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Agenda item 58

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Latévi Modem LAWSON-BETUM (Togo)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 44/118 A of 15 December 1989.
2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 1990, the General Assembly, *on* the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.
3. At its 2nd meeting, on 9 October 1990, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on the disarmament items allocated to it, namely, items 45 to 66. At its 4th meeting, on 16 October, the First Committee decided to consider jointly with other disarmament items agenda item 155, which was allocated to the First Committee upon a decision of the General Assembly at its 30th plenary meeting, on 15 October. The deliberations on those items took place between the 3rd and 23rd meetings, from 15 to 30 October (see A/C.1/45/PV.3-23). Consideration of and action on draft resolutions on those items took place between the 24th and 39th meetings, from 2 to 16 November (see A/C.1/45/PV.24-39).
4. In connection with item 58, the First Committee had before it the following document:
 - (a) Report of the Secretary-General on the scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security (A/45/568).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/45/L.24 AND REV.1

5. On 31 October, Afghanistan, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Peru, Sri Lanka and Venezuela submitted a draft resolution entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" (A/C.1/45/L.24), which was later also sponsored by Bolivia. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of India at the 29th meeting, on 7 November.

6. On 8 November, the sponsors submitted a revised draft resolution (A/C.1/45/L.24/Rev.1), which was later also sponsored by Costa Rica. The revised draft resolution contained the following changes:

(a) In the **second** preambular paragraph, "the emergence of an entirely new class of" was replaced by "more sophisticated weapons and new";

(b) At the end of the fourth preambular paragraph, the phrase "and to channel scientific and technological developments for beneficial purposes," was added:

(c) A new sixth preambular paragraph was added, reading:

"Noting the results of the United Nations Conference on "New Trends in Science and Technology: Implications for International Peace and Security", held at Sendai, Japan, from 16 to 19 April 1990, and recognising, in this regard, the need for the scientific and policy communities to **work** together in dealing with the complex implications of technological change".

7. At its 37th meeting, on 15 November, the Secretary of the Committee made a statement concerning the programme budget implications of the draft resolution (see A/C.1/45/PV.37).

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted revised draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.24/Rev.1 by a recorded vote of 113 to 3, with 16 abstentions (see para. 9). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, **Australia**, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, **Myanmar**, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia,

Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

9. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

scientific and technological developments and their impact on
—international security

The General Assembly,

Recalling that at its tenth special session, the first special session devoted to disarmament, it unanimously stressed the importance of both qualitative and quantitative measures in the process of disarmament,

Noting with concern the potential in technological advances for application to military purposes, which could lead to more sophisticated weapons and new weapon systems,

Recognizing that scientific and technological developments can have both civilian and military applications and that progress in science and technology for civilian applications needs to be maintained and encouraged.

Stressing the interests of the international community in the subject and the need to follow closely the scientific and technological developments that may have a negative impact on the security environment and on the process of arms limitation and disarmament, and to channel scientific and technological developments for beneficial purposes,

Emphasizing that the proposal contained in its resolution 43/77 A of 7 December 1988 is without prejudice to research and development efforts being undertaken for peaceful purposes,

Noting the results of the United Nations Conference on "New Trends in Science and Technology: Implications for International Peace and Security", held at Sendai, Japan, from 16 to 19 April 1990, ^{1/} and recognizing, in this regard, the need for the scientific and policy communities to work together in dealing with the complex implications of technological change,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security"; ^{2/}

2. Fully agrees that:

(a) The international community needs to position itself better to follow the nature and direction of technological change;

(b) The United Nations can serve as a catalyst and a clearing-house for ideas to this purpose:

3. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to follow scientific and technological developments in order to make an assessment of emerging "new technologies" and submit to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session a framework for technology assessment guided, inter alia, by the criteria suggested in his report;

4. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-seventh session the item entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security".

1/ See A/45/568.

2/ A/45/568.