



REPORT
OF THE *AD HOC* COMMITTEE
ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY - FIRST SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 29 (A/31/29)

UNITED NATIONS



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New York, 1976

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By resolution 3458 (XXX) of 11 December 1975 the General Assembly, in paragraph 3, requested the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to continue their consultations on the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean, with particular attention to the following six points:

(a) Purposes of a conference on the Indian Ocean;

(b) Date and duration;

(c) Venue;

(d) Provisional agenda;

(e) Participation;

(f) Level of participation.

In paragraph 4 of the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Ad Hoc Committee to continue its work and consultations in accordance with its mandate and to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session a report on its work, including the results of the consultations referred to in paragraph 3, mentioned above.

2. The Ad Hoc Committee reconvened on 10 May 1976 and held eight formal meetings (A/AC.159/SR.31-38) and a number of informal meetings at United Nations Headquarters between that date and 17 September 1976. The littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean held one informal meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 11 May 1976, which was presided over by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee.

3. As established by General Assembly resolutions 2992 (XXVII) and 3259 B (XXIX), the membership of the Committee continued to be as follows: Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia.

4. The elected officers of the Ad Hoc Committee continued to serve as follows:

Chairman: Mr. Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe (Sri Lanka);

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Djoko Joewono (Indonesia);

Rapporteur: Mr. Henri Rasolondraibe (Madagascar).

II. CONSULTATIONS PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPHS 3 AND 4
OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3468 (XXX)

5. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 3468 (XXX), the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, in a letter dated 10 February 1976, requested the littoral and hinterland States to communicate their views on the six points listed in paragraph 1 above. Replies were received from the following countries: Australia, Burma, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya and Pakistan. Some delegations indicated, during the discussion of the Ad Hoc Committee, that they had already submitted the views of their Governments on the six points in 1975 and that their positions either remained unchanged, or that they did not wish to add to their replies at the present stage.

6. At the meeting of littoral and hinterland States, held on 11 May 1976 (see para. 2 above), the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee made a statement summarizing comments received so far from littoral and hinterland States pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution 3468 (XXX) and in reply to a request for views about the convening of a conference directed to those States by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee in 1975.

7. When the statement was presented to the Ad Hoc Committee, some delegations emphasized that all exchanges on the points set out in paragraph 3 of resolution 3468 (XXX), as summarized by the Chairman, were of a preliminary and informal nature and that further intensive consultations among littoral and hinterland States were required before arriving at a consensus on various aspects of the convening of a conference. The substance of the above-mentioned summarized statement is set forth in paragraphs 8 to 15 below.

A. Purposes of a conference on the Indian Ocean

8. The Governments that had replied were agreed that the main purpose of the conference would be to achieve progress towards the practical implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Several replies urged the Great Powers to refrain from increasing and strengthening their military presence in the region. Some Governments stressed the importance of co-operation among the States of the region to ensure conditions of security as envisaged by the Declaration.

B. Date and duration

9. Most of the replies were flexible on this point and were ready to go along with the wishes of the majority. Several Governments stressed that the date for the conference could be fixed only in the light of the progress made with the preparations for the meeting. On the question of the duration of the conference, the suggestions that had been made favoured a period ranging from one to six weeks.

10. It was urged in the Ad Hoc Committee on 10 May 1976 that, if the conference was to be a success, the most careful preparations should be made and that the Ad Hoc Committee itself might function as the preparatory committee for the conference. There was one suggestion that, as part of the preparations, there should be ready for the consideration of the conference a draft instrument or instruments so that proper direction and purpose could be given to the deliberations of the conference.

C. Venue

11. Several Governments suggested that the conference should be held in one of the littoral or regional States of the Indian Ocean. Some States suggested Colombo as an appropriate meeting place, while others expressed their preference for holding the conference at United Nations Headquarters. Two Governments, Iraq and Mauritius, offered to act as host to the conference. Madagascar had stated that, if the conference was to be held in more than one stage, it would be prepared to serve as host for the first stage.

D. Agenda of the conference

12. The agenda of the conference would depend on the purposes of the conference as determined by the littoral and hinterland States. It was generally felt that the agenda should conform to the purpose of implementing the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. A number of States had suggested that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean or a preparatory committee should propose a provisional agenda. Among the many suggestions in regard to agenda items were the following:

- (a) Measures to create conditions of security in the area;
- (b) Delimitation of the zone and definitions of the principal ideas falling within the Declaration, such as "foreign military bases" and "context of great Power rivalry";
- (c) General assessment of the extent of great Power military and naval presence in the Indian Ocean;
- (d) Elaboration of measures for achieving the elimination of all foreign military bases conceived in the context of great Power rivalry and a reduction of their military and naval presence conceived in the context of great Power rivalries with a view to its eventual elimination;
- (e) A system of collective security without military alliances;
- (f) Regional co-operation in all fields, and not necessarily in the field of security alone;
- (g) Procedures for implementing such measures to establish a zone of peace.

E. Participation

13. Many Governments favoured the participation of the regional States as well as of the major Powers and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean. Some Governments suggested that, at least in the initial stages, the conference should be limited to the regional States. There was also a suggestion that the regional States should be full participants, while the major Powers and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean should be invited to attend as observers.

P. Level of Participation

14. Many replies suggested that the conference should be held at the plenipotentiary level. Some Governments indicated a preference for a ministerial level of participation. Yet other replies suggested that there could be a conference at the ministerial level preceded by a meeting of senior officials.

15. At the stage when the general question of implementation was being considered ministerial participation might be useful, but if ever the conference moved to the stage of discussing a treaty or convention it would be more appropriate for it to be held at the plenipotentiary level.

16. On 10 May 1976, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to invite China and Japan to participate in the consultations of the littoral and hinterland States with a view to convening a conference of the Indian Ocean. It also decided to extend a similar invitation to the other great Powers and major maritime users which are not members of the Ad Hoc Committee.

17. On 19 May 1976, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean addressed a letter to the Governments of the other great Powers and major maritime users mentioned above inviting them to participate in the consultations of the littoral and hinterland States.

18. In response to the letter, Greece, Liberia and Sweden accepted the invitation. France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America declined to participate in the consultations. Canada, the Netherlands and Norway expressed their preference not to participate at the present stage. Italy replied that the invitation was under consideration.

III. OTHER MATTERS

19. On 13 September 1976, the Ad Hoc Committee received a communication from the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid containing a statement issued by him on 9 September 1976 on the subject of the military and naval expansion by South Africa with particular reference to the peace in the Indian Ocean zone. The statement was read by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the same day and drawn to the attention of its members. Some delegations expressed concern over the developments mentioned in the statement. The Ad Hoc Committee requested the Chairman to reply to the communication from the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid accordingly.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

20. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean unanimously recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean
as a Zone of Peace

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, contained in its resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, and recalling also its resolutions 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, 3080 (XXVIII) of 6 December 1973, 3259 A (XXIX) of 9 December 1974 and 3468 (XXX) of 11 December 1975,

Reaffirming its conviction that concrete action in furtherance of the objectives of the Declaration would be a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security,

Noting the resolution adopted at the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries on the subject of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Proposal, 1/

Deeply concerned that there has been an escalation of the military presence of the great Powers conceived in the context of great Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, and believing therefore that the implementation of the purposes and objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace has acquired a new urgency,

Regretting that, despite repeated invitations, certain great Powers as well as certain major maritime users of the Indian Ocean have not so far found it possible to co-operate with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean,

1. Takes note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, 2/ in particular section II thereof concerning the consultations entered into by the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean in pursuance of paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 3468 (XXX);

2. Requests the Ad Hoc Committee and the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to continue their consultations with a view to formulating a programme of action leading to the convening of a Conference on the Indian Ocean;

3. Renews its invitation to all States, in particular the great Powers and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, to co-operate in a practical manner with the Ad Hoc Committee in the discharge of its functions;

4. Requests the Ad Hoc Committee to continue its work and consultations in accordance with its mandate and to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session a report on its work;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to render all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Committee, including the provision of summary records.

1/ A/31/197, annex, p. 124.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 29 (A/31/29).

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