within this Organization and through other means, for the peaceful negotiation of disputes, we ought not to resign ourselves passively to the belief that changes can occur only to the accompaniment of violence, antagonism, and disorder.

7. It is the supreme task of this Organization—a task which it has yet to fulfil—to see to it that transitions in human affairs in any part of the world are not determined by force, that security in one half of the world is not founded on attempts to deny security to the rest of the world, and that peace means more than the absence of war. If the United Nations is to make

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its full impact on the problems which confront it, its Members must make a more resolute effort to adjust their national policies to the larger objectives of the Charter. The measure of that effort will decide the future of the Organization and of peace among nations. A principal aim must still be to make easier the evolution of peoples towards increased freedom in conditions of greater safety.

8. It can, I think, properly be claimed that despite its many other preoccupations the United Nations has not allowed the events of recent months, or the continuing difficulties in great Power relations, to obscure its obligations to help the less developed countries in their struggle to win better standards of life for their people. During the last decade we have been fortunate to witness the emergence of vigorous new sovereignties in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. There are few, if any, of these nations which are not labouring devotedly to break the vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy and disease in which their people for too long have been bound.

9. During the past year, the momentum of the Organization's economic and social activities has not slackened; important new beginnings have been made, and the foundations laid for further progress. The Second United Nations International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy has been meeting in Geneva. It can confidently be predicted that its work will hasten the day when the benefits of this vast new power will be extended throughout the globe.

10. From all this we can, I believe, derive considerable encouragement. The results of United Nations activities, as well as of numerous multilateral and bilateral programmes, have been of immense benefit in supplementing national endeavours. They have brought greater hope to millions, pushing back the frontiers of want and misery and building confidence where none existed before. But they mark only the beginning; and great needs remain unsatisfied in countries which have shown a capacity for sound planning, progressive social attitudes and a concentrated domestic effort.

11. It is indisputably true that poverty anywhere menaces prosperity everywhere. But it is also indisputably true that the disparity between the advanced and the less developed countries is growing. Surely it is nothing less than tragic that, while this should be so, the richest Powers on earth should expend their wealth and stretch their nerves in mutual fear and hostility—and this at a time when man's increasing mastery of his physical environment has put him in reach of undreamed-of plenty.

12. Let us hope that the discussions to be held at this thirteenth session of the General Assembly on one of the most dramatic of mankind's technological triumphs—I refer to the exploration of outer space—will clear the way for an early accord that outer space will be used solely for peaceful and scientific purposes. Our opportunities have been made immeasurably large; our responsibilities have grown in like measure.

13. In the critically important field of disarmament, it will be recalled that the Assembly ended its twelfth session in a state of deadlock, deprived of agreement either on what practical steps should be taken to check the arms race, or on the forum in which a solution should be sought. In view of this deeply

disquieting fact, it is especially encouraging that the Geneva talks on the technical aspects of suspension of weapons tests should have been brought to a successful conclusion. It will be a world-wide hope that the negotiations to be pursued in Geneva at the end of October 1958 will bring an equally successful result.

14. The central problem of disarmament, however, brooks no delay. It is, I believe, urgent that there should be a resumption and intensification of the effort to reduce the burden of armament and of fear weighing so heavily on the world.

15. Members of the Assembly, I shall not detain you longer. May I, in conclusion, say that it has been a very great privilege and honour to have been associated with you in the great United Nations enterprise and to have been able, with the wise advice of Mr. Hammarskjöld and Mr. Cordier, to have served you as your President.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Credentials of representatives to the thirteenth session of the General Assembly:

(a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee

16. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: In accordance with rule 28 of the rules of procedure, which provides that at the beginning of each session the Assembly should appoint a Credentials Committee, I should like to suggest that the Credentials Committee for the thirteenth session be composed of the following nine Members: Argentina, Chile, France, Nepal, Tunisia, Turkey, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America.

17. If there is no objection, I shall consider the proposal approved by the General Assembly.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 4

Election of the President

18. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: We shall now proceed to agenda item 4, which is the election of the President of the General Assembly.

19. Mr. DAVID (Czechoslovakia) (translated from Russian): In accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, which provides that all elections shall be held by secret ballot and that there shall be no nominations, the Czechoslovak delegation wishes to make the following statement with a view to ensuring that the forthcoming election of the President of the General Assembly follows the normal course.

20. By agreement with the other east European countries, the Czechoslovak delegation withdraws the candidature of Ambassador Jiří Nosek for the office of President of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly in favour of the candidate of the overwhelming majority of the Arab countries, to which Czechoslovakia is bound by the ties of traditional friendship.

21. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I now invite the Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly. The election will be held in accordance with rules 31 and 94 of the rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the Temporary President, Mr. Nisot (Belgium) and Mr. Voutov (Bulgaria) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

<u>Number of ballot papers:</u>	80
<u>Invalid ballots:</u>	0
<u>Number of valid ballots:</u>	80
<u>Abstentions:</u>	4
<u>Number of members voting:</u>	76
<u>Required majority:</u>	39
<u>Number of votes obtained:</u>	
Mr. Charles Malik (Lebanon)	45
Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Mahgoub (Sudan).	31

Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Charles Malik (Lebanon) was elected President of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly, and took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Charles Malik, President of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly

22. The PRESIDENT: Honourable Members of the General Assembly, friends and colleagues: I wish to express to you, on my own personal behalf and on behalf of my country, Lebanon, my profound gratitude for the honour which you have done me in electing me today as the President of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly. I shall endeavour to the best of my ability to live up to the trust that you have placed in me.

23. A president serves under the terms of the Charter. This I promise you to do with the utmost strictness and fidelity. A president also serves under the rules of procedure. These also I shall apply to the best of my ability, subject always, of course, to your own overriding opinion. Finally, once a man is elected President, he is by that very act made above his own country and his own region. He no longer, as President, serves either his country or his region. He serves the Organization and, through

it, the world. This I promise you also to observe and to obey to the best of my ability.

24. The sportsmanlike competition that has occurred here between me and one of my best friends, the Foreign Minister of the Sudan, is a healthy and wholesome thing in this world, which is often characterized by timidity and lack of virility. It is a good thing that we in the Middle East are beginning to feel the burden of responsibility to the extent that we welcome vigorous competition for the sake of peace and for the sake of service with one another. This wholesome, sportsmanlike phenomenon of competition is, as I said, something to be welcomed, and I want to assure the Assembly that I would have been just as happy to see my distinguished friend elected to this highpost; and I am sure that he would have served you in a most distinguished manner.

25. The relations that bind Lebanon to the Sudan and to our other sister Arab countries are so deep, so real and so lasting, that no incident like this wholesome, sportsmanlike event that we have witnessed in the past few days can possibly affect them. We shall always live as brethren, and we shall always endeavour to understand one another and serve one another to the best of our ability.

26. And now we have before us a heavy agenda; the issues are many and serious. We should turn our attention to them with all the power and devotion with which we may be endowed. I do hope and trust that all of us will bear with one another during the next several weeks and months and, in a spirit of forbearance and tolerance, patience and understanding and mutual accommodation—in such a spirit and with such an end in view—I trust that the thirteenth session of the General Assembly will prove to be a fruitful and successful event in international relations. Let us keep in mind the fact that all that we are doing here is in the service of peace with justice for the whole world.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.