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COMMITTEE OF LEGAL ADVISERS ON PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW
(CAHDI)

27th meeting
Strasbourg, 18-19 March 2004

ITEM 14: OTHER BUSINESS:
REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

Document submitted by the delegation of Switzerland



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CABLE TELEVISION

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15 March 2004

Excellency,

As you know, I had scheduled Open-ended informal consultations of the plenary on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly for tomorrow, 16 March 2004, to continue discussions on the possible options for re-scheduling the work of the Main Committees of the General Assembly. The consultations were to have taken place bearing in mind the Note by the Secretariat (A/58/CRP.3) on this subject, which had been prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 58/126, entitled, "*Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly*."

I have, however, been receiving useful feedback from delegations on the Secretariat's Note, most particularly through the six Facilitators on the Revitalization item. Following consultations with the Facilitators, it seems to me that at this stage, it would be best if I were to make available my views on the direction that I believe we should now take in this matter. Consequently, an Informal Text entitled, "*Reordering the work of the General Assembly*" is attached for your information and attention.

Allow me to share with you the thinking that has led to the preparation of this text. While the effort that went into the preparation of the two Options identified in CRP.3 was welcomed, it has become apparent that neither Option meets with universal acceptance. Nonetheless, I believe it is fair to say that Option I, which calls for the Second, Third and Fifth Committees to meet in the autumn and for the First, Fourth and Sixth Committees to meet in the spring, has attracted the most attention. At the same time, a large number of delegations have expressed reservations about de-linking the deliberations of the First Committee from the annual general debate in the plenary.

All Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations

It has also become apparent that if the work of the Main Committees were to be scheduled over two substantive periods, the work of the plenary itself would have to be re-considered. At a minimum, the plenary would need to schedule a portion of its work during the second substantive period to take up the reports of the Main Committees. In fact, in order to have a rational balance of work between the two periods, it seems desirable to re-schedule the discussion of the items allocated to the plenary for consideration and distribute them between the two substantive periods.

Additionally, since a practice has developed in recent years of the Fifth Committee holding resumed sessions, it makes programmatic sense to institute, as a policy, what until now has been a habitual practice.

Allow me to emphasise that I firmly believe that reordering the work of the General Assembly will be of benefit to all delegations. Delegations large and small have indicated to me that they find it increasingly difficult to cope adequately with the present workload of the Assembly in the September to December period. I firmly believe that a reordering along the lines suggested in the Informal Text will serve the broad purpose of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Assembly.

I have requested the Secretariat to re-schedule the informal consultations of the plenary which were due to be held tomorrow for 22 March 2004, to allow time for delegations to consider and consult on the Informal Text.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Julian R. Hunte

INFORMAL TEXT

Reordering the work of the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 58/126 entitled, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly",

Recalling, in particular, paragraph B.2, of the Annex in which it determined that the work of the Main Committees of the General Assembly might benefit if it is scheduled over two substantive periods during the session,

Having considered the Note by the Secretariat entitled, "Options for the rescheduling of the Main Committees of the General Assembly"¹,

1. Decides:

- (a) to reorder the consideration of the agenda items before the General Assembly over two substantive periods. The first period will last from September to December and the second from February to April;**
- (b) that the items allocated for consideration by the plenary will be scheduled between the two substantive periods;**

¹ A/58/CRP.3.

(c) that the items allocated to the First, Second and Third Committees shall be scheduled for consideration during the first period;

(d) that the items allocated for consideration by the Fourth and Sixth Committees shall be scheduled during the second period;

(e) that the items allocated for consideration by the Fifth Committee shall be distributed appropriately between the two substantive periods;

2. Decides further that the new arrangements for reordering the work of the General Assembly shall be implemented with effect from the sixtieth session of the General Assembly;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to submit detailed proposals for the implementation of this resolution for consideration at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly bearing in mind that the rescheduling of the work of the plenary and Main Committees of the Assembly should not lead to additional costs, additional or longer meetings, or staggered work schedules of the Main Committees.