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Chairman: Mr. Károly CSATORDAY (Hungary).

AGENDA ITEM 105

Declaration on the denuclearization of Africa (*continued*) (A/5975, A/C.1/L.346)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. MALECELA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation considered the question of the denuclearization of Africa to be one of the most important topics on the agenda of the twentieth session of the General Assembly. The African people had been horrified at the lasting effects of the first atom bomb and retained its original conviction that the use of atomic weapons constituted a new form of genocide. Although most of the African peoples had still been under the colonial yoke, they had given their blessing to the first negotiations begun for the purpose of reaching an agreement on the control and prohibition of nuclear weapons; after independence, they had denounced the use of those weapons, which they considered the most heinous form of destruction. Summit Conference of Independent African States, held at Addis Ababa in May 1963, had decided unanimously to declare Africa a denuclearized zone; to oppose all nuclear and thermonuclear tests, as well as the manufacture of nuclear weapons; to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; to call for the destruction of existing nuclear weapons; to bring about, by means of negotiation, the end of military occupation of the African continent and the elimination of military bases and nuclear tests, such elimination constituting a basic element of African independence and unity; to appeal to the great Powers to reduce the quantity of conventional weapons, to put an end to the arms race and to sign an agreement on general and complete disarmament under effective international control; and to appeal to the great Powers, in particular the Soviet Union and the United States of America, to use their best endeavours to secure those objectives. The first regular session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, which had met at Cairo in July 1964, had reaffirmed that position in a declaration on the denuclearization of Africa to which the Nigerian representative had already referred at the 1387th meeting.

2. Man was devoting resources, energy and creative genius to developing a process which threatened the extinction of human life, and the African nations wanted no part in that suicidal process. Preferring to struggle for peace and a more abundant life for their peoples, free from hunger and disease, those nations had accordingly chosen a neutral position between the two major contemporary ideological and military blocs. An incidental effect of that policy was that the African States, together with the similarly motivated States of Asia and Latin America, could sometimes act as a buffer or as a bridge between the major opposing blocs. The African countries were anxious to remain non-aligned, and one way to ensure that was to prevent their continent from becoming a zone of conflict between the major nuclear Powers, i.e. to make it a nuclear-free zone. The African countries had therefore listened attentively to the various proposals which had been made in the past for the development of nuclear-free zones in other areas of the world. What they hoped for was denuclearization and the co-operation of all States, inside as well as outside Africa. He recalled that in resolution 1652 (XVI), of 24 November 1961, the General Assembly had called upon all Member States to consider and respect the continent of Africa as a denuclearized zone, and that the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries had recommended, at Cairo in October 1964, the establishment of denuclearized zones covering Africa, the Latin American countries, certain areas in Europe and Asia and the oceans, and had requested the nuclear Powers to respect those denuclearized zones.

3. His delegation and the other sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.346) therefore had every reason to hope that it would be adopted unanimously. It would be noted that the words "the continent of Africa" in the draft resolution must be taken to mean the continental land surface, the internal and territorial waters and the surrounding islands of Africa.

4. If the African countries undertook not to produce nuclear weapons, it was only fair that they should be able to ask others to spare them from the nuclear hell which the production of such weapons implied; and that was what the draft resolution called for. There was nothing in the draft resolution that was aimed against non-African States; on the contrary, its adoption would give a lead to other continents and regions. The spread of nuclear-free zones would be a major advance towards general and complete disarmament and, indeed, towards international peace and security.

5. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers in the general debate on the item under discussion would be closed not later than 4 p.m. that same day.

6. Mr. OBI (Nigeria) said that as the *Journal* for the preceding Friday had not indicated that the item would be taken up, he would ask that the list of speakers should not be closed before noon the following day.

7. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the debate on the item had begun at the previous meeting and that the practice had always been to close the list of speakers at the end of the second meeting devoted to a given item. In the present instance, however, he was prepared to wait until the beginning of the next day's meeting before closing the list of speakers.

8. Mr. OBI (Nigeria) said he would be grateful if the Chairman would wait until 11.30 the following morning before closing the list of speakers in order to give delegations absent from the current meeting the time to read about it in the *Journal* and to place their names on the list.

*It was so decided.*

9. Mr. GEBRE-EGZY (Ethiopia) said that in his delegation's opinion all the items with which the First Committee had been dealing were only part of the general problem of banning nuclear weapons. If it had voted in favour of many resolutions, it had been because it hoped that the United Nations would attain that supreme objective. It was in that same spirit that it considered the question of the denuclearization of Africa and supported the draft resolution before the Committee. The well-known history of the draft resolution was recalled in the preamble, and the operative paragraphs, too, were based on well-known facts.

10. The draft resolution sought to devise methods by which a convention on the denuclearization of Africa might be signed not only by African countries, which would be easy enough, but also by other countries which might be in a position to affect the continent of Africa; that was implicit in operative paragraph 5. The sponsors' idea, in drafting that paragraph, had been to get the co-operation of all countries, for it would serve no purpose for the African countries members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to declare their wish not to have nuclear weapons, not to acquire them and not to have them stationed in their respective territories if they were not supported by non-African countries and if the countries which were not members of the OAU did not adhere to the spirit of that declaration. The help of the United Nations was needed in that respect. If, then, the draft resolution was adopted unanimously, the States members of the OAU would prepare, with the assistance of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, a draft convention which they would then submit to the General Assembly, so as to obtain the support of all States and include those which were in a position to acquire nuclear weapons but were outside OAU. He therefore hoped that the Committee would give the draft resolution in general, and paragraph 5 in particular, the support it deserved. The draft resolution had the same objectives as the resolution on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (resolution 2028 (XX)), since it sought to prevent States from acquiring such weapons.

11. Before concluding, he wished to make a suggestion concerning the organization of the Committee's work. With reference to agenda item 29 (Question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament), which was to have been considered next by the Committee, he proposed that it should be sent back to the Eighteen-Nation Committee in view of the fact that the twentieth session was already far advanced and the First Committee would have very little time to consider the item. It would, however, have ample time to consider it at the twenty-first session. The importance of the subject justified that procedure and, moreover, in view of the decision taken by the First Committee earlier in the current session, it would be more appropriate to consider the item at the next session of the General Assembly.

12. Mr. KANE (Senegal) said that his country had joined thirty-three others in requesting the inclusion of the item on the denuclearization of Africa and was a sponsor of the draft resolution relating to it for both internal and external reasons. From the internal point of view, Senegal had no ambitions to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons or to allow any nuclear Power whatsoever to carry out tests or to transport or stockpile weapons of mass destruction within its national territory. From the external point of view, Senegal continued to advocate a policy of dialogue between nations and the settlement of all disputes by negotiation. That was why Senegal had supported General Assembly resolution 1652 (XVI) and the resolutions and declarations adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at their conferences in May 1963 and July 1964. He recalled that the resolutions adopted by the African Heads of State had been supported by the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo in October 1964, and read out the relevant passages from the declaration adopted at Cairo.

13. It was easy to understand why all the African countries were as one in desiring the denuclearization of their continent. African was not yet faced with all the complex problems which made the establishment of nuclear-free zones difficult, but it was aware that on 13 February 1960 the first atomic explosion on African soil had taken place, and it had not forgotten the tension and acrimony in which the Committee's discussions had taken place during the Caribbean crisis in October 1962. In that connexion, Senegal would congratulate the Latin American countries which had united to adopt a declaration on the denuclearization of their continent and earnestly hoped that all the Latin American States would subscribe to it. It was encouraging to note that, at the Conference of the Organization of American States, the United States Secretary of State had just reaffirmed his country's support for the idea of a Latin American denuclearized zone. As some African States were capable of manufacturing atomic weapons, there was every reason to act quickly, and that position was further reinforced by General Assembly resolution 2028 (XX) on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and by the draft resolution on the suspension

of nuclear tests adopted on 26 November by the First Committee. His delegation considered that by now adopting a resolution on the denuclearization of Africa, the Committee would reinforce the ideas contained in the resolutions just mentioned, since the prohibition of tests as well as of the stockpiling or transport of nuclear weapons on the African continent would constitute a means of limiting the acquisition of such weapons.

14. The Powers possessing weapons of mass destruction should therefore refrain from testing nuclear weapons, installing launching pads for missiles with nuclear warheads, or storing nuclear weapons, and from transporting nuclear weapons by water, land or air throughout the African continent and in the seas adjacent. The nuclear Powers must also abstain from using African States whose Governments might incline to their side to introduce nuclear weapons into Africa.

15. For its part, Senegal was prepared to make a unilateral declaration of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons such as the Italian delegation had proposed in the Eighteen-Nation Committee,<sup>1/</sup> and it would be very glad to see such a declaration considered and adopted by all the African countries. That being so, Senegal was all the more willing to subscribe to any international treaty or any declaration concerning the denuclearization of Africa. He hoped that the States whose people loved peace and freedom would vote in favour of the draft resolution under consideration.

16. Mr. BARNES (Liberia) recalled that one of the chief considerations which had led the Assembly to adopt resolution 1652 (XVI) was the concern of Africa and the international community about the spread of nuclear weapons and the need to prevent Africa from becoming involved in the competition associated with the nuclear arms race. It was also recognized that the problems of economic and social development confronting Africa required the uninterrupted attention of the African States without the additional burden entailed by the manufacture or acquisition of nuclear weapons.

17. In spite of the progress indicated by the Antarctic Treaty, the partial test ban treaty and other collateral measures, it must be recognized that not a single nuclear weapon had as yet been destroyed and that the military power of the nuclear Powers continued to increase. Because of the present situation, it was obvious that, for political, economic and strategic reasons, Africa should be considered a nuclear-free zone, and should not find itself in the paradoxical position of spending huge sums, far beyond its means, in the fervent hope that there would be no need to use the nuclear weapons thus produced and pledging at the same time not to be the first to use

them. Nor did Africa wish to be drawn into the conflicts of the big Powers by allowing their nuclear weapons on its territory and thus opening itself to the risk of becoming a battleground for the forces of East and West. In case of war, nuclear bases in Africa would be targets of attack; the deterrent effect of the possession of nuclear weapons, of which so much was heard, would not prevent the ruin of both sides once the conflict had begun.

18. It was for those reasons and others that the Organization of African Unity had issued a solemn declaration on the denuclearization of Africa, which had been supported by the non-aligned countries in the declaration adopted at their Cairo Conference, and that twenty-one delegations, including his own, had submitted the draft resolution under consideration. After drawing attention to the chief points of the draft resolution, he said that although the ushering-in of the nuclear age had aggravated the problem of disarmament, the draft resolution would have the effect of furthering the efforts to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. It was therefore the duty of all delegations devoted to that goal to support its adoption.

19. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) said that, since the great Powers were unable to reach agreement on even the partial and gradual destruction of nuclear weapons, and in view of the almost insurmountable difficulties involved in extending control provisions to the treaty contemplated, the efforts being made by the African countries to secure the denuclearization of their continent were to be welcomed. The Latin American countries, which were pursuing the same goal for their own region, were of course sympathetic to the proposal. The draft resolution before the Committee dealt with the implementation of a resolution already adopted and was a logical follow-up to the resolution recently adopted on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (resolution 2028 (XX)); its operative part reaffirmed previous resolutions, supported the declaration of the African Heads of State on the same question and appealed to all countries to respect and apply that declaration. The proposal for denuclearization must therefore be regarded as a part of the framework of principle on which United Nations legislation concerning the nuclear questions should be based. Far from having any objection to it, therefore, his delegation regarded the proposal as having the merit of clearly indicating to the nuclear Powers that their competence was confined to the use of nuclear weapons installed in their own countries only. His delegation was also glad to learn that there was a possibility of a moratorium or suspension by the super-Powers of their efforts to manufacture new and more advanced missiles for the launching of nuclear weapons.

20. The moment seemed propitious for unanimous approval of the draft declaration before the Committee and his delegation would vote for it.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

<sup>1/</sup> See Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/227, annex I, sect. D.