

GENERAL
ASSEMBLYASSEMBLEE
GENERALEA/AC.21/SR.2
12 January 1948

ENGLISH ONLY

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

OF THE PALESTINE COMMISSION

Lake Success, New York

Saturday, 10 January 1948, at 11.00 a.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. Lisicky	(Czechoslovakia)
Members:	Mr. de Medina	(Bolivia)
	Mr. Federspiel	(Denmark)
	Mr. Morgan	(Panama)
	Mr. Francisco	(Philippines)
Secretariat:	Mr. Sobolev	(Assistant Secretary-General)
	Mr. Bunche	(Secretary)

CONSIDERATION OF PLAN OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

The CHAIRMAN stated that it would facilitate the work of the Commission if only one working language were used during the discussions. He suggested the use of English. He asked if there were any objections to this course.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) stated that there would be no objection as long as representatives might be allowed to make statements in the language of their choice, if they so desired.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) said that he could express himself most effectively if he were allowed to speak in his own language.

Mr. MEDINA (Bolivia) suggested that an interpreter should be placed at the disposal of Mr. MORGAN (Panama) and when statements were made in any language other than English there should be an official interpretation.

The Commission agreed to adopt this procedure.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) was of the opinion that as the discussions in the Commission were to be informal, only summary records of the discussions should be made.

The SECRETARY informed the Commission that this would be so, but that verbatim reporters would be available if the need arose.

The CHAIRMAN asked the SECRETARY to make a brief statement as to the official designation of the Commission.

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/The SECRETARY

The SECRETARY replied that after consideration it was thought that the most appropriate designation for the Commission would be "United Nations Palestine Commission".

It was agreed that the official designation of the Commission should be "The United Nations Palestine Commission".

The CHAIRMAN then called the attention of the members to the "Check List of certain tasks incident to the implementation of the Resolution of the General Assembly on Palestine" prepared by the Secretariat (document A/AC.21/W.1).

The SECRETARY pointed out an omission which had occurred in paragraph 1 (c) of the Check List, the words "immigration and land regulations" should be added after the word "citizenship" in the last line of that paragraph.

The CHAIRMAN said the Check List was in no sense a rigid plan of work but merely an enumeration of the major problems before the Commission and open to discussion. Referring to Section B, paragraph 2 of the Check List, he wondered whether the Commission was bound to take 9 February 1948 for the date of the submission of its first periodic monthly progress report to the Security Council. He thought it would be a more practical method to report on the first of each month.

It was agreed that this procedure should be adopted.

Mr. FEJERSPIEL (Denmark) said he had some doubts concerning the interpretation of paragraph 2 of B (4), Part I of the General Assembly's Resolution. He wondered whether the Commission was to notify the Security Council, and to take such action as it might deem proper, if by 1 April 1948 a Provisional Council of Government had not been selected for one of the States only, or for both. He thought the logical interpretation of this provision was that the Commission was to notify the Security Council if by 1 April 1948 a Provisional Council of Government had not been selected, or if selected was unable to carry out its functions, for either one or both of the States.

The CHAIRMAN agreed with the representative of Denmark that this was the most logical interpretation of the provision.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) asked what action the Commission should take if it were in doubt concerning the interpretation of its terms of reference.

After some discussion it was agreed that if any serious doubts arose concerning the interpretation of the terms of reference, the Commission should refer the question to the Security Council under whose guidance the Commission would be functioning.

The CHAIRMAN asked the members if they had any comments to make on Section A, paragraph 1, of the Check List.

Mr. FEJERSPIEL (Denmark) thought with reference to paragraph (c) that the question of the establishment of law courts should also be added.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the representative of Denmark to the fact that this question would be included in questions relating to the administration of justice, which was listed under 1 (c). He asked members if they had any further comments to make on the other paragraphs of Section A of the Check List.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) thought that, in connection with paragraph VI, (Preparation for application of United Nations Statute for the City of Jerusalem) the Commission might ask the Working Committee on Jerusalem of the Trusteeship Council for information on the substance of the Draft Statute for the City of Jerusalem.

The CHAIRMAN asked the Secretary to give a brief account of the progress up to date of that Committee.

The SECRETARY informed the members of the Commission that the Trusteeship Council had set up a six-member Working Committee to prepare a draft Statute, to be submitted for the approval of the Trusteeship Council at the second part of its Second Session in February 1948. This Working Committee had before the Christmas recess divided into two Working Groups, each charged with drafting specific parts of the preliminary draft Statute. These drafting groups had now finished their tasks and the preliminary draft Statute was being discussed in the Committee as a whole. It was anticipated that the final draft Statute would be approved within the next two weeks. The Trusteeship Council at the second part of its Second Session in February 1948 would approve the Statute and appoint a Governor for the City of Jerusalem.

It was agreed that the Commission might informally request the Chairman of the Working Committee for information on the draft Statute when it was finally completed, it being understood, however, that the Commission could not interfere in any way with the work of the Working Committee.

The CHAIRMAN then asked the members of the Commission for their views on how the work of the Commission should be divided. It was his thought that the most practical and effective method would be for each member to be given a specific task and to report on his conclusions to the Commission. Decisions would, of course, be made by the Commission as a whole.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) thought the Commission would have more power and would work more effectively as a group.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) held the view that the Commission should strike a middle course between the proposal of the Chairman and that of Mr. Morgan. If it considered itself in the light of a Cabinet, it could work effectively by allowing Members to submit recommendations individually while making decisions jointly.

Mr. FRANCISCO (Philippines) suggested that small sub-committees be set up to report to a committee of the whole. He enquired whether technical assistance /would be available

would be available to Members in discharging the tasks assigned them.

The SECRETARY stated that the Secretariat would provide such technical assistance as the Commission would require and that, irrespective of whether or not individual tasks were assigned to Members, the technical assistance would be at the disposal of the Commission as a whole.

It was the consensus that individual Members would be responsible to the Commission at all times and that all tasks discharged would have to be endorsed by the Commission as a whole.

The CHAIRMAN said he was of the opinion that the Commission should adopt some rules of procedure of its own. He intended to ask the Secretary to prepare draft rules of procedure which could be discussed at a later meeting. He asked the members if they had any objection to this procedure.

It was agreed that this procedure should be adopted.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the agenda for the next meeting should include: (1) Consideration of the General Assembly Resolution of 29 November 1947, and (2) Consideration of draft rules of procedure.

He asked members for their views on the question of issuing press communiques; at the end of each meeting, as the meetings of the Commission were to be held in private. Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) was of the opinion that members of the Commission should be extremely cautious in making statements to the press.

After a short discussion, it was agreed that for the present the SECRETARY would issue a short press release and the question of relations with the press could be considered further at a later meeting.

It was decided that no meeting would be held on Monday, 12 January, in order that the members might have an opportunity to study the various papers connected with the Palestinian problem.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.
