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NOTE

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FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTH MEETING

Held in New York on Friday, 29 August 1969, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Jaime DE PINIES (Spain).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Algeria, China, Colombia, Finland, France, Hungary, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Senegal, Spain, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zambia.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1506)

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Letter dated 18 August 1969 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/9397).

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 18 August 1969 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/9397)

1. Mr. TARDOS (Hungary): My Government is very much aware of the fact that the implementation of the resolution of the General Assembly on decolonization has changed the composition of the membership of the United Nations and the political picture of this Organization. To promote the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples is one of the most important obligations of our Organization, and we should not stop that process; indeed, the decolonization resolution of the General Assembly [1514 (XV)] should be fully implemented. At the same time, we are also aware of the problems that may arise from the fact that many small States are joining this Organization. Therefore, we share the feelings of the Secretary-General that the problem of the micro-States should be studied. From that angle, we agree with the initiative of the United States Government namely that a group of experts of the Security Council be established to study this complex problem. We are of the opinion that any attempt to solve the problem must be undertaken with care. All possible consequences of a decision, be it legal, political, organizational or otherwise, must be properly analysed.

2. The United States delegation raised this question almost two years ago. Since that time not too much progress has been made. We were therefore a little surprised by the

timing of the United States delegation's request for this meeting, and especially surprised by the draft proposal contained in document S/9414. We are certain that the United States delegation has very thoroughly studied the question of the micro-States and we hope that it will share its knowledge with us. At the same time we hope that the contributions of other members of the Security Council to the working-out of a solution to the problem will render it more acceptable to the entire membership of the United Nations. For that reason we do not object to the establishment of a group of experts, and my delegation is ready to take part in its deliberations.

3. But my delegation feels that to request the Secretary-General, in the name of the Security Council, to inscribe an item on the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly entitled "Creation of a category of associate membership" would be committing members of the Council to a course of action, without having had the benefit of the work of the group of experts or, to be more precise, without being convinced that we can offer a timely and workable solution. Of course, if any Member of the United Nations feels that this question should be inscribed on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, it has the right to request the inclusion of such an item on the agenda; but today, my Government cannot subscribe to such a request by the Security Council without a discussion of the substance of the question.

4. After those observations, I should like to make one concluding remark: The institution of associate membership does not exist in Chapter II of the Charter, which describes carefully the conditions and procedures concerning membership in our Organization. Therefore, the establishment of any new type of membership by all means should be considered as a revision of the Charter, and Member States should act accordingly.

5. Mr. KHATRI (Nepal): For some years now, beginning in 1965, the Secretary-General has been drawing the attention of the Organization to the historical phenomenon of the emergence of small new States, often called "micro-States" or "mini-States", which are characterized by the smallness of their size and of their human and economic resources—a condition which, in the words of the Secretary-General, "can pose a difficult problem as to the role they should try to play in international life".¹ The Secretary-General believed the time had come for a closer examination of the question of association of those States with the United Nations.

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Supplement No. 1A* (A/6001/Add.1), page 2.

6. My delegation is grateful for the initiative taken by the United States delegation in bringing the question of those small States to the notice of the Security Council with a view to a further and detailed examination of the question by a committee of experts of the Council, and possibly by the General Assembly itself.

7. Given the complexities of the question, this examination will no doubt be a difficult task. None the less, our task has been made considerably less difficult by the fact that, since the publication of the Secretary-General's introduction to the annual report for 1965, valuable research and studies on the conditions and problems of those States have been carried out by individual scholars and institutions such as UNITAR, and also by the fact that the Secretary-General himself has discussed the question in somewhat more detail in the introductions to his annual reports for 1967 and 1968.

8. No one can claim that we would all necessarily agree with the conclusions drawn as a result of that valuable research and study as to the course of action that the United Nations should take in order to ease the difficulties of the problem which is our common concern. But those studies have largely succeeded in giving a clearer picture of the complexities of the question, so that we might say that we are now in a better position to consider it in its true perspective.

9. At our last meeting, we listened with the utmost interest and attention to the statement made by the United States representative, Ambassador Yost, in which he raised the matter in a very thorough way. The United States has suggested the creation of a category of associate membership for the benefit of those small States. To that end it is proposed that the Council request the Secretary-General to inscribe an item concerning this question on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, and that the Council refer this question for study and appropriate recommendation to a committee of experts.

10. At that meeting, we also heard preliminary observations on the question by the representatives of Finland, France, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. In the light of those observations it appeared to me that the general consensus was that the Council would be well advised to proceed in the consideration of the question with caution and no undue haste. Ambassador Bérard, in advocating a cautious approach, exhorted the Security Council to take into account the fact that any change in the conditions for membership would necessarily lead to a substantive modification of the Charter. My delegation is in full agreement with that view.

11. The need, as my delegation sees it, is for a more careful and thorough study of this important question. I would join in the support for the proposal made by the United States delegation that the Security Council refer the question to a committee of experts for study. The committee should be required to report the results of its study, and its recommendations, to the Security Council for further consideration.

12. As I understand it, although the United States delegation wishes that the report of the committee of

experts, and subsequently the recommendation of the Security Council, be made available to the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, we seem to agree generally that our action now would not prejudice or preclude future consideration and decision by the Council in this respect.

13. At this stage, I do not wish to go in detail into the substance of the matter in all its aspects, because we shall have an opportunity to do so during meetings of the proposed committee of experts. However, I feel that it would not be inappropriate for me to state the basic position of my delegation on this question.

14. Let me say at the outset that we have viewed the question on the basis of general principles, about which mention was made by Ambassador Yost in his statement.

15. First and foremost in our minds is the principle of the universality of our Organization. We have welcomed the emergence of new independent States and their admission to the United Nations. In our opinion, this happy trend, far from weakening the United Nations, has enriched it. My delegation was indeed very happy the other day when the representatives of France and the United Kingdom acknowledged, in glowing terms, the positive and beneficial contribution to the international community made by those new States, and by some of the smallest among them. Therefore it would appear but natural that the delegation of Nepal should not agree with the assumption that increase in the membership of the United Nations as a result of the emergence of what are called the "micro-States" would inevitably lead to the weakening of the Organization.

16. Furthermore, we regard the principle of the sovereign equality of States as the basis of the whole United Nations system. Provisions of the Charter make a distinction between the right to independence of a State and its right to membership in the United Nations. No State becomes a Member automatically by virtue of its independence. There are independent States which have, for various reasons, opted out of membership. States which apply for membership must satisfy certain conditions set in the Charter before they are admitted by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. In that respect the authority and discretion of the Council and the Assembly are supreme under the Charter. However, as we view this question, it seems to me that nothing contained in the Charter limits the right of independent States, even if they do not have the right to membership in the United Nations, at least to apply for it. In considering any criteria or categories of membership or associate membership, it is incumbent upon us to pay very particular attention to that aspect of the sovereign rights of independent States.

17. My delegation can envisage that in the future many emerging States may find the obligations of membership too onerous for them to bear. It is for those States themselves to decide. Consequently they might, in their judgement and for reasons of their own, deem it advisable to opt out of membership of the United Nations voluntarily. Because of these considerations, my delegation feels that, while it is prepared to join in the proposed study with a view to working out a beneficial system of association between the United Nations and those new small States

that for various reasons do not become Members, it does not necessarily mean that it is definitely committed to the idea of laying down any limitations or conditions for membership other than those already contained in Article 4 of the Charter.

18. We recognize that the question is of great importance and complexity and, therefore, is not susceptible of ordinary, easy solutions. When the Secretary-General drew our attention to this question some four years ago,² his principal concern was the protection and promotion of the legitimate aspirations for national security, economic and social development and international co-operation of the emerging small independent States, which, for reasons of their own, might not find it advisable to associate themselves with active membership in the United Nations. We fully share that concern.

19. My delegation would address itself to the task ahead of us with that objective uppermost in our minds. Both the Secretary-General's report and Mr. Yost's statement make reference to the fields of association that already exist between the United Nations and States which are not Members of the Organization. In the realization of our objective, we could, as a first step, start by defining those existing fields of mutual association and co-operation, extending them and seeking newer ones, without, however, doing violence to the fundamental principles and purposes of the Charter.

20. I could not conclude my observations on this question without paying a grateful tribute to my friend, the representative of the United Kingdom. During the nearly five years of my association with Lord Caradon, I have not always agreed with his views but I have come to regard him as truly a "United Nations man", to use his own term. His understanding of the problems connected with our Organization is profound, sincere and generous. Nothing reflects the profundity, sincerity and generosity of this understanding better than the two interventions he made at our last meeting.

21. Mr. AZZOUT (Algeria) (*translated from French*): Shortly after the Second World War, the newly established United Nations had barely 50 Member States, most of them Western. At the time, very few countries of Africa and Asia were independent and, hence, represented in the United Nations. As a result of the struggle waged by the peoples of Asia and Africa, the colonial system has been undermined and many peoples have acceded to independence and international sovereignty. Consequently, membership of the United Nations has increased considerably. This fresh blood built up the United Nations: in fact, it became a more faithful reflection of the new lines of force in the world. The Third World was emerging on the international scene as primarily a moral and political force. One of the first consequences of this new situation was the adoption by the United Nations of resolution 1514 (XV) containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. This historic Declaration, condemning the colonial system, closed one of the darkest chapters in the history of mankind.

22. Thus, the achievement of independence by a State was and is a source of great satisfaction to us.

23. It is true that accession to the United Nations Charter involves certain conditions, in particular those laid down in Article 4 to the effect that:

"Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving States which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgement of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations."

Thus, the United Nations reserved the right to consider the case of each State wishing to become a Member of the Organization.

24. In our view, however, one of the fundamental elements underlying the Charter remains the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Membership in the United Nations is itself still a prerogative of the international sovereignty of every State recognized as such.

25. We know, however, that for some years now in the introduction to his annual reports the Secretary-General has drawn our attention to the difficulties which might ensue from the entry into the United Nations of very small States with very limited resources.

26. Without going into the substance of the question at this stage, it may nevertheless be argued that because of the legal and political aspects involved, it is extremely complex. Therefore, in the opinion of my delegation the question of micro-States, which is the subject of our debate, should be referred to a committee of experts of the Security Council. The committee will be requested to make a detailed study of all aspects of this important question and to report to the Security Council at a later stage.

27. Mr. SHAHI (Pakistan): First of all I should like to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his foresight and persistence in drawing the attention of the Members of the United Nations to the question of the place and status of micro-States within the United Nations family of organizations in the light of long-term implications of the present historical trends.

28. Secondly, we join with the other members of the Security Council in thanking the United States delegation and Ambassador Yost for finally succeeding in making the Council become seized of the matter.

29. Thirdly, we should like to congratulate UNITAR for the excellent study on the status and problems of very small States and Territories.³ That study will greatly facilitate a search for a realistic but at the same time, an equitable solution of the question of the relationship between such States and the United Nations family in full conformity with the Charter of the United Nations—as has been so rightly stressed by Ambassador Bérard of France.

30. My delegation has followed with great interest the statements made by four of the permanent members of the Security Council, by the delegation of Finland and by the other delegations that have spoken today. Those inter-

³ *Small States and Territories: Status and Problems*, UNITAR Series No. 3 (New York, Arno Press).

² *Ibid.*

ventions have greatly clarified the issues. In particular, we should like to say how greatly we appreciate the emphasis that the representative of the United Kingdom, Lord Caradon, has placed on the importance of meeting the needs and aspirations of the small countries, the needs of economic development and the aspirations to security.

31. At this time we should like to reserve our position on the substance of the question until the Security Council's committee of experts is able to consider it fully. We are ready to support the proposal to establish such a committee and to refer the question to it for study.

32. Mr. M'BENGUE (Senegal) (*translated from French*): The question before the Council today was, as everyone knows, raised by the United States delegation. It is in fact a problem of quite long standing which has already been mentioned several times by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his annual reports. In search of a solution to this problem, the United States delegation felt that it should submit for our consideration a proposal whereby the Secretary-General would be requested to place the question entitled "Creation of a category of associate membership" on the agenda of the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

33. My delegation has listened carefully to the statements of the representatives who have spoken before me and who stated their Governments' views about the association of newly independent States with the United Nations. The Senegalese delegation believes that the United Nations should not impose new criteria for admission on newly independent States. Those States, in the view of my delegation, should retain the freedom and right to request membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter, which clearly defines the conditions for the admission of new States. I must state here that we are opposed to any idea of new criteria.

34. Moreover, as certain representatives and particularly the representative of France have already pointed out, the introduction of changes in the conditions for admission may raise problems which could be difficult and delicate and might even lead to a significant alteration of the Charter.

35. Under these circumstances, my delegation considers it advisable, before any final decision is taken, to submit the problem to a competent organ of the United Nations, which would make a thorough study of the question. After this preliminary work, which in the view of my delegation is necessary and which would have the great advantage of defining the scope and content of the problem, the Council could meet again to recommend the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly, which will have the final word on the substance of the question.

36. Therefore, in conclusion, my delegation would like to state that, in the light of the observations made at the outset of our statement, we should like to see a change made in the title of this item, which seems to prejudge the position of the Council on the substance of the problem.

37. Mr. SOLANO LOPEZ (Paraguay) (*translated from Spanish*): Like others who have spoken before us, my

delegation feels that a thorough study of the questions on the agenda of our preceding and present meetings may be extremely useful to the future of the United Nations.

38. The Secretary-General U Thant, has at various times, and particularly in the introduction to his annual report on the work of the organization for the year ending 15 June 1967,⁴ referred at some length and in great earnest to the question of the so-called micro-States, which involves the concept of the universality of the United Nations.

39. In this connexion, we thank the United States delegation for bringing the question now before us to the Council's attention. In a sense, this discussion represents payment of an outstanding debt owed not only to the distinguished Secretary-General but also to the United Nations itself.

40. With regard to the procedures whereby the Council could ensure that its work is both useful and legally acceptable, my delegation believes that the best method would be for a study of the various questions dealt with in the letter contained in document S/9397 to be made by a committee in which each member of the Council would have every opportunity to express his views on the various aspects—especially the political and legal aspects—of these questions and their implications, in order to seek the common denominators reflecting the opinion and the collective will of the members of the Council.

41. My delegation is confident that, at this stage in our discussion, this is the course which the Security Council should follow in the present state of affairs.

42. In conclusion, it goes without saying that this statement implies no judgement on the substance of the questions I have mentioned.

43. Mr. MORALES SUAREZ (Colombia) (*translated from Spanish*): The delegation of Colombia has listened with close attention to the statement by the United States delegation on the problem of the so-called micro-States, a problem which has already been mentioned repeatedly by the Secretary-General.

44. My delegation is grateful for these explanations, which we think are useful and necessary for the satisfactory discharge of the functions of the Organization. We favour consideration of the problem by a committee of experts, whose task should be broadly defined so as to set no limitations on the aspects to be considered. The legal and political elements involved are so important that my delegation feels it would be premature and even hazardous to do more than express support for a comprehensive study of the problem.

45. Mr. CHANG (China): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to discuss a question which is of the greatest importance to the future of the United Nations. This is the question of how to deal with the growing number of what has often been referred to as "micro-States" within the framework of the United Nations.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-second Session, Supplement No. 1A.*

46. This question is, of course, not new. The Secretary-General has repeatedly called attention to the problem. Ambassador Yost, in his opening statement, last Wednesday [1505th meeting], outlined the reasons why the Council should at this moment act on the question. Inasmuch as, he said, there are now no applications for membership before the Council, the question of principle can be addressed in the proper perspective and with the greatest objectivity. It seems to my delegation that the arguments he has advanced in support of the draft resolution [S/9414] he has proposed are both cogent and persuasive.

47. I believe that all members of the Council are agreed that a general influx of micro-States would, to quote the Secretary-General, "lead to a weakening of the United Nations itself".⁵ Membership in the United Nations, moreover, is not an unmixed blessing for the small Territories which may one day attain independent statehood. There is therefore, I believe, merit in the United States proposal that a new and separate category of associate membership should be created to accommodate those future independent States which are too small in size and population and too poor in resources to assume the obligations of full membership. The status of associate membership would enable those States to play a role in the international community without being burdened by the responsibilities of regular representation in the United Nations.

48. My delegation is, of course, aware that there is another side to the question. Most of the small Territories which may one day emerge as independent States are today part of the colonial system. For the colonial peoples the end of the colonial rule marks the beginning of a new process: the conversion of nationalism into nationhood. Membership in the United Nations has served this purpose. It has become a badge of independence, the credentials of sovereignty and the symbol of nationhood. It is only when a new nation takes its place in the grand hall of the General Assembly that it considers itself as having arrived.

49. The question of micro-States is thus one of great complexity. It seems to my delegation that the conditions of membership laid down in Article 4 of the Charter, if strictly applied, would be adequate to deal with the question. The General Assembly and the Security Council have under that Article a discretionary power to pass on the ability of a State seeking admission to the United Nations to fulfil its obligations under the Charter. It is because the Charter conditions for membership have not always been strictly applied that the United Nations is now faced with the problem of micro-States.

50. That being so, my delegation finds itself in essential agreement with the proposal set forth in the statement of Ambassador Yost. The proposal does, however, pose a number of important and delicate questions. Further study of the problem is thus called for. Perhaps the most practical procedure to be followed under the circumstances is to entrust the problem to a committee of experts. That seems to be the consensus of the Council.

⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 164.

51. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Spanish*): If no other member of the Council wishes to speak, I should like to make a statement on behalf of my country, SPAIN.

52. When the time comes, my delegation will give a detailed explanation in the committee of experts of its views on the subject before us. Because of the importance of this matter, however, I consider it appropriate to make some preliminary considerations.

53. In the view of my delegation, the study we are to make in the committee of experts should cover solely and exclusively the future relationship with the United Nations to be offered to sovereign and independent States, bearing in mind that active participation as full members might, in the opinion of those sovereign States, place an excessive burden on their limited resources.

54. We have followed with great attention the statements made by various representatives and my delegation has noted the importance attached by some delegations to the problem of decolonization. This is not the problem we have to consider. The United Nations has already laid down the principles on the basis of which the decolonizing process must continue relentlessly in all dependent territories; although in most cases it is obvious that the interests of the peoples concerned must be paramount, it is no less true that in other cases, either because imported populations or certain specific interests are involved, the principle of territorial integrity must prevail.

55. To us that is clear. There is already a whole series of United Nations resolutions on certain specific cases and it is therefore unnecessary to refer to them at this time.

56. The study made by UNITAR on the status and problems of very small States and territories has also been mentioned here. This important study was made by a group of experts who tried to examine thoroughly and in depth all the problems raised. Nevertheless, we should like to point out that the study is incomplete in certain respects, particularly when it refers to territories where the principle of territorial integrity should prevail. It confines itself to giving the viewpoint of the administering Power and the claimant Power, without referring to the decisions adopted by the General Assembly. We feel that a reference to a body of doctrine already established by the United Nations would have been of particular value, since it would then be unnecessary to go into the controversial and disputed views of the respective parties; the attentive reader would be able to see at a glance what was the opinion and the decision of this international Organization, which has already passed judgement on the question.

57. As to the substance of the matter before us, my delegation considers that in making the study the Security Council committee of experts must be fully aware that whatever is decided must always be an alternative offered to the sovereign State. The Charter of the United Nations proclaims in its Preamble the equal rights of nations large and small and Article 2, paragraph 1, confirms that statement when it establishes that "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members".

58. There can be no doubt, so far as my delegation is concerned, about the significance and scope of this principle of the sovereign equality of States, which permits any independent State, in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Charter, to knock at the doors of this Organization. Nevertheless, we share the concern expressed by the representative of the United States about the need to study the problems posed for the United Nations by the possibility of admitting a large number of States with very limited resources.

59. In the view of my delegation, it is appropriate and timely to heed the appeal of the Secretary-General and thoroughly examine all the legal, political and economic implications of the question, in order to arrive at solutions beneficial both to the United Nations and to the States which may eventually aspire to membership in the Organization.

60. Consequently, in our opinion, what we must try to do is to offer an alternative to those sovereign States which, because their resources are limited, may consider that the advantages they can derive from participating in the activities of the United Nations, without having to become full Members, are such that they should feel satisfied, without this placing an excessive economic burden on them. We do not, however, believe we are in a position to judge *a priori* whether a State should be a full Member, on the basis of criteria different from those already established in Article 4 of the Charter which, as we know, lays down necessary and sufficient conditions for membership in this Organization. In other words, with that reservation, it is certainly not for us to judge whether, for economic reasons or because of the excessive economic burden involved, we can bar a State from membership in the United Nations. This would require an alteration of the Charter; so long as the Charter remains in its present form, however, the only course open to us would be the one I have just mentioned: to let the sovereign State decide for itself which alternative to adopt.

61. Speaking again as PRESIDENT of the Council I would say that following consultations on the subject, I understand there is no objection to the establishment of a committee of experts, consisting of all members of the Security Council, to study the question considered at our 1505th and 1506th meetings.

It is so decided.

62. The representative of the United States has asked to speak and I now call on him.

63. Mr. BUFFUM (United States of America): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to thank you very much for the

courtesy, co-operativeness and capability with which you have conducted the consultations leading up to the action just taken by the Council this morning. I think there is no doubt that these qualities have typified your conduct of office, and as the month of August nears its close I merely want to say to you how deeply indebted I am sure we all feel to you for the manner in which you have discharged the onerous duties of the Presidency.

64. Secondly, I wish to extend to all members of the Council our deep appreciation for the positive spirit they have evidenced and the support they have given for the agreement reached in establishing a Committee to examine all the questions involved in the relationship between the micro-States and the United Nations. We regard this action today and the numerous statements we have heard as clear evidence that the Council is in fact unanimous in recognizing that this is a serious subject and one which deserves our most careful attention. If I may say so, I think that the representative of Paraguay put it very well when he said that in taking this step we discharge a duty not only to the Secretary-General but also to the United Nations as an institution.

65. I would recall briefly that my delegation had considered this to be an ideal time to raise this subject since there is no concrete application for membership pending. Accordingly, while the time is right, we wish to see this matter pursued urgently, and indeed we would hope that the first meeting of the Committee of Experts will take place during this coming week. As indicated in Ambassador Yost's statement on 27 August, our objective would be to see the work of the Committee concluded in time for this Council to consider the matter again in order that it may recommend appropriate action during the next session of the General Assembly.

66. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words addressed to me.

67. If no other representative wishes to speak, since this is probably the last meeting over which I shall preside this month, I should merely like to thank each and every member for the exceptional co-operation they have extended to me in the discharge of my duties.

68. Before adjourning the meeting, I also wish to thank the Secretary-General and the entire Secretariat which he represents for their co-operation.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.