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Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure I shall be expressing the sentiments of the entire Committee if I commence this meeting by extending a most cordial welcome to the new Member of the United Nations, the Republic of Seychelles. Its presence in our midst is yet another confirmation that the membership of this Organization has become an inseparable and lasting ensign of modern statehood. We rest assured that quite soon we shall be able to meet here all the other States ready and willing to join our ranks, and thus stimulate the record of their national accomplishment and enrich the treasury of positive international relations.

Your Chairman comes from a country which as early as 31 years ago had acquired that chance through the heroic struggle of its people for its own national survival. I therefore take my election to the chairmanship of this important Committee as first and foremost a token of distinction conferred upon the Polish delegation in recognition of the peaceful, constructive and consistent foreign policy of my country, the Polish People's Republic, and for its active involvement in the work of the United Nations from the Organization's very inception. In expressing my gratitude to all Members of the United Nations who have lent me their valuable support it gives me particular pleasure to thank Poland's allies and friends of the socialist States for having unanimously endorsed me as the joint candidate of the group of Eastern European States.

Let me say also how much I appreciate the very kind and generous words offered by our eminent Chairman of last year, Ambassador Edouard Ghorra of Lebanon, in nominating me for election at the first meeting of this Committee. I am sure that I am expressing the sentiments of all members of the Committee when I extend to Ambassador Ghorra our congratulations and gratitude for the exemplary manner in which he presided over our deliberations last year as well as for his outstanding contribution to the outcome of our work, which I would venture to describe as highly prolific.

The work of this Committee, dealing as it does with political and security matters, in fact represents the basic reflection of the very essence of the purposes

(The Chairman)

and principles of the United Nations, among which the maintenance of international peace and security stands out as the paramount objective of our Organization. It suffices to review the agenda items allotted to the First Committee to realize how great a benefit the success of our work can prove, or else how frustrating our failures might be. The tasks before us, therefore, are both challenging and exalting.

In the field of disarmament they comprise a number of important issues pending their indispensable and prompt solution, including the well-known initiatives aimed at limiting the arms race and making the world safer for durable peace, development and the attainment of mankind's other common goals.

(The Chairman)

In the sphere of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security we shall be able to assess whether and how far the family of nations has succeeded in the last year in abiding by the lofty principles enshrined in that historic document, the adoption of which heralded the time of change brought about by the incipient processes of détente.

Discussion of a new item which the General Assembly decided yesterday to allocate to this Committee, namely, "Conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations", affecting profoundly the basic questions on our agenda pertaining to the consolidation of peace, strengthening of international security and efforts towards disarmament, should be conducive to positive results in all these fields.

Finally, consideration of other important political problems such as international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space in its various aspects should complete the broad spectrum of items which we are expected to tackle and on which, indeed, we are expected to achieve progress.

Whatever the final outcome of our efforts ... and I, for one, earnestly hope for the best from them ... there is one thing which adds an extremely important asset to our deliberations. The cause we are trying to enhance in this Committee has on its side hundreds of millions of well-wishers, and in fact the hearts of all mankind. Mankind is expecting from the United Nations more evident progress in the problems whose solution has been entrusted to us, and which at the same time are so fundamental to world peace and security.

Having dealt for so long with United Nations subject-matter, I am not claiming that within the next two or three months we shall succeed in beating all the world's swords into ploughshares, but I rest assured that, given good political will and genuine effort on all sides without exception, we can achieve progress on a number of questions on the Committee's agenda. I am confident also that, as far as matters requiring some more time and labours are concerned, we can at least retain the momentum of a productive debate which in the final resort will lead us to substantive progress in the future. On my part: I shall spare neither effort nor time to bring our work to maximum fruition. In so doing, I count on the constructive co-operation and assistance of the Committee's entire membership. I deem this aspect of my function to be one of the decisive factors of success in our

(The Chairman)

common endeavours. It is gratifying to know that I can count also on the most valuable experience, competence and profound knowledge of my two distinguished friends to my right and my left, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, Ambassador Arkady Shevchenko, and the Secretary of the First Committee, Ambassador Banarjee, always so ably assisted by their diligent and devoted staff.

Last but not least, I am looking forward to the new experience in friendly co-operation with all the officers whom this Committee is about to elect. In this spirit, as I assume my new post today, I wish to assure the Committee of my determination to discharge my responsibilities in the best tradition of Poland's diplomacy and its contribution and devotion to the work of the United Nations heretofore. Trying as I will to follow the high standards of competence and efficiency set by my distinguished predecessors under whose wise guidance I had the honour of serving in this Committee for the last six consecutive General Assembly sessions, and with the help, support and understanding of the Committee, I am sure I am not reaching for the impossible.

ELECTION OF TWO VICE-CHAIRMEN

The CHAIRMAN: The agenda for today's meeting concerns the election of the Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur and the organization of work. Before taking up those items I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the decision of the General Assembly, taken at its 1935th meeting on 22 September 1971, concerning the procedure regarding the election of officers of the main committees. According to that decision, the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will follow this procedure in regard to the items on our agenda for today concerning elections.

Baron von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): Please allow me first Sir, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you on your unanimous election as Chairman of this most important Committee of the General Assembly. I am sure that with your experience and your wisdom gained during a long and distinguished career

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal Republic
of Germany)

in the foreign service of your country, with which the Federal Republic of Germany has just recently strengthened its close and friendly ties, you will steer this Committee through its heavy agenda of most important items.

I have the honour and pleasure to propose that we elect as Vice-Chairman of this Committee the acting Permanent Representative of Portugal, Mr. Antonio da Costa Lobo. He was born in 1932 and studied law at the University of Coimbra, where he received a degree in law, and he attended post-graduate courses on historical juridical sciences. He has also worked as an attorney for a short period. He entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal in 1956 and has had assignments in Havana, The Hague, San Francisco and New York. He is also the head of the Division of International Economic Organizations. He has been a member of the delegation of Portugal to the International Court of Justice in the right of passage case. He participated in several conferences and meetings, among others the Tangiers Conference in 1956, the Third United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and meetings within the framework of EFTAR and others related to the agreement between Portugal and the EEC, and he is the author of a book on United Nations peace-keeping operations. But, above all, he served in six General Assemblies, beginning with the twenty-fifth through last year's General Assembly, and I do not think I really have to introduce Mr. Antonio da Costa Lobo. All present here know him, and I would propose that he be elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for his nomination of Minister Antonio da Costa Lobo, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal, for a Vice-Chairmanship. I greatly appreciate the friendly remarks he deemed it proper to make about the relations between our two countries. I am grateful also to Ambassador von Wechmar for his kind words addressed to me, and I am sure I am expressing the sentiments of this Committee when I thank him for his important contribution to the work of this Committee as Vice-Chairman of last year's session.

(The Chairman)

There being no other nominations I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and with established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Mr. Antonio da Costa Lobo elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. da Costa Lobo (Portugal) was elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. MAIGA (Mali) (interpretation from French): In taking the floor for the first time on behalf of my delegation, I should like to express to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of this important Committee.

I wish to submit to the Committee the candidacy of His Excellency, Mr. Frank Edmund Boaten, Ambassador of Ghana, as a Vice-Chairman of this Committee. Mr. Boaten has no need of any introduction. All representatives are familiar with him and his great qualities and his long experience of international organizations which have made of him someone who we are sure can fill this post with effectiveness and competence.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Mali, Chairman of the African Group for the month of October, for his nomination of Ambassador Frank Boaten, the Permanent Representative of Ghana, for a vice-chairmanship. I also thank him for his kind words addressed to me.

As there is no other nomination I take it that the Committee in this case, too, wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Frank Boaten elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Boaten (Ghana), was elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: May I express to the two Vice-Chairmen my warmest congratulations on the distinction that has been conferred upon them and tell them of my confidence that we shall co-operate in a harmonious manner so that we can jointly discharge the responsibilities incumbent upon us.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

Mr. ARTEAGA COSTA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the delegation of Venezuela I should like first to express to you, Sir, our most sincere congratulations on your well-deserved election as Chairman of this Committee. We wish also to congratulate the two distinguished Vice-Chairmen.

It is an honour for me to have the opportunity to submit the candidacy of Mr. Kedar Shrestha of Nepal for the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. Mr. Shrestha, who has a Master's degree in political science from the University of Bombay, in India, has had an outstanding career in the service of his country, both in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in discharging important functions abroad. Among other things, Mr. Shrestha has been second secretary of the Nepal embassy in Bonn, Under-Secretary of the United Nations Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Chief of Protocol in that same office. Also in that department, since December 1973, he has been first secretary of the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations and has participated actively at international conferences and in particular in decisions of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. Also, he has participated in the work of the First Committee since 1972. Because of his ability and experience Mr. Shrestha is a most competent candidate for the office of Rapporteur of the First Committee. Accordingly I am pleased to propose him for election to that post.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Venezuela for his nomination of Mr. Shrestha of Nepal for election to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. I thank him also for his kind words addressed to the Chairman, and I am sure I am expressing the sentiments of the Committee when I offer our thanks to him for his important contribution to the work of the Committee last year as its Rapporteur.

As Mr. Shrestha is the only candidate for the post of Rapporteur, I take it that the Committee wishes to follow the same procedure as in the election of the Vice-Chairmen.

Mr. Shrestha (Nepal) was elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: I express my most cordial congratulations to the representative of Nepal upon his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee, and invite him to take his place at the officers' table.

I call on the representative of Lebanon, the Chairman of the First Committee during the thirtieth session, Ambassador Ghorra.

Mr. GHORRA (Lebanon): The practice established by the General Assembly has bestowed upon me the honour of nominating you for the chairmanship of this Committee, and I am delighted that the Committee has unanimously brought you to its helm. Also it is a pleasure for me to follow rule 110 of the rules of procedure which gives me, as the past Chairman, another privilege, namely, that of extending to you on behalf of the Committee the congratulations of its members. As a matter of fact, the rule gives the past Chairman alone that privilege, but you will find, Sir, that this Committee --- a first-class Committee that abides by its own rules --- is tempted, and quite often, to break rule 110. It is in truth the most fragile rule in our rules of procedure and the one most susceptible to be broken, and you will find yourself disarmed and powerless to enforce it, but for good reason, because this Committee has entrusted you with a great task and has placed great confidence in you. I am certain that you will justify that confidence to the best of your ability, because all of us know of your experience, your eminent qualities as a diplomat and your service to the cause of peace and international co-operation. I had the opportunity to mention many of those qualities in my statement at the first meeting, and I am glad to reiterate them here today. You mentioned in your statement the fact that your election was a tribute to the peaceful policy of your country. I had the privilege of serving my country in Poland for three years and I know from first-hand experience that that foreign policy of your country reflects the deep-rooted sentiments of the Polish people for peace and for harmony and for international co-operation.

(Mr. Ghorra, Lebanon)

Mr. Chairman, you have a very heavy agenda. It had been somewhat lightened by the deletion of one of the items, but you will be having another item, "Conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations", proposed by the Soviet delegation, and I am sure that that will provoke a great deal of interest and debate in this Committee. Under your leadership this Committee will undoubtedly take very important decisions on the various items before it and I am certain that, given your capacity, your knowledge, your impartiality and your wisdom, the right course will be followed and the right decisions will be obtained.

May I take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, not only to congratulate you but also to wish you every success -- and I am sure that you will be successful for the reasons I have already advanced. At the same time, I should like to extend on behalf of the Committee its collective congratulations to the two eminent Vice-Chairmen who have been elected to assist you, Ambassador Boaten of Ghana and the acting Permanent Representative of Portugal,

Mr. da Costa Lobo, as well as the Rapporteur, Mr. Shrestha. We all know them, and we know too that they are not only good colleagues but also very able ones who have made their contributions. Together, you will be forming an excellent Bureau to achieve excellent results. I wish you all success and you can count not only on my personal co-operation but on the co-operation of the membership of the Committee to make your task an easy one.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the newly-elected officers of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, I thank Ambassador Ghorra very much. I appreciate keenly his kind words about my country and also his generous remarks addressed to me which I do not deserve. But I particularly value his assurances of the co-operation which I shall certainly need in the discharge of my responsibilities. As to rule 110, I was going to refer to it at the end of our meeting, but I think that perhaps this morning's meeting may be an exception. Later on, however, with the co-operation of the Committee, it will be possible to enforce that rule too.

I now call on the representative of Portugal, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. da Costa Lobo.

Mr. da COSTA LOBO (Portugal) (interpretation from French): My delegation would very much like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee, which is a very justified tribute to your own country, and in this regard it is a pleasure for me to refer to the excellent relations between our two countries. Your election constitutes also a recognition of your personal qualities, so familiar to all the members of this Committee, qualities which are a guarantee to us that the work of this Committee will be conducted competently and will be successful. I should like also to congratulate Ambassador Boaten and Mr. Shrestha upon their respective elections as Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of this Committee.

I wish to thank the Committee for having elected me Vice-Chairman, and I interpret this gesture of confidence as being addressed particularly to my own country. I am grateful, too, to Ambassador von Wechmar for his kind words about me.

It would be unnecessary now to reaffirm my intention to do my best to co-operate with this Committee, but I should like to point out that it is with the greatest satisfaction that I contemplate the prospect of working in our common and important work with you, Sir, and with my colleagues the other officers of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. da Costa Lobo, and I fully reciprocate his kind words about the friendly relations between our two countries. As a matter of fact, we have been co-operating also here in this Committee for a number of years and I am looking forward to the continuation and strengthening of that co-operation in the Bureau of the Committee this year. I now call on the representative of Nepal, the Rapporteur of the Committee.

Mr. SHRESTHA (Nepal): First of all I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee. I record the sentiments of the members of this Committee when I say that we can rest fully assured about the guidance that you will provide in our work here. I wish also to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Boaten and Mr. da Costa Lobo on their elections as our Vice-Chairmen.

(Mr. Shrivastha, Nepal)

I am grateful to the members of the Committee for electing me Rapporteur for this session; I would like to assure them that I will do all that I can to prove worthy of the trust and confidence that they have reposed in me. At the same time, I would assure you, Mr. Chairman, of my full co-operation in your work in the Bureau.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Rapporteur for his generous remarks and for his expression of willingness to co-operate with me and the other officers of the Committee. I am sure I am expressing not only my own view but also that of the two Vice-Chairmen when I say that we are all looking forward to close co-operation with him during the session.

That completes consideration of the first two items on our agenda for today, namely, election of the Vice-Chairmen and election of the Rapporteur.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.1/31/1 and Add.1)

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now proceed to the next item on the agenda for this meeting of our Committee, namely, the organization of work. In this connexion, may I draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/31/1 dated 28 September 1976, containing the letter dated 24 September 1976 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly and informing me that the General Assembly at its 4th meeting decided to allocate 21 items to the First Committee. I should like also to refer to the decision of the General Assembly adopted at its 16th plenary meeting held yesterday, and transmitted to me in the letter from the President contained in document A/C.1/31/1/Add.1, allocating to the First Committee an additional item entitled, "Conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations". Thus, the Committee has 22 items on its agenda.

In order to be able to submit a work programme to the First Committee -- one that naturally will be subject to approval by all members of the Committee -- I have taken particularly into account the time limitations we face. For the present session the general debate in the plenary Assembly is scheduled to end on 14 October and, according to established practice, the First Committee will start its substantive work only after the end of that general debate. On the other hand, the date of completion of our work has been implied in the wish expressed by the President of the General Assembly that as far as possible we should not go beyond 10 December for considering all the items allocated to the First Committee.

These limitations leave the Committee with a period extending from 18 October to 10 December, during which it should be able to wind up its rather heavy work load. The Committee will have at its disposal a maximum of 80 meetings in which to consider all the items before it.

The work programme foresees that our deliberations will demand the full utilization of the time available. In this connexion I should like at this stage to call upon members of the Committee to submit as much in advance as feasible draft resolutions pertaining to the different items so as to provide sufficient time for necessary consultations. The Secretariat has asked me to

(The Chairman)

request members of the Committee that draft resolutions, amendments, co-sponsorships and requests for accommodation for group meetings be given in writing to the Secretariat in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding. I would also urge delegations to inscribe their names on the list of speakers for the various items as early as possible so as to facilitate the task of the Secretariat and the Chairman.

I have tried to put before the Committee a realistic work programme allocating to each item the number of meetings that I consider should give delegations a full opportunity to state their views. I understand that the proposed order of business and time-table is now being distributed to members.

To begin with may I suggest to the Committee that we take up the two items relating to Outer Space, items 31 and 32 of the Committee's agenda in document A/C.1/31/1, namely, "International co-operation in the peaceful uses of Outer Space", and "Preparation of an international convention on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting".

I propose to the Committee that we start with these two items, and I believe that 8 to 10 meetings from 18 to 21 or 22 October should be ample for a thorough consideration of them.

If there are no objections, I shall take it that the Committee agrees with this proposal.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: As the next item, we could take up the question of the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations. I would suggest that we allocate 10 meetings for the consideration of this item, from 25 to 29 October. Then, starting on 1 November, the Committee could take up the items relating to disarmament, namely items 34 to 50 and item 116 of the session's agenda. For the consideration of these items I would propose the allocation of 50 meetings during the period from, as I have just mentioned, 1 November to 3 December.

(The Chairman)

Finally, during the last week of the Committee's work, that is from 6 to 10 December, we could deal with item 33 of the agenda, namely "Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security". Thus we would dispose of all items allocated to us within the available time. Taking into consideration the experience of last year, I would even hope that we could save some of the allocated time.

May I take it that the Committee agrees with the suggested programme of work and time-table?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: With reference to documentation, I should like to point out that the General Assembly has, over the years, adopted a number of resolutions on the control and limitation of documentation containing measures designed to make the most effective and economical use of this vital but very expensive element of the services. These rules have been summarized in document A/INF/136/Rev.1

May I particularly appeal to members to take these provisions into account. I would make an appeal at the outset to all members strictly to limit any requests for additional documents. This is necessary, as representatives are all aware, because of the tremendous pressures on the Secretariat during the General Assembly as far as the preparation, typing, translation and distribution of documents are concerned.

For the time being, these are the considerations I wish to place before members in connexion with the organization of our work. I need hardly add that all these organizational aspects of our work are really the responsibility of the Committee as a whole.

May I add that, in order to utilize fully the time allocated to us and for reasons of efficiency and economy, I intend to start the meetings of the Committee punctually. We started a little late today, but let it be an exception. I would be obliged to the representatives for their kind co-operation in this regard too.

(The Chairman)

Finally, I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure, already invoked by my predecessor in this office, Ambassador Ghorra. It states:

"Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session --- or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation --- after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

I hope that this rule, as well as all other rules pertaining to the Committee's work and proceedings, will be strictly observed by all representatives.

If no delegation wishes to make any remarks or observations at this stage, I propose to adjourn the meeting and we shall, as decided, start our substantive work on 18 October with the discussion of items 31 and 32 pertaining to outer space.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.