



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 3RD MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PASTINEN (Finland)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.1/33/1)

The CHAIRMAN: As the clock on the wall testifies, we are starting this meeting at 10.50 a.m. instead of at 10.30, as scheduled. I hope that this will not be a bad omen for meetings to come.

I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to document A/C.1/33/1 of 25 September 1978, which contains a letter of 22 September 1978 addressed by the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the First Committee. That letter informs me that the General Assembly at its fourth and fifth meetings decided to allocate altogether 18 items to the First Committee.

In accordance with the established practice, the First Committee will start its substantive work only after the end of the general debate in the plenary Assembly, scheduled for 13 October. On the other hand, the Committee should not go beyond the cut-off date suggested by the President of the General Assembly; 8 December.

These limitations leave the Committee with a period from 16 October to 8 December, during which it should be able to cover its rather heavy workload. Altogether the Committee will have at its disposal a maximum of 78 meetings in which to consider all the items before it.

After rather extensive consultations during the last two weeks, in which I have been ably assisted by the other officers of the Committee, I have arrived at a suggested programme of work that I will outline in a few moments.

(The Chairman)

Before doing so, however, I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that, in accordance with the recommendation of the Final Document of the special session devoted to disarmament, the First Committee should henceforth deal exclusively with disarmament and related security items. Thus, items 51 and 52, relating to outer space, no longer appear on the agenda of the First Committee. They have been referred to the Special Political Committee. Obviously, this gives us a little more flexibility in arranging our work.

I now come to the suggested programme and to the number of meetings to be allotted to each of the items. I suggest that to begin with we take up agenda item 125, "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: report of the Secretary-General". To me, this seems to follow rather naturally. For the consideration of this item I would propose the allocation of between 16 and 20 meetings.

As I see it, the consideration of this particular item should be action-oriented and deal mostly with the implementation of the concrete recommendations contained in the Final Document. There are quite a number of those, and they include, to mention only a few, recommendations on guidelines for studies, guidelines of the programme for fellowship on disarmament, the report of the Disarmament Commission, and the date of the second special session. But I should like to urge that while preparing statements to be made under this item delegations should keep in mind that the main general debate will, as before, take place in connexion with the substantive disarmament items, items 35 to 49 inclusive.

After completing its work on item 125, I suggest that the Committee consider next agenda item 128, "Conclusion of an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States". I would propose the allocation of 10 meetings to that item.

After the conclusion of the debates on items 125 and 128, we would take up the substantive agenda items relating to disarmament to which I referred

(The Chairman)

just now. For their consideration - as I said a moment ago, the main general debate should take place in connexion with them - I would propose the allocation of from 38 to 42 meetings. Our work on them would end on 1 December.

With respect to the debate on these items, I should like to make it clear that I intend to follow the practice that has been accepted by the First Committee in past years, namely, that delegations may refer to each or all of the disarmament items in the order they deem appropriate. Any delegation may start with any of the items on disarmament, regardless of the order in which they appear on the agenda, and not only may delegations speak on the items in the order in which they wish, but they may also make more than one statement.

(The Chairman)

During the last week of the Committee's work - from 4 to 8 December - we could deal with agenda item 50, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security", in 10 meetings.

May I take it that I have made myself sufficiently clear and that the Committee agrees with the proposed programme of work and time-table?

Mr. GALLAGHER (Canada): Some delegations have expressed the feeling that we should, as is traditional, start with a general debate rather than holding it later in the session, primarily because of the difficulty that one would have in dealing with substantive matters initially. I wonder whether there is any support for this suggestion.

Mr. NEUBERT (Federal Republic of Germany): As I take the floor for the first time in this Committee in the course of this thirty-third General Assembly, I should like to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other officers of the Committee my congratulations on your election. I am confident that under your experienced leadership the Committee will be able to achieve a satisfactory result, and I assure you of the full co-operation of my delegation.

On behalf of the nine countries of the European Communities, for which I have the privilege to speak, I should like to make a few comments on the draft programme of work before us. Perhaps these views could be discussed. We are very interested to hear the opinions of other delegations on this matter.

(Mr. Neubert, Federal Republic
of Germany)

We believe that experience has shown the usefulness of a general debate at the beginning of the Committee's work. We have no objection at all to maintaining the present title of item 125 as the official label of this debate, as indeed the discussions at the special session devoted to disarmament covered all aspects of disarmament and arms control. We think, however, that 16 to 20 meetings - that is, a week and a half to two weeks - are a little inadequate. We would therefore propose to provide for a minimum of 20 and perhaps up to a maximum of 30 meetings for such a general debate. The Committee might be flexible about the precise closing date and gear that to the actual number of delegations wishing to speak.

Furthermore, we believe that it would be impractical to start taking decisions on specific draft texts at such an early stage. We would therefore propose a general understanding that during the meetings on the items in the first part of the draft programme of work no detailed discussion or decision-taking should take place on any particular draft text, in order to allow adequate time for consultations and negotiations under what is here labelled "III, items 35 to 49", with the addition of other items likely to entail resolutions.

We have a few other points in mind, but it may be more appropriate to raise them at a later stage of our discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: The only comment that I can make at this time, from my own point of view, is that the meetings allotted to each item do not represent an inflexible deadline by which all the resolutions should also be put forward and approved. Rather, as in many earlier years, the resolutions may be put forward later and be dealt with later.

Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria): May I first also convey to you, Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the Committee our sincere congratulations on your election.

In looking at the proposed schedule of work, my delegation shares to a considerable extent the views expressed by the two previous speakers. We, too, think that the method of starting our work with a general debate

(Mr. Sucharipa, Austria)

on all disarmament items has indeed stood the test of time and should therefore be continued this year. We believe that this method ensures a comprehensive exchange of views that serves as a very broad and valuable basis for the subsequent discussion of the different items before us.

My delegation has an open mind on how we can achieve this goal. One possibility has just been raised - that of having the general debate under item 125, which would then need many more than 16 to 20 meetings. I think that three or even four weeks should then be allotted to it.

The other way would be simply to start our discussions with the general debate for two or three weeks and immediately afterwards take up item 125, which should then really be "action-oriented", to use your own terms, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BERG (Sweden): Mr. Chairman, first I should like on behalf of the Swedish delegation to express our congratulations to you and the other officers of the Committee on your election. We are confident that under your guidance we shall make progress on disarmament in the coming autumn.

As for the programme of work, I should like to join the previous speaker in saying that we think it is essential to start our deliberations with a general debate and that sufficient time should be allocated to such a debate. On the other hand, we are very flexible on the form that would take, what item we should hold it under, and so on. That Austrian representative has just suggested two possibilities, and we are open to both of them. What we think is important is that, as in other years, we start with a general debate.

The CHAIRMAN: I have listened with great care to the statements which have been made. At the same time, as I mentioned in my earlier remarks, the programme of work has been the subject of rather keen and intensive consultations during the past two weeks, and the suggestion that I read out is, therefore, not something that the officers of this Committee have taken from some source or other. What it represents in actual fact is the views of the overwhelming majority of delegations from all geographical regions. Of course there might often be one or two who have better ideas, but those ideas cannot always come to fruition.

Mr. ORTIZ DE ROZAS (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, it appears to me that there is no incompatibility between the programme you suggested, by way of a proposal from the officers of the Committee, and the observations made this morning. The difficulty lies perhaps in considering that when we begin our work on item 125 the examination of that item will necessarily end with the adoption of resolutions before we take up the other items. Personally I feel that it is inevitable that when we discuss item 125 there should be what we might call a mini-general debate on that particular item: in other words, all delegations will give their views on the

(Mr. Ortiz de Rozas, Argentina)

review to which the item refers and their assessment of the tenth special session. This does not mean that at the end of the exchange of views that may occur on that item we shall have to adopt resolutions. If the Committee deems it fitting those resolutions may well be postponed for adoption at the end of our session. The same would apply to item 128. It will be dealt with exclusively in a kind of debate where delegations will put forward their positions, but this does not necessarily imply that before we take up other items we shall have to adopt resolutions.

In short, Mr. Chairman, I think there is no divergence between the views suggested by you and the opinions put forward by the delegations of Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria and Sweden. If we follow the order suggested by the officers of the Committee, we could begin to consider those items in what in the final analysis will be a general debate and defer until a subsequent stage - I would even say, towards the end of our work - the adoption of resolutions on all the items listed in the First Committee's agenda.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Argentina for his help. I can say that I entirely share his views, particularly as far as the consideration of draft resolutions is concerned.

Mr. BARTON (Canada): Mr. Chairman, first, since I was unable to be here during my delegation's first statement, I should like to congratulate you and the other officers of the Committee on your election. I think it is a good augury that you started the first meeting as promptly as you did, and I hope that that will last throughout the session.

Secondly, I feel that the point that has just been made by the representative of Argentina is entirely correct. I think we shall all find that when we come to discuss the first item on the agenda we shall inevitably have to talk about others as well, because there is an interconnexion that is inescapable between the nature of what was discussed at the special session and the substance of the items that follow. On the assumption that in the debate on that first item we shall touch on many of the matters that follow thereafter, I hope that this will concentrate the lengthy series of statements that we inevitably have at the beginning of the

(Mr. Barton, Canada)

Assembly session within that period and we should find that when we go on to consider the individual items, in the way in which the representative of Argentina has mentioned, the actual discussion will be generally factual.

Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): I should like to support the views expressed by the representative of Canada. And, in coming back to an intervention that was made earlier on behalf of the European Nine, I really wonder whether a debate on item 125 would permit us in ten meetings to assess the results of the special session devoted to disarmament and take a position on various items which are on the agenda for later deliberations but which have been discussed and dealt with during the special session. I should be very much surprised if delegations did not wish to speak during the discussion of item 125 - which I see as a general debate, and I really wonder whether ten meetings for such a voluminous discussion of substance would be sufficient. If the officers of the Committee, including you, Mr. Chairman, are in a position to do so, I should like you to reconsider your earlier statement. After the consultations that you had but in view of what has been stated here this morning, you might reconsider your proposal that the programme of work as submitted by the officers of the Committee might be taken as adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to draw the attention of the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the fact that item 125 is now allotted, for the reasons he enumerated himself, no longer ten meetings but from 16 to 20 meetings, and that it has also been agreed during the discussion this morning that these would include, as the representative of Argentina put it, a mini-general debate within that framework - which is to say that it would have the character of an action-oriented debate to the extent that there are a number of concrete recommendations emanating from the special session, and that delegations would particularly want to pronounce themselves upon them.

(The Chairman)

Further, I would point out that within the time-limit, even with 20 meetings, the door would be left wide open for the necessary resolutions and decisions to be adopted at a later stage in the Committee's work, and that, therefore, once the item had been discussed work on it would not be concluded prematurely before all the decisions had been taken. I wonder whether these explanations take care, in part at any rate, of the preoccupations of the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): They do indeed take care of my concern and the concern of the Nine. I was a little worried when I heard you say, Sir, that you would consider the programme of work as submitted by the officers of the Committee adopted and I just wanted to make sure that the understanding was that the proposed programme of work had been amended in the light of this morning's debate, and that the amended version was what was before the Committee now.

But before the Committee comes to a decision, I should like to reserve the right to speak on another point contained in the proposed programme of work.

The CHAIRMAN: When you came into the Committee, Sir, we were on the verge of taking a decision. I have nothing else to say at this time except to put the programme of work, as we have proposed it, to the Committee once again for acceptance.

Mr. OXLEY (Australia): Mr. Chairman, may I join those other delegations which have expressed their congratulations to you and their willingness to work under your chairmanship.

We share the concerns voiced by a number of the delegations about our order of work. We share the view that it has always been helpful in this Committee to have a period at the beginning of our

(Mr. Oxley, Australia)

deliberations to discuss all matters because that allows representatives time to work in the corridors, at the back of the conference hall and at Missions to prepare draft resolutions. There are very few draft resolutions ready for adoption within the first week or two of the Committee's work. It is in that sense that, while I appreciate fully the proposal made by the officers of the Committee that consideration of item 125 should be action-oriented, I can myself conceive of perhaps only two resolutions which might be adopted in that time. There are a number of other matters which, presumably, will come up under that item and which customarily require consideration, but it is difficult in my delegation's view to envisage the possibility of spending 10 or indeed 16 or 20 meetings on action-oriented consideration.

It was the suggestion made by the representative of Argentina which held most merit for my delegation and I believe was in tune with the suggestions made by every other delegation that has spoken in this discussion. The representative of Argentina suggested that we ought to regard the discussion under item 125 as a mini-general debate.

Item 125 on the special session devoted to disarmament provides an opportunity for us to consider every subject which has ever been discussed in this Committee, and more, because there were some new ideas which emerged at the special session which had not been discussed before. When my delegation prepares its statement on that item it will in fact be preparing its general debate statement, and if there is then a second period of general debate we will not have much to say. While other delegations may welcome that, the fact is that we will all be in a situation of being asked perhaps to prepare two general statements, and if we do not we shall have a lot of free time on our hands when we come to consider the general debate, because what we would include in a general debate statement is what we would talk about under the item on the special session. The special session is the most important thing that has happened in the disarmament sphere for quite some time. It took a position on almost every issue which we have to deal with, and it would be germane to our discussion to use that as the point of departure.

(Mr. Oxley, Australia)

What would seem to my mind to represent the common view expressed in most statements made so far - and possibly in this we would find the genesis of a common position which would not necessarily differ from the proposals emanating from the discussions by the officers of the Committee - is that we should perhaps consider item 125 as the first item for discussion. We could put in parenthesis after that "(General debate)" and allocate up to 30 meetings for it. I suggest that we should make that proposal the basis for the first decision to be taken about our agenda.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think we shall make very much progress if we try to visualize every item from beginning to end and characterize what each representative may say under this one or that. There may be certain delegations that would make their general statements under item 125. I would consider that to be rather misguided, but of course nobody can prevent them from doing so. I would think it misguided particularly since I understood that we had already agreed here that what it would invoke would be the mini-general debate and action-oriented debate. I very strongly suggested that when representatives made their statements on item 125 they would keep in mind that the general debate as always would take place under the substantive disarmament items, of which there are quite a number. Are there any other views?

Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): Sir, are you asking whether there are any further views on item 125 or are we now proceeding to other items on the proposed programme of work? In the latter event, I have a short statement to make on another item.

The CHAIRMAN: It was my understanding that what we were considering was the programme of work in toto.

Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): In that case I should like to address myself very briefly to item II of the draft programme, agenda item 128, and on behalf of the nine member States of the European Community I should like to say that we have some difficulty in understanding why one week should be exclusively devoted to one particular proposal. Moreover, we feel that it is a new proposal, and I am afraid that it might not be possible to conclude its discussion and to take a decision in the early stages of our work. Finally, we believe that it is intimately related to the more general question of negative security assurances which will be discussed under item 47.

We think, therefore, that while, in the general debate or under item 125 the Committee might be given some additional information on the new proposal, a more detailed discussion should take place later under III, agenda items 35 to 49, together with other aspects of the question of negative security assurances. However, in view of the importance of the matter, the proposal under item 128 cannot be seen or discussed in isolation from the general question and perhaps from other proposals in the same field. The European Nine therefore propose to merge II and III into one block of meetings. Point IV, agenda item 50, could then remain unchanged.

The CHAIRMAN: Am I right in understanding the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to have made a formal proposal, on behalf of the Nine, to amend the programme of work by taking its item II, on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, and merging it with the block of other disarmament items?

Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. YANKOV (Bulgaria): My delegation was of the opinion that we were close to a consensus agreement, along the lines that the Chairman was kind enough to set forth in his opening remarks and also taking into account some interpretations with respect to flexibility, that the suggested programme of work submitted by the Chairman as a result of prior consultations could constitute a good and viable basis for our deliberations. I would suggest that, on that understanding concerning flexibility, we adopt the Chairman's suggestions. We consider that that flexibility referred to by the Chairman, along the lines of the suggestion made by the representative of Argentina, would provide a very good basis for our work.

We could well take up item 128 in two stages. It is the submission of my delegation that we could have a discussion, as provided for in the Chairman's time-table, and that draft resolutions on the item could be considered at a later stage. This practice has been followed in many instances in this Committee.

My delegation cannot share the view that we should try now to rearrange and restructure this programme. I shall not elaborate at length on why a concrete proposal on an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States deserves proper consideration. That does not mean that it would be isolated from the comprehensive approach to disarmament matters, but it would provide an opportunity for the Committee to ponder this new proposal which was submitted before the opening of this session of the General Assembly, we could hold a discussion on this item, and at a later stage during the decision-making period, we could well consider specific draft resolutions on it.

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

That understanding is not in contradiction with the views already expressed by several speakers. I should appreciate it if the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany would reconsider his proposal and not formally press for restructuring of the suggested programme of work as proposed by the officers of the Committee.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): As this is the first occasion on which my delegation has spoken at this session in this Committee, I should like to express our warm felicitations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee and to congratulate the other officers of the Committee.

We have listened with interest to the discussion on the organization of work and we are prepared to go along with the proposals made by the Chairman, as amended generally during the discussion this morning.

I have asked to be allowed to speak to address the particular point raised by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the merger of what is now agenda item 128 under II with the general debate under III, items 35 to 49.

As my delegation sees it, agenda item 128, proposed by the Soviet Union, is an important response to recommendations emanating from the special session devoted to disarmament. As such it is a concrete proposal to which we must give due attention, and we believe that the present arrangement to have it discussed in a preliminary way, initially as a separate item, and to formulate our views at a later stage on an actual decision on the matter, would be the right way to deal with this subject at the present session.

We therefore join with our colleague from Bulgaria in requesting the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to see if he could not find it possible to reconsider his proposal on this subject.

Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to support the suggestion just made by the representative of Pakistan. Agenda item 128 is a new one for the First Committee and, as on many occasions in the past, a new item deserves special consideration, at least in the initial stage. This item may well be a very important one and deserves to be discussed separately from the other items included in the traditional disarmament agenda. After it has been discussed in a special way this year, it is quite possible that next year it will appear on the agenda for consideration together with the other agenda items. But at least, in this the first year, let us give it the same treatment that we in the First Committee have always given to new items on disarmament, that is, separate consideration.

Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus): May I take this opportunity of congratulating you warmly, Sir, upon your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We all have confidence in the ability and objectivity you will bring to bear as we deal with the matters before us.

The purpose of my intervention at this moment is to suggest that agenda item 50, which appears as sixteenth in the proposed allocation of items on this Committee's agenda, is one that is closely related to agenda item 35 on the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and that therefore, if item 50 is going to be considered first - as is very proper, since it should come somewhere after the general debate or in connexion with the general debate - the subject that should come immediately after it, as one closely connected with it, is this item 50, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security". First of all, that is in the very nature of things because the two items are closely connected. Secondly, the special session was presented with a study prepared by United Nations experts on the interrelationship between disarmament and international security, and the Final Document of the special session included the decision that that study should be completed and submitted to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

In view of these facts, I suggest that item 50, which appears in sixteenth place in the allocation of items, should be considered instead in connexion with and immediately after the item dealing with the special session of the General Assembly and in close relation to the general debate.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): Mr. Chairman, as this is the first time my delegation has spoken in this Committee, may I congratulate you and the other officers of the Committee on your election.

On the whole, Mr. Chairman, my delegation sees a lot of merit in the proposals which you had put forward this morning as emanating from the Committee's officers. Those proposals, of course, have since, during the course of discussions and from what I gathered from the statements made, been modified, at least to the extent that item 125 would be allocated more meetings than had originally been scheduled. From what you said after I came into the room, I understood that that item has now been allocated between 16 and 20 meetings, which, from the point of view of my delegation, at least should give as many delegations as wish an opportunity to express brief views on implementation of the recommendations.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

And that is what the item says: "Review of the implementation of the recommendations"; it does not speak of "an assessment" as such of the special session devoted to disarmament. If we are going to concentrate on a review of the implementation, then I think that 16 to 20 meetings could provide a chance for as many delegations as wish to make statements to do so.

As the representative of Argentina rightly suggested, the question of resolutions to be adopted under that item could be left for further consultations, even after the conclusion of our statements on it if need be.

I think the same goes for item 128. Without prejudice to whatever the Committee may decide to do under this particular item, it is the view of my delegation that when a delegation comes forward with an initiative of this nature it is only fair that the Committee should not lump it with its perennial items, as it were. Such initiatives ought to be appreciated and ought to be considered.

As I have said, the decision which ultimately will be taken on such an initiative is a different matter entirely, but I think that we owe it to the authors of proposals of this nature to give such initiatives very fair and full consideration. If need be, again, at the end of the debate on this particular item - and this has been done several times in the past - the Committee might give itself ample opportunity for informal consultations on the type of decision or resolution or method by which the particular suggestion would be further pursued.

Therefore, my own delegation would certainly agree with the delegations of Bulgaria, Pakistan and Argentina that we leave this item as a separate item, as has been suggested by officers of the Committee. As I said at the beginning, my delegation feels that, on the whole, the way and manner in which they had set out the suggested programme of work is acceptable to us, and I hope that the Committee will be able to take a decision without wasting too much time.

Mr. KHLESTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, first, may I also be permitted to congratulate you on behalf of the Soviet delegation and to say that we are prepared to work with you and to co-operate with you. We must express satisfaction at the fact that our Committee will be working under your experienced guidance. That is the token of our success here.

Since we are having a discussion on the list of items submitted by the Committee's officers as a whole, my delegation would like to note that, as we see it, the items on their list are duly balanced, the list is logical, and it shows that the officers have held the necessary consultations and have drawn up a very logical list, which sounds politically quite correct. We think it is sensible that the Bureau has suggested as the first item "Implementation of the conclusions of the first Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and establishment of a preparatory committee for the second Conference". This takes into consideration the wishes of all delegations.

My delegation has listened attentively to a number of comments which have been made by other delegations on the order of discussion of the various items, the timing of submission of resolutions, and other matters. I think that the interpretations we have heard - the proposals made by Argentina, and so on - are quite correct. And when you summarize the discussion, Mr. Chairman, we will be able to see exactly what working methods we will adopt. I think that all the apprehensions with regard to the number of meetings will be taken into consideration when you summarize the debate. Therefore, to our mind, the proposed programme of work is a balanced one.

We feel in duty-bound to explain that, in our opinion, item 128, which is now listed as item II, should remain a separate item. I do not wish to expatiate on the arguments that have been adduced by several representatives, including those of Pakistan and Nigeria, but would just say that it is a major and specific issue which requires special debate, and one that relates to the interests of a number of countries, including my own.

(Mr. Khlestov, USSR)

This is a new item and, therefore, with all due respect to the views expressed by the Federal Republic of Germany, it is difficult for us to go along with his approach and his proposal.

Bearing in mind that the material that you have submitted, Sir, has been fully weighed by all the officers of the Committee, I would say that we should not defer for too long the adoption of the agenda. While we fully respect the view expressed by the Federal Republic of Germany, we would urge him not to press his proposal, so that the Committee may accept the list in the document submitted by you, Sir, with the changes that have been made, and accept also the number of meetings that have been allotted to individual items.

Mr. FULLER (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, may I first of all join other delegations in offering you and other officers of the Committee our congratulations on your election.

I am frankly slightly confused by parts of this debate. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, speaking on behalf of the Nine, has pointed out that item 128 is intimately related to the discussion on negative security assurances, which will come up under item 47.

The representative of Pakistan has pointed out - correctly, in my view - that item 128 is in many ways a response to various proposals and statements, including one made on behalf of my Government, at the special session. There would, therefore, apparently be some logic in examining the item during the general debate, at the beginning of our work, on the results of the special session.

Yet, as I understand the representative of Bulgaria, he proposes that we should, as suggested by the officers of the Committee, discuss item 128 at 10 meetings as a separate item and then discuss it again later in the session.

There seems to me to be a real danger that we not only are going to duplicate the debate but are going to triplicate or quadruplicate it. And it is for that reason that I would certainly continue to support the proposal made by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany that this could be taken up as part of item III on your proposed agenda.

(Mr. Fuller, United Kingdom)

It does occur to me, though, as a possible alternative that if we were to extend the number of meetings for the first item, as suggested by the representative of Australia, to, say, 30, it would be open to the delegation of the Soviet Union to introduce its new item under that discussion. But for the moment I would certainly hope that we could further consider the suggestion made by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. IMAM (Kuwait): Mr. Chairman, may I extend the congratulations of my delegation to you and to the other officers of the Committee on your election.

With regard to item 125, there seem to be two interpretations of the wording of this item. As it stands, it reads: "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: report of the Secretary-General". A strict interpretation of this title would imply that the annex to the Programme of Action, which contained a large number of proposals made by several delegations, would be excluded from the debate. But, of course, a more flexible interpretation would allow us to discuss all the proposals contained in the annex. In order to avoid any ambiguity, perhaps we can say: "Review of the work of the tenth special session, including implementation of the recommendations and decisions ...". In that manner we would remove any ambiguity as to the possibility of discussing all the proposals made by delegations and included in the annex to the Programme of Action. That is my first point.

My second point is simply this. I wish very strongly to support the representative of Bulgaria - who was supported also by many other speakers, including, I believe the representatives of Argentina and Nigeria, who pointed to the need to discuss separately item 128, on the conclusion of an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States. We believe that in the past all new items have been discussed separately, and we feel that including this important item in the general debate would undermine its importance and relegate it to a minor role in a debate that will include a very large number of items. Since this item is designed to benefit primarily the non-nuclear States - of which we are one - we should like to support those who wish the item to be discussed separately and to be given the consideration it truly deserves.

Mr. BERG (Sweden): I should like to discuss the problem of a programme of work in a practical way. In that context, I come back to what I find to be a confusing question: whether we should have one general debate or whether there should be two general debates, separated by consideration of another item. As matters now stand, there are apparently differing opinions about that: some delegations want to have the general debate under the proposed item I, and others wish to have it under the proposed item III.

In that context, I think there would be merit in taking up together at least items I and III on the list, because then one could make a more non-dramatic transition also in the general debate.

There are those who would prefer to have the general debate in connexion with a discussion of the special session, and others who would want to make their statements in the general debate under the general item, just taking a later place on the list of speakers.

That leads me to the proposed item II, on security guarantees, item 128. I think that those who have stressed the importance of that item - including its author - have also stressed that they want to have it discussed as a separate item. Therefore, I should like to suggest that we take up the first item as you propose, Sir; then, secondly, take up the item on general disarmament matters; and thirdly, take up item 128, on security guarantees.

Mr. BARTON (Canada): This is an interesting discussion, but I think we are falling into the old trap of arguing about air instead of substance. Any organization can be made to work if there is sufficient will, and I trust that there is sufficient will here.

It seems to me, first of all, Mr. Chairman, that the figures that you put down were indicative, not mandatory. Secondly, if you take up an item and find that there are insufficient speakers you move on to the next item, coming back to the first one later. On that basis I would go along with the programme you have put forward. I am assuming that some delegations will elect to discuss under agenda item 125, at least to some extent, those aspects of items 35 to 45 that they feel are pertinent to item 125. Others will perhaps speak more specifically to item 125, and at greater length in the general debate on the main items. That is a choice for individual delegations to make. I assume that when agenda item 128 is introduced, those who have views to express immediately will do so; others may elect to wait until they make their general-debate statements. That is a matter for individual choice, and we should not sit around for 10 meetings just because that is what was put down on the programme. We should move on to the next item and come back to a previous one if necessary. On that basis, Mr. Chairman, I am quite prepared to accept the programme you have put forward.

Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): Again I fully agree with the representative of Canada.

I have listened very carefully to the various comments that have been made in the past few minutes here. I listened, in particular, to the statement made by the representative of Pakistan, who drew our attention to the fact that item 128 is a direct result of the special session devoted to disarmament, which makes me believe that at least one delegation, if not several, would wish to address themselves to this item under I, item 125. I could imagine that the representative of the Soviet Union would wish to introduce the item under item 125, or, if not, under item 128.

I do share the view of the representative of Canada that once we get to item 128 you, Mr. Chairman, will have to see whether we really need 10 meetings for it, because I know of several delegations that wish to return to this item when we discuss what is now listed under III, item 47.

(Mr. von Wechmar, Federal Republic
of Germany)

I listened attentively also to what the representative of Argentina said when we started this discussion, that decisions - that is, the adoption of resolutions - should be taken at a later time.

That having been said, Mr. Chairman, and believing in your ability to steer us through this long list of items, the delegations that I represent do not want to stand in the way of a consensus that seems to be emerging here under which we would proceed as proposed, keeping in mind that, first, some delegations will most likely already have addressed themselves to item 128 under item 125; secondly, that we may not need the 10 meetings proposed by you; thirdly, that we shall return to the subject under item 47; and, fourthly, that we shall take a decision, in whatever form, at a later stage, in accordance with the usual practice of this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I can assure the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany that nothing in this programme of work will be artificially extended, and nothing will be artificially reduced, and that the utmost flexibility, which also leads to the most efficient use of our time, will be my policy, in so far as it depends on me.

Mr. SEZAKI (Japan): Mr. Chairman, since this is the first time that my delegation has spoken, it would like to associate itself with the other delegations in extending congratulations to you and to the other officers of the Committee.

As to agenda item 125, my delegation would like to express its over-all views on disarmament in the general debate. My delegation understands that there are many other delegations that would like to do that. So my delegation would like to support the proposal submitted by the representative of Australia that 30 meetings be allocated for agenda item 125.

As to agenda item 128, my delegation fully supports the analysis made by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany and would like to propose that two meetings should be allocated to this item in the early stages for its

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

introduction by the representative of the Soviet Union, and later on should be further discussed. So my delegation would like to support the idea proposed by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany on behalf of the European Community of Nine that item II on the list should be merged with item III. My delegation is not at all convinced that we should allot 10 meetings to agenda item 128 at an early stage.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): As this is the first intervention of the United States in the First Committee, I should like to add the voice of the United States delegation, both officially and personally, to those of other delegations that have congratulated you, Sir, on your election as Chairman and the other officers of the Committee on their election.

It is not a denial of the confidence that I have in your chairmanship, Sir, but an affirmation of it to state that I feel that an allocation of meetings should reflect our best guess as to how many meetings we are going to need. The United States does not oppose the introduction of a new item, namely, item 128, or giving those introducing it adequate time to do so.

On the other hand, I was quite impressed with the suggestion of the representative of Bulgaria and others who spoke after him that this should be divided into two parts, so to speak - the introduction and then the final decision - as part of various aspects of the item III on the list. It does occur to me that the allocation of 10 meetings is based on the assumption that that will cover not only the introduction but the resolution of the item. So the United States would propose a reduction along the lines suggested by the representative of Japan. We are not opposed to the introduction of this special item or the allocation of two or at the most three meetings for that purpose. But the final disposition should come under item III on the list - because it is, after all, a new item and all of us have to think about it.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

On behalf of the United States, I urge the officers of the Committee to reconsider their allocation of time. I am not trying to read their minds, but it is my opinion that to have 10 meetings out of 78 is to act on the assumption that we are not only introducing the matter but disposing of it.

Perhaps that total allocation should be reconsidered, as my colleague from Japan said, and should be, say, two or three meetings.

The CHAIRMAN: If I understood him correctly, the representative of the United States made a new proposal, that the item be somehow divided into two parts: first, a short introductory part in three meetings, with the real action and other views on it coming more at the tail end of the programme. I see that he is indicating agreement with what I have just said, and thank him for confirming that I understood him correctly.

Mr. YANKOV (Bulgaria): I apologise for speaking again, but since there were different interpretations of my original submission, I should like to place on record my delegation's understanding.

The representative of Argentina made a wise suggestion, based on the Committee's practice, that we should bear in mind that on some items we may not be prepared to take a decision at a certain point but may need time for further consideration or consultations. Then, as has been the practice in this Committee, the draft resolutions could be considered properly at a certain stage, probably during the second half of our work.

I did not suggest that we split any item into two debates or two periods of consideration, as the representative of the United Kingdom, to mention only one, thought, misinterpreting what I had in mind. What I had in mind was that we should have this schedule as a basis for our practical work, but be quite flexible, and if the majority of the Committee expressed the view through you, Mr. Chairman, or the other officers, or directly that the draft resolution should be taken at a later stage, that should be done. We rely on your judgement and guidance, Mr. Chairman, but it would be premature to say now whether one or two meetings only would be sufficient for important new items.

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I humbly submit that the programme of work that you have suggested be reconsidered during the process of our work by the officers, on the basis of the practical work and deliberations of the Committee. You could say in the middle of the session that the officers had examined certain points and that we could move to another; that a draft resolution was being considered and informal consultations were taking place. That could very well be done, as it has before. We should not tie our hands and minds now with a preconceived time-table that would not help our work but might create difficulties.

On this point I very much agree with the wise suggestion of the representative of Canada. We suggest adopting this time-table, as proposed by you, Mr. Chairman, provided that during the session we may consider our practical time-table in accordance with the situation that we face at a certain point.

Mr. KHLESTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Our delegation would like to express gratitude to the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, who said that in order to achieve a consensus on the working schedule suggested by the officers of the Committee he would not object to it. We were glad to hear that, because it will help the Committee to conclude its discussion on the suggested working schedule submitted by the officers. If we are to understand that the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany spoke on behalf of the Nine in making that proposal, we of course thank the other members of the Nine also for having agreed to the draft programme of work.

We listened attentively to the comments and remarks made by the representatives of Japan and the United States on item 128. As the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany did not press his proposal, I understand that the support given by the Federal Republic of Germany to the Japanese proposal is now withdrawn.

The representatives of Japan and the United States suggested that item 128 be divided into two parts. The Japanese proposal was that there be two meetings, and three meetings were suggested by the representative of the United States, the second part of the whole question, it having been divided into two, coming under III.

(Mr. Khlestov, USSR)

We have analysed that proposal and we think that certain misgivings are justified. First, if we start dividing each item on the agenda we are merely complicating our work schedule. We could do this with every item. Let us look at the first item. We may have discussions on it, and then, as in the past, we shall have draft resolutions, which will naturally come later. Do we divide item 1 into several parts?

Such circumstances may arise with other items as well - under III, for example. Such an approach by our Committee, dividing items into two, would create practical difficulties.

Secondly, such a procedure is not in line with normal United Nations working practice. Items on the agenda are discussed and draft resolutions are prepared within the framework of those items. Experience shows that the preparation of resolutions or decisions sometimes comes later, but it is not the usual practice for an item to be splintered into various parts, each of them being considered as a separate item.

I think that at this stage in our work we must express a negative attitude to the proposal, because we can do nothing with it. Perhaps it is a little early to adopt such a negative stance, but I have just pointed out what is the usual practice.

(Mr. Khlestov, USSR)

I hope the Chairman will be flexible enough to guide our work as he sees fit. If the consideration of a certain question does not fit into the number of hours allocated to it or if the discussion takes less than the number of hours allocated to it, then the Chairman, after consulting with the other officers of the Committee, can always be flexible. I apologize to my colleagues, but these attempts to tie our hands, to try to inhibit the flexibility of our meetings, are not good at this early stage of our work. We have all expressed congratulations to our Chairman. We must have confidence in him. So during the discussions the Chairman should examine the items and move them to other places as he sees fit. He must decide on the times for the discussion of individual items as he sees fit.

I should like to ask the representative of Japan and the representative of the United States to show a spirit of co-operation. I think we could adopt the schedule as submitted by the officers of the Committee, so that our Committee can start its work and have at least some sort of work programme at its disposal.

Mr. MADADHA (Jordan): Mr. Chairman, as this is the first time I have spoken in this Committee, I should like to join my colleagues in extending to you and the other officers of the Committee congratulations on your election.

My delegation has followed all the statements made by members of the Committee, and I should like to express agreement with those who have proposed the allocation of two weeks to item 125 and one week to item 128, in view of the fact that they are new items on the agenda. Then there would be a general debate on the rest of the items, including item 50, which is not a new item, as most of us will recall. Thus, in view of the fact that items 125 and 128 are new items on the agenda, we agree with the view that they should remain as they are, separated from the rest of the items, and that a general debate should be held on the rest of the items. Thus the one week allotted to item 50 could be allotted to 125, and the rest of the items could be considered in one general debate. However, I think the time will be sufficient for statements on items 125 and 128, if two weeks are allotted for item 125 and one week for item 128. Then the draft resolutions could be submitted during the discussion of the rest of the items, when we shall have ample time.

Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): I have listened with appreciation to what the representative of the Soviet Union has said in relation to my earlier statement. I hope that he had in mind the four points that I added when expressing my readiness not to stand in the way of a consensus, that is points (a) to (d), which represented our understanding of such an arrangement. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I should like to direct a question to the representative of the Soviet Union. It is the same question as the representative of the United States has already submitted here. Does the author of item 128 have in mind concluding the consideration of that item in the 10 meetings still allotted to it in the proposed programme of work?

The CHAIRMAN: As no other representative wishes to express a view at this point, I think we are approaching the time when we should take a decision on the working schedule of the First Committee. I myself have found the preceding discussion most valuable, because it has given some insight into how some of the items are going to shape up. All sides have, I think, urged the officers of the Committee to observe as much flexibility as possible. You may be sure that I will try to do so.

Before submitting the final working schedule for adoption by the Committee, perhaps it would be good if I were to repeat it. For the consideration of item 125, "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session", from 16 to 20 meetings would be allotted; next, for item 128, 10 meetings; then for the substantive disarmament items, from 35 to 49 inclusive, from 38 to 42 meetings; and, finally, for item 50, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security", 10 meetings. Keeping in mind the discussion we have had this morning, I formally propose that the Committee adopt this working schedule.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I now have a few indications to give the Committee. The programme of work the Committee has just adopted envisages full utilization of the time available. To achieve this, members of the Committee should submit draft resolutions as much in advance as feasible so as to provide sufficient time for consultations. The Secretariat has asked me to request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions, amendments, indications of co-sponsorship and requests for accommodation for group meetings be given in writing to the Secretariat in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

What I have to say about documentation may be redundant as far as this body is concerned, but I shall read it out anyway, because it is the wish of the Secretariat. With regard 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 of economical use of this vital but very expensive element of the service. These measures have been summarized in document A/INF/136/Rev.1.

(The Chairman)

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

I come now to a part which I should like to read with great emphasis. As delegates know, the normal meeting times are from 10.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. I hope it will not be abnormal for this Committee to follow that time-table. At any rate, I shall be here at those times. With your kind co-operation I should like to start the meetings of the First Committee punctually. That will enable us to avoid unnecessary waste. To illustrate that, it may be good for representatives to know that the cost of servicing one meeting of a committee is approximately \$7,300. Obviously those dollars are paid by our Governments in various ways. In order fully to utilize the time available, I open the list of speakers as from today. Apparently that news has leaked out, because I understand that the delegation of Mexico has already inscribed its name on the list for 16 October. Members of the Committee can inscribe their names to make statements on any item, particularly, of course, for statements on the items which will be considered by the Committee during its first week of work. I also urge delegations to inscribe their names before the Committee begins its substantive work.

As delegations may realize, the United Nations is under financial strain and we must help the Organization and our own delegations to have more order and to effect some economies in our work. I am certain that I can depend on the members of the Committee and I am sure that their co-operation will be much appreciated.

It would also be appreciated if delegations could provide the conference officer with 12 copies of the text when a speech is to be delivered according to a prepared text.

(The Chairman)

Finally, I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure - although this rule has been observed more in the breach than otherwise - which states as follows:

"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."

To my mind that is a mandatory provision and since one of my responsibilities is to see to it that the Committee at all times follows its rules of procedure, I seem to have no alternative but to rule out of order a speaker who breaks that rule. Does any delegation wish to comment?

Mr. IMAM (Kuwait): The first item that will be debated, namely item 125, relates to a report of the Secretary-General. I have not yet seen that report and when I asked the Secretariat I was not able to find out when that report will appear. Since our statements will have to be prepared in advance in relation to that report, could we have any indication as to when that report is expected to be issued?

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to ask the Director of the Centre for Disarmament of the United Nations, Assistant Secretary-General Bjornerstedt, to reply to that question.

Mr. BJORNERSTEDT (Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Disarmament): In reply to the question: the reference is to two specific questions, one is the guidelines with regard to the fellowship programme that is to be established and the other contribution refers to the question of a disarmament study where the Secretary-General was asked in paragraph 108 of the Final Document of the special session to submit a report. Both these documents are expected to be with members of the Committee

(Mr. Bjornerstedt)

by the middle of next week. As members of the Committee will have noticed, the number of reports requested under the various items for discussion during this session is quite high, which to a certain extent explains the reason for the lateness of these two reports.

The CHAIRMAN: As no other representative wishes to speak, I shall adjourn this meeting with a reminder that the First Committee will meet again on Monday, 16 October at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.