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Fifty-second session

First Committee

23rd Meeting

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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Nkgowe (Botswana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda items 62 to 83 (continued)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman: This morning, the Committee will proceed to take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/52/L.43, L.2, L.3, L.11/Rev.1, L.42/Rev.1, L.27/Rev.1 and L.52.

Before the Committee proceeds to take action on draft resolution L.43, I shall call upon those delegations wishing to introduce revised draft resolutions.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I would like to propose a revision to the resolution on small arms contained in A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1. Our proposal concerns operative paragraph 1, which currently reads,

“Endorses the recommendations contained in the report on small arms, which was approved unanimously by the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms”.

Our proposed revision of this paragraph is to add the following words after “Governmental Experts on Small Arms”:

“bearing in mind the views of Member States on the recommendations”.

That is the proposal of my delegation, with the agreement of the co-sponsors, on draft resolution L.27/Rev.1.

Mr. García (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution on the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, contained in document A/C.1/52/L.11/Rev.1, my delegation wishes to convey the decision of the co-sponsors to make the two following revisions to the text.

The first line of operative paragraph 1 currently states:

(spoke in English)

“Decides, subject to the emergence of a general agreement”.

The words “a general agreement” are to be deleted and replaced by the word “consensus”. Operative paragraph 1 then reads:

“Decides, subject to the emergence of consensus on its objectives and agenda, to convene its fourth special session devoted to disarmament”.

(spoke in Spanish)

Likewise, we wish to make the following revision to operative paragraph 3.

(spoke in English)

Where the text currently reads:

“and, in the light of the outcome of the deliberations”

the words “in the light of” are to be deleted and replaced by the words “subject to”. Accordingly, that portion of operative paragraph 3 will read:

“and, subject to the outcome of the deliberations”

and so on.

The Chairman: Are there other delegations wishing to introduce revised draft resolutions?

Mr. Karem (Egypt): I have the pleasure to speak today on a draft resolution submitted by Egypt under agenda item 71(c), entitled “Transparency in armaments” and contained in document A/C.1/52/L.2/Rev.1.

The draft resolution, as I am sure you are all aware, aims at establishing the long-awaited recognition by the General Assembly of the interrelationship between transparency in conventional weapons on the one hand and, on the other hand, transparency in weapons of mass destruction and on transfers of equipment and technology directly related to the development and manufacture of such weapons.

Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, and even before, Egypt and the rest of the Non-Aligned States have stressed every year that the concept of transparency should not be limited to conventional weapons, but should also include weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological — as well as transfers of high technology that has military applications.

This principled position does not in any way diminish Egypt's support for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, nor its recognition of the need for the Register's development and expansion. This support was clearly reflected in the fact that the report of the expert group on this important matter [A/52/316, annex] was agreed to by consensus.

In our view, this draft resolution is an essential complement to the draft resolution that is adopted annually on this item and which, for this session, is contained in document A/C.1/52/L.43. Draft resolution L.43, which the General Assembly is going to adopt this session, endorses the report of the expert group and sets the tone and agenda for another expert group to be convened in the year 2000.

For this reason, we have embarked on extensive consultations with the co-sponsors of L.43, and we appreciate very much the positive spirit with which they

have tried to accommodate our concerns in their draft. These consultations, as positive as they have been, have yet to lead to agreement on specific amendments or specific courses of action to be followed. At present we remain ready to consider any further compromise proposals.

Egypt shall submit to the Secretariat at the end of the day a slightly revised draft that is aimed at addressing some of the observations that have been communicated to us by some delegations. We shall open a co-sponsorship list for the draft resolution, and we urge delegations wishing to co-sponsor the draft to contact us, with a view to voting on this draft on Monday or Tuesday if no conclusive agreement is reached in the ongoing consultations. For this purpose my delegation is making available on the table at the back of the room advanced copies of the revised draft.

The Chairman: As there are no other delegations wishing to introduce revised draft resolutions, I will now call on those delegations wishing to make general statements on any draft resolutions contained in any cluster.

Since there are none, I will now call on those members of the Committee wishing to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43.

A recorded vote has been requested on operative paragraphs 5(b) and 7. I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to continue the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, entitled “Transparency in armaments”, was introduced by the representative of the Netherlands at the 16th meeting, on 6 November 1997. In addition to those countries listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/52/INF/2, it is also sponsored by Andorra, Madagascar, Saint Lucia, Guinea-Bissau and the Dominican Republic.

Now the Committee will vote on operative paragraph 5 (b).

Mr. Nordenfelt (Sweden): Could you, Sir, be kind enough to ask the Secretariat to read out exactly what it is in the paragraph that we are going to vote on? It starts at (b), I understand. Where does it end?

The Chairman: Would the Secretary of the Committee please read the paragraph.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): I am going to read operative paragraph 5 (b).

“Requests the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in 2000, on the basis of equitable geographical representation, to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with a view to a decision at its fifty-fifth session”.

So now we are voting on operative paragraph 5 (b).

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

Against:
None

Abstaining:

China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Mexico, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic

Operative paragraph 5 (b) was retained by 127 votes to none, with 8 abstentions.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now vote on paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, which reads:

“Invites the Conference on Disarmament to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments”.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

Against:
None

Abstaining:

Algeria, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic

Operative paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43 was retained by 123 votes to none, with 14 abstentions.

[Subsequently the delegation of Morocco informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43 as a whole.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab

Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Mexico, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43 as a whole was adopted by 132 votes to none, with 10 abstentions.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives wishing to explain their vote after the decision.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China)(*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, "Transparency in armaments", as a whole and abstained in the voting on paragraphs 5 (b) and 7. The Chinese delegation believes that appropriate military transparency measures can help to enhance international confidence and ease tensions. Therefore, since 1992 China has participated in the various related United Nations activities, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

At the same time, the Chinese delegation believes that in the prevailing international circumstances no country can agree to exercise or can effectively exercise absolute transparency in armaments. We do not believe in transparency for transparency's sake. Countries have different political, military and security environments, and a uniform level of transparency would have different impacts on different countries.

Where the great Powers or members of military blocs are concerned, some level of transparency might help to enhance mutual confidence and can even be a way for them to demonstrate their military muscles and promote their arms trade interests. However, this can only jeopardize the security of other countries. It is therefore not realistic to formulate abstract or purportedly unified measures for transparency applicable to all countries. Such an endeavour leads nowhere.

We therefore believe that applicable and relevant measures of transparency should be achieved through negotiation, within the framework of concrete arms control

and disarmament treaties, taking into account the different character, nature and requirements of various existing treaties.

In the Chinese delegation's view, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms can be a useful exercise and experiment. Leaving aside the Register's impact on arms control and disarmament and in restricting arms transfers — although that is also a question that merits our careful consideration — the operation of the Register over the past few years, judging solely from the participation in it, has shown that the system can hardly be called successful. According to the Secretary-General's report [A/52/312], 85 countries participated in the Register in 1996, less than half the membership of the United Nations. Therefore, it is urgent that we study and solve the problem of how to enhance and increase the Register's universality. Only then will it be possible for us to consider whether and how to extend its scope. To do so too early or to set a time limit for such extension would only jeopardize the Register as it now stands.

With regard to the question of including transparency in armaments in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament next year, we believe that this is a question to be decided by the Conference on Disarmament itself through consultations with all parties. These consultations will take into consideration the other agenda items of the Conference.

As far as the Chinese delegation is concerned, the question of transparency is by no means a priority item of the Conference on Disarmament. Furthermore, an isolated discussion of transparency in armaments ignoring the concrete requirements of arms control and disarmament treaties will only meet the propaganda needs of certain countries. Apart from that, there is no other significance.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): From 1991 to 1993, Egypt supported the annual General Assembly resolution on transparency in armaments, which, during those three years, was adopted without a vote.

However, with the realization that Egypt's commitment to comprehensive and far-reaching transparency in armaments was not met with an equal commitment on the part of others, we were forced, starting in 1994, to resort to abstaining in the voting on draft resolutions on transparency in armaments.

As in the past three years, our abstention this year is also to be seen as a reflection of our continued

disappointment in the lack of progress being achieved towards the expansion and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 46/36 L of 1991. This lack of progress is adequately reflected in the report of the group of experts which met this year.

Two Groups of Governmental Experts appointed by the Secretary-General, an Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament, annual deliberations during the General Assembly and countless conferences and seminars on the issue have not led to any progress.

The United Nations Register remains limited to transfers of only seven categories of conventional arms and continues to ignore other types of conventional arms, as well as weapons of mass destruction and advanced technologies with military applications.

Furthermore, the Register deals less than adequately with the issues of military holdings and procurement through national production.

While the United Nations Register in its present form may meet the security concerns of certain States, it does not adequately meet those of Egypt.

Only an expanded Register which provides a comprehensive picture and covers in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner the overall military capabilities of States can serve the cause of transparency in armaments.

Until such a Register is in place or until we determine that there exists a genuine commitment among States to fully implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, Egypt will continue to abstain in the voting on draft resolutions on transparency in armaments.

We regret that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43 have chosen to put it to the vote today, thereby preventing further consultations that could have led to reaching a text on this important agenda item.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We wish to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, "Transparency in armaments", which has just been adopted.

My delegation wishes to fully support the world movement towards building an international community free from the use of force and the threat of the use of force, a

world where the principles of justice, equality and peace prevail.

As we confirm our willingness to participate in any international endeavour aimed, in good faith, at the realization of that aim, we wish to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that the draft resolution does not take into account the special situation in the region of the Middle East, where the Arab-Israeli conflict continues.

This is because of Israel's persistence in occupying Arab territories, its refusal to implement relevant Security Council resolutions, its possession of the most lethal and dangerous weapons of mass destruction and its ability to produce, manufacture and stockpile in its territory all kinds of sophisticated weapons. Thus, transparency in the field of Israeli armaments is indeed the tip of the iceberg.

Consequently, my delegation abstained in the voting on this draft resolution.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I wish to explain the position of my delegation on the draft resolution "Transparency in armaments", contained in document A/C.1/52/L.43.

Myanmar believes that transparency in armaments can be a useful confidence-building measure provided that it is non-discriminatory, universal and on a voluntary basis.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, contains the shortcomings present in the draft resolutions on the subject put forward at previous sessions of the General Assembly.

My delegation has reservations on operative paragraph 5 (b) and operative paragraph 7. In operative paragraph 5 (b) the General Assembly would call for the convening of a meeting of a group governmental experts in the year 2000 and would call upon the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continued operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development.

We believe that we still need to review and reassess the operation of the Register. It is therefore premature and unnecessary at this stage to further develop the Register of Conventional Arms.

In view of the past record of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, we also have misgivings about the effectiveness and usefulness of holding another meeting of a group of experts in this regard.

Moreover, we do not see any urgent need for the Conference on Disarmament to take up the issue of transparency in armaments, as it is called upon to do in operative paragraph 7, at a time when it ought to be concentrating on banning fissile materials, nuclear disarmament and other pressing issues.

Accordingly, my delegation abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 5 (b) and operative paragraph 7, as well as on the draft resolution as whole.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to explain why our delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

The Islamic Republic of Iran supports transparency in armaments as a confidence-building measure. We are cognizant of the contributions that an enhanced level of transparency could make in building confidence among States and that it would help the security of States. We have participated in the Register since 1992, when it was established. However, contrary to the understanding reached in resolution 46/36 L of 1991 and the contents of that resolution, which provided for a phased transparency in armaments, including in nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and conventional armaments, no concrete efforts have been made so far to expand the scope of the Register to include data on all categories of weapons.

Based on the operation of the Register in the past five years, there is no evidence that the Register has led to self-restraint in the transfer of conventional arms, particularly on the part of the biggest suppliers of these weapons. No rigorous efforts have been made to promote full regional participation in the Register on an equal basis, especially in regions which count for most conventional arms transfers, such as the Middle East.

With respect to specific elements of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, as a member of the Group of Governmental Experts on transparency in armaments, I should say that the Group made a valuable effort to provide a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development. But it was not able to make any substantive recommendation to the General Assembly, due to divergent views on the development of the Register.

On the contribution of the work of the Conference on Disarmament on transparency in armaments, we firmly believe that the Conference has already completed its mandate on this issue. However, if there is a new proposal

to discuss transparency in armaments in the Conference on Disarmament, we are ready to consider it, provided that such a proposal promotes greater transparency in nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons in a non-discriminatory manner.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): During the course of our general debate and subsequent discussions, many delegations dealt with the subject of transparency in armaments. In the statement I made on 16 October, I explained the position of my delegation on the subject. Hence, I do not wish to refer once again to the issues phrased in that statement.

Operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution invites the Conference on Disarmament to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments. This invitation has to be viewed in the context of positions taken by individual delegations and groups of delegations at the current and past sessions of the General Assembly. A number of delegations referred during the debate to certain deficiencies of transparency in armaments, such as selectivity in relation to types of weapons — here, I would refer to conventional weapons, ignoring weapons of mass destruction — as well as selectivity in relation to specific weapons on which transparency is decided.

When invitations are made, such as the one in operative paragraph 7, some delegations take contradictory positions. When it suits them, they do not hesitate to invite the Conference on Disarmament or even to call upon it to take on certain tasks. The request made with regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in General Assembly resolution 50/65 is one such example.

On other occasions, some delegations take the position that the Conference on Disarmament is an independent organ and as such should be the master of its house, requiring no requests or invitations from the General Assembly. In doing so, they seem to forget the fact that the resources of the Conference on Disarmament come from the international community and that the Conference, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament issues, is responsible to the international community as a whole. If we accept the argument on the independence of the Conference on Disarmament, there is no rationale for operative paragraph 7; there is no rationale for taking the position that, on some draft resolutions, the Conference on Disarmament should be permitted to take its own decisions and that, on others, it is acceptable to invite or to call upon the Conference on Disarmament to engage itself in certain work.

The mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee was decided by the Conference on Disarmament on 26 May 1992 and the heading of that decision refers to a decision on organizational arrangements in connection with General Assembly resolution 46/36 L. It is quite clear to all of us that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee is rather dated. The sponsors should have taken into account the statements made in the Conference on Disarmament as well as during the current session, and made reference to the need to reexamine the mandate prior to undertaking any work in the field of transparency in armaments.

It is the view of this delegation that merely inviting the Conference on Disarmament year after year to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments is not helping the cause of transparency or the Conference in the conduct of its work. Such a message sent from this forum is unhelpful, as it would encourage interested delegations to seek further work on transparency in armaments without addressing the validity of the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Committee in 1992.

With regard to the effort of the Register, we too share the apprehensions expressed by some delegations, though in principle we have no objection to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We have, in the past, provided information to the Register. To achieve its objective, the Register should be expanded.

Finally, in view of the foregoing, my delegation abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 7. Despite other deficiencies in the draft, Sri Lanka voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole, as we believe that further work on transparency, on the basis of views expressed by various delegations, is desirable.

Mr. Bakiet (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Sudan voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, entitled “transparency in armaments”, proceeding from its belief that transparency in armaments undoubtedly contributes to confidence-building and security throughout the world.

However, we also believe that such transparency should extend to all types of armaments, including weapons of mass destruction, so as to consolidate the principles of trust and peace among all States of the world with a view to achieving the objective which we all strive for: complete and general disarmament.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in its current form lacks transparency, because the information

provided to it, such as procurement from national production and military holdings, is incomplete and inaccurate and does not reflect reality. Therefore, the Sudan supported the response of the States of the Arab League to the Secretary-General regarding the Register. We also support any endeavour and proposal aimed at achieving transparency in armaments by including weapons of mass destruction in the Register or by establishing a parallel register of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, in which Cuba was represented, having been barely completed, we would have preferred that this year's draft resolution, A/C.1/52/L.43, confine itself to reflecting the results of that exercise practically and factually. This would have facilitated the adoption of a more balanced text, which would have had greater potential for support from delegations.

The main reason for our abstention on the text as a whole this year is because of my delegation's serious reservations on operative paragraph 7. As we have said in previous years, the consideration of the item on transparency was properly concluded within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. Given the current situation in the work of that forum, we cannot agree to give priority to topics that divert its attention from matters of the highest priority.

Mr. Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

My delegation is of the view that if the United Nations Register system is to be supported by all Member States as a universal one, it should become a sort of disarmament, not a register per se. From its inception, my delegation was suspicious of the objectives and effectiveness of the Register system. The last several years hardened our doubt about it. Though the Register system was established, the transfer of weapons at the global level has not decreased. Instead it encouraged increased competition in the export of weapons among the big Powers and the main producers of weapons alike. The Register system has not had a direct bearing on the big Powers and the main producers of weapons, who continue in a mere pursuance of their military and political ends to transfer weapons into regions such as the Korean peninsula, where a tense situation prevails, and regions of conflict. My delegation believes that

all weapons deployed in foreign countries should be resisted and their withdrawal should be promoted.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation would like to explain its vote with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

Algeria attaches great importance to the question of transparency and considers it a confidence-building measure, as it has always supported initiatives aimed at advancing genuine transparency, which, from our point of view, should cover all types of armaments, including weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation therefore regrets that this year, once again, it is not able to support this draft resolution which continues to provide favoured treatment to this important issue with a framework which, in our view, has shown the limits of its ability to meet the expectations of all States. We also cannot continue to support the continuation of initiatives which cannot provide an impetus for efforts aimed at truly setting up a system which is viable, effective, authentic and covers all types of weapons.

The report of the Group of Governmental Experts [A/52/316, annex] is yet one more illustration of the difficulties in achieving progress towards expanding the Register for all types of weapons.

My delegation has supported and continues to support the intensive consultations which have been held over the last few days by several delegations interested in this question. We had hoped until the very end that the efforts would be successful. At the same time, however, we remain confident regarding the continuation of these efforts to meet the concerns of delegations which, while supporting the Register, have some difficulties in agreeing with it for objective reasons as long as it is not expanded to cover other types of weapons.

For all these reasons, my delegation abstained from the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43.

Ms. Laose (Nigeria): I have asked to speak to explain Nigeria's action on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

Nigeria is part of the Group of 21 at the Conference on Disarmament, and we share the well-known views of other like-minded members of that Group with regard to the

agenda item on transparency in armaments. It is nonetheless our hope that the obstacles before the agenda item in the Conference on Disarmament will be overcome through consultations between the members of the Conference. However, if this is not the case, we believe that a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development can still be done in the year 2000 — even if the Conference on Disarmament is unable to agree on the item on transparency in armaments.

We have therefore voted in favour of operative paragraph 5 (b) and abstained on operative paragraph 7. We voted in favour of the draft as a whole because we attach great importance to the question of transparency in armaments.

Mr. Al-Dayel (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43, entitled “Transparency in armaments”, because the United Nations Register includes seven types of conventional weapons and thus excludes weapons of mass destruction and the transfer operations for advanced technology which has military applications.

What reinforces transparency and makes it realizable is its comprehensive inclusion of all kinds of armaments because of the mutuality of relationships between transparency in conventional arms and transparency in weapons of mass destruction, as well as the transfer of advanced technology that has military applications. In this context, we emphasize the position of the member States of the League of Arab States presented to the Secretary-General in this respect.

The Chairman: As there are no other delegations wishing to speak at this stage, the Committee will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.3. Are there members who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on the draft resolution?

As I see none, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.3. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the First Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.3, entitled “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific”, was introduced by the representative of Nepal at the 17th meeting, on 7 November 1997. The draft resolution is sponsored by those countries listed in document A/C.1/52/L.3 itself and in document A/C.1/52/INF/2.

The Chairman: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.3 have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.3 was adopted.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.11/Rev.1. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the First Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.11/Rev.1, entitled “Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament”, was introduced by the representative of Indonesia at the 16th meeting, on 6 November 1997.

At the 23rd meeting, on 14 November, the representative of Colombia made the following oral revisions: in paragraph 1, the word “consensus” should replace the words “a general agreement”; and in paragraph 3, the words “subject to” should replace the words “in the light of”.

The Chairman: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.11/Rev.1 have expressed the wish that the draft resolution, as orally revised, be adopted by the Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.11/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.

The Chairman: I call now on those delegations wishing to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): My delegation expresses its appreciation to the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.11/Rev.1 for their extra efforts this year to develop a text that could be adopted without a vote. The draft resolution reflects an understanding that a consensus is needed to set up a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, that there is no point in setting a date until such consensus emerges and, finally, that hard work will be required to prepare it.

I would like to make clear, however, that United States support for this draft resolution should not be misconstrued as support for a fourth special session on disarmament.

Rather, the United States supports this draft resolution because it makes clear that a fourth special session should be convened on the basis of consensus, just as were all previous special sessions on disarmament, and that it would be useful only if there was consensus on its objectives and agenda. In our view, such an agenda should be balanced and not unduly weighted towards nuclear issues. It should include, for example, items such as conventional weapons, transparency and confidence-building measures. These views were presented in detail in a working paper at the 1997 session of the Disarmament Commission.

There are also several questions that must be answered prior to any decision to convene a special session on disarmament, such as: What is the need for or intended purpose of such a session? Is the international climate propitious for the holding of such a session? What are the prospects for consensus results? Would the large costs estimated for such a meeting be justified by the results? Would a special session conflict with, be redundant to or duplicate other ongoing arms control and disarmament activities?

The adoption of this draft resolution without a vote this year indicates a broadly shared realization that we should convene a special session only when its purposes are clear and when concrete and balanced results based on consensus are possible. We hope that it indicates a shift away from pursuit of a special session on nuclear disarmament only, which appeared to be the initial impetus behind the call for a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

Mr. Millim (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated State of Cyprus associate themselves with this explanation of vote. The countries members of the European economic area — Iceland and Norway — also associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union is pleased that consensus has been restored on a draft resolution on this subject. We stress that our support for draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.11/Rev.1 does not imply agreement with the fifth preambular paragraph. The European Union intends at the 1998 session of the Disarmament Commission to participate in future constructive exchanges on a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

As it did last year, the European Union will make a positive contribution towards the consensus necessary for agreement on a date for a fourth special session and for the convening of the Preparatory Committee for the session. The European Union calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to work constructively to that end.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation supported the adoption without a vote of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.11/Rev.1, entitled “Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament”, as orally revised.

We were pleased that in the course of consultations at this session it was possible to draft a text that enjoys general support. We also would like to reiterate our opinion that the decision to convene a special session can be adopted only after a consensus has been reached as to the objectives of the agenda and the dates for the session.

Mr. Danieli (Israel): Israel joined the consensus on this draft resolution. However, Israel disassociates itself from the content of the fifth preambular paragraph. It also shares the points made and the concerns expressed by previous delegations which explained their vote on this draft resolution.

The Chairman: If there are no further speakers who wish to explain their vote after the voting, the Committee will proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1.

I now call on delegations wishing to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution in A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1, as we have always supported the existing international disarmament machinery and the important role that the United Nations plays in it. We agree with the provisions of the draft resolution — that is to say, that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. Emphasis on this issue at this time is opportune, because the Conference on Disarmament right now is encountering some difficulties in preparing its future course of action on banning nuclear tests.

We do not agree with those who wish to avail themselves of those difficulties to set up various special

tribunes to speed matters up, without basing themselves on consensus, with a view to reaching agreements which, as experience has taught us, cannot take into account the security interests of all countries.

The United Nations Secretariat here must focus on providing all with the services that are indispensable to the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. That is where the disarmament experts from all countries truly are focused.

I should like to reaffirm the recognized role of the Conference on Disarmament. This draft resolution before us, L.42/Rev.1, is a step in the right direction. We have also noted that the co-sponsors of L.42/Rev.1 deleted the first preambular paragraph in the original text, thereby avoiding the reproach that the First Committee overlaps work done elsewhere pertaining to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a Programme for Reform" [A/51/950]. We deem this to be along the right lines. It removes doubts about the draft resolution that might exist for those who oppose such overlapping, including our own delegation.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): The United States will vote no on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1 on the role of the United Nations in disarmament. This is because in our view it intrudes on the larger efforts at United Nations reform, which are more properly the work of the General Assembly, as evidenced by the consensus approval of General Assembly draft resolution A/52/L.17 just two days ago.

We are maintaining this position even after the removal of the first preambular paragraph. The elimination of this paragraph merely drops the explicit link to the Secretary-General's reform efforts. The remainder of the draft resolution implicitly still attempts to influence that effort. Therefore, although it contains a few useful points, the United States cannot support the draft resolution as a whole and will continue to work in the General Assembly plenary to manage the reform effort in an across-the-board manner. We urge others to do the same and to vote no with us on draft resolution L.42/Rev.1.

Ms. Hand (Australia): Australia will vote against this draft resolution, because we adhere strictly to the view that United Nations reform issues — which encompass the role of the United Nations in disarmament — should be considered in the context of the Secretary-General's Track II package. They are under the authority of the General Assembly, not its committees. They concern the vision by

Member States for the United Nations as a whole and should be dealt with as a package, not picked apart by committees.

We also have concerns about the contents of the draft resolution. While many of the substantive elements are unobjectionable in themselves, the overall intention of the draft resolution is clearly to discourage the Secretary-General from his proposals to strengthen the Secretariat's advisory capacity in the area of disarmament. In adhering so rigidly to the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, the draft resolution ignores more modern mandates based on General Assembly resolutions. It also ignores that the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) itself has called for updating the disarmament agenda and machinery of the United Nations through a further special session on disarmament. It imposes an artificial schedule of priority on disarmament issues. Finally, operative paragraph 8 perpetuates the myth that the Secretary-General plans a super-verification role for the Secretariat.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1. This is because, first of all, the Chinese delegation believes that the draft resolution is not in conflict with the ongoing reform of the United Nations. However the United Nations is to be reformed, such reform should only improve the role and status of the United Nations disarmament machinery instead of weakening it, and I do not think it will weaken it.

Secondly, the disarmament machinery mentioned in L.42/Rev.1 should not only continue to exist, but its role should be further strengthened.

Thirdly, the draft resolution's references to compliance with treaties has the full endorsement of the Chinese delegation, because we firmly believe that the existing international treaties governing international disarmament should be faithfully adhered to.

Fourthly, the Chinese delegation believes that the United Nations Secretariat should, in accordance with authorization by the General Assembly, provide support and services to the existing disarmament machinery. The work of the Secretariat should under no circumstances replace the sovereign States in the exercise of their functions.

Ms. Mshai Tolle (Kenya): Kenya will vote in favour of this resolution because we believe that the United Nations has a role to play in disarmament through its existing machinery. As a member of the Conference on

Disarmament, my country holds the view that this is an important forum for negotiating treaties that touch on national security interests. My delegation has carefully studied the draft resolution before us, L.42/Rev.1, particularly operative paragraph 7, which reaffirms that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole negotiating body for disarmament.

Furthermore, following the deletion of the first preambular paragraph, we see no conflict between this resolution and the ongoing reforms currently being addressed by the General Assembly. We therefore hope that the resolution will enjoy the widest support.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the First Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1, entitled "Role of the United Nations in disarmament", was introduced by the representative of Pakistan at the 21st meeting, on 12 November 1997. In addition to those countries listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/52/INF/2, it is also co-sponsored by Cuba.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic,

Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Marshall Islands, Republic of Korea, Uruguay

The draft resolution was adopted by 93 votes to 42, with 9 abstentions.

The Chairman: I now call upon those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote after the decision.

Mr. Dean (Canada): The Canadian delegation must acknowledge its difficulty with this draft resolution. There is much in it with which we agree. However, despite the changes made to the draft, Canada believes that the substance of this resolution is related closely to two other matters.

First, the Secretary-General has recommended that the General Assembly undertake a review of the work of both the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee with a view to updating, rationalizing and strengthening their work. This needs to be done, and the Secretary-General's reforms are, in fact, being considered elsewhere. In this light, we welcomed the proposal by Pakistan to delete the first preambular paragraph.

Secondly, with regard to the First Committee's own deliberations on the rationalization of its work and reform of its agenda, on 3 November Canada presented a paper to this Committee containing its views. We believe that action on these more specific issues could and should be taken now. We support your efforts, Sir, in this regard.

In conclusion, the substantive matters dealt with in draft resolution L.42/Rev.1 need comprehensive and careful

consideration. We believe that, in fact, this has yet to occur during this General Assembly. Canada has therefore abstained on this resolution.

Mr. Millim (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): The European Union has taken note of the improvements made by the co-sponsors to the preambular part of draft resolution L.42/Rev.1. We have noted certain positive elements in the draft. However, the text as a whole still causes some important problems of principle which impel us, at this late stage, to vote against it.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): In the general debate of this year's General Assembly, and also in the First Committee, South Africa made clear its support for the Secretary-General's reform initiatives in the area of disarmament. It is our view that draft resolution L.42/Rev.1, entitled "Role of the United Nations in disarmament", is an endeavour to retain the status quo in the United Nations disarmament machinery, without taking into account — and by implication denying — the Secretary-General's proposals in this regard.

Furthermore, my delegation also wishes to note the existence of resolution 52/12, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", which was adopted by consensus in the General Assembly on 12 November 1997. For these reasons, my delegation had instructions to vote against this resolution.

Mr. Pearson (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the Secretary-General's reforms. We strongly welcome and support them because we believe very much in the goal of a more effective and strengthened United Nations.

We also support the Secretary-General's proposals which relate to disarmament, and we agree fully with the approach being taken to deal with the reforms as a package in plenary meetings of the General Assembly. In that approach we will need, of course, to be mindful of the validity of existing arrangements, but we should not start from the premise that these cannot be questioned. Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.47 is backward-looking by seeking to do just that.

The General Assembly only this week adopted by consensus a resolution which specifically stresses that the actions will be implemented with full respect for relevant mandates. It also affirms the programmatic implications of relevant actions in the reform package. We consider, therefore, that draft resolution L.42/Rev.1 is superfluous. Moreover, we believe that submitting it in this Committee

is not helpful to the wider process of achieving reform. We were obliged, therefore, to join others in opposing it.

Mr. Danieli (Israel): Israel voted against draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1. Israel dissociates itself from the main thrust, explicit or implicit, of that draft resolution, from some of its provisions and from much of its language. My delegation believes that the draft resolution is superfluous and adds nothing to the functioning of disarmament machinery.

Mr. Uluçevik (Turkey): Turkey voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the sponsors of the draft for the improvement they made in the original text, thus facilitating my delegation's decision to vote in favour of it.

We believe that the main thrust of the draft resolution is in keeping with earlier General Assembly resolutions, including those of the special sessions devoted to disarmament. The draft resolution also once again reaffirms the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. Moreover, in our view, the draft resolution is not in conflict with the Secretary-General's reform programme.

Mr. Abdulai (Ghana): I wish to explain why my delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1. We do not see in what way the draft resolution contradicts the fact that we have decided to discuss reform in the General Assembly. We believe that the reform covers all aspects of the work of the Organization, and it is an ongoing process. If we continue the habit of linking draft resolutions with which we do not agree to reform in order to prevent their discussion in committees, we will be doing the Organization a disservice, since we do not expect its work to be halted pending an exercise that is not supposed to end today or tomorrow.

Therefore, the support of my delegation for the reform effort cannot be questioned by anybody. Like others, we joined the consensus in the decision regarding the reform process in the General Assembly.

Mr. Villarga-Delgado (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation shares various points expressed in draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.42/Rev.1. Nevertheless, we think that the draft resolution does not take sufficient account of the reform programme undertaken by the Secretary-General. For that reason, we abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

The Chairman: The Committee will now consider draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, "Small arms".

I call upon delegations wishing to explain their position or vote before the voting.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): This is not an explanation of vote. I merely wanted to inform the Committee that following the acceptance by the principal sponsor of the draft resolution, following the change in operative paragraph 1 introduced by the representative of Japan, adding the words "bearing in mind the views of Member States on the recommendations" to the end of that paragraph, my delegation has decided, in a spirit of cooperation, not to press the draft amendment to that paragraph that we had submitted [A/C.1/52/L.52]. With this change, my delegation would be able to go along with the draft resolution.

Mr. Tan (Singapore): My country will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, but I would like to take this opportunity to explain our vote.

Singapore recognizes that there is a need to curb small arms obtained through illicit means, given their destabilizing implications for regional and international security, especially when such arms could fall into the hands of terrorists, drug traffickers and underground organizations. We also recognize the potential danger of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons.

Singapore therefore supports any measures aimed at stopping the illicit international arms trade and the destabilizing accumulation. That is why we support draft resolution L.27/Rev.1. If the opportunity arises, we are prepared to participate in the Panel of Governmental Experts and any other meetings on the issue in order to contribute constructively to the process.

Nevertheless, Singapore is of the view that proposals to reduce the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons and the approach to controlling the destabilizing accumulation should not impinge on the national security interests of States. We would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, which reaffirms the inherent right to individual or collective self-defence. We also welcome the amendment submitted by the Ambassador of Japan at the last meeting to insert a new fifth preambular paragraph that clearly recognizes the legitimate right of self-defence of States. States should retain a legitimate right to use and procure all such arms and weapons for their legitimate

defence purposes, as inscribed in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Soutar (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I wish to explain our vote before the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1.

The United Kingdom strongly supports both the work of the Panel of Experts and the recommendations made in the Secretary-General's report on small arms and will therefore be voting in favour of the draft resolution as a whole.

However, we did not wish to see any caveat attached to the draft resolution's endorsement of the recommendations contained in the report, and we regret that it has been necessary to make the changes in operative paragraph 1. As a result of those changes, the United Kingdom wishes to withdraw its co-sponsorship of L.27/Rev.1.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I should like clarification on what we are discussing because this morning I proposed the insertion of some words in operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1.

Are we in fact considering L.27/Rev.1 as orally amended in my intervention this morning, or are we considering the original L.27/Rev.1? Of course, we would prefer — and as supported by the representative of Pakistan — that L.27/Rev.1 as orally amended be the subject of action in the Committee now.

The Chairman: That is precisely how we are proceeding.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): It is with some regret that I must ask the Secretariat to have the record reflect that the United States is no longer able to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27.

Unfortunately, the language proposed by Pakistan which has just been incorporated in Rev.2 causes us some concern and forces us to withdraw our sponsorship. It muddies what had been a very clear paragraph endorsing the recommendations contained in the consensus report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. The paragraph can be read to imply that the General Assembly endorses only the portions of the experts' report which fully coincide with the views of all Member States, a position which the United States rejects.

The United States strongly supports efforts to address the problems posed by small arms, and we participated in the 1997 Expert Panel. Therefore, my delegation still supports the draft resolution and will vote in favour.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I should like to explain my delegation's vote on this draft resolution.

We have studied the report of the Secretary-General prepared with the help of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, and we have several observations on the report and on the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Japan.

It is our view that the Committee must observe the principle that once a group of experts has concluded its work, Member States must have the opportunity to study the reports closely and to formulate their views and policies before being asked to endorse or reject the results.

Pakistan has always considered the issue of conventional armaments to be important and this is evident from our resolutions which address both the nuclear and conventional issues. We have also supported other resolutions on the subject, and in this context I should like to express my particular appreciation for the flexibility displayed by the German delegation regarding the draft resolution on practical measures for disarmament.

Pakistan, as one of the largest contributors to United Nations peacekeeping missions, is fully cognizant of the dangers created by the indiscriminate proliferation of small arms in conflict situations which the United Nations has had to deal with. We therefore consider this subject to be of legitimate importance for careful and considered study and deliberation amongst Member States.

However, there is general recognition that this issue involves complex factors and dynamics requiring a long and evolutionary process before we can take firm decisions. Several of the recommendations of the Expert Panel implicitly recognized this fact.

However, there are other recommendations which appear to us to be entirely impractical at this stage. Yet, this draft resolution has sought their endorsement. It calls for a review of their implementation. It further calls for a report on undefined "further actions recommended to be taken". This is not a feasible approach, and the desire for such quick results instead of promoting progress could lead to impeding it.

Pakistan also objects to the selective political approach adopted by the experts in identifying specific regions, even though there was no authoritative representation from these regions on the panel.

It is for this reason that, as a minimum, my delegation had insisted on conditioning the endorsement of the recommendations with the views of Member States. If this had not been included, my delegation could not have supported this draft resolution.

We will now vote in favour of the draft resolution, but we do so in the context of the remarks and reservations I have just expressed.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico supports the adoption of this draft resolution as revised. Mexico attaches great importance to the problem of the proliferation and excessive accumulation of all arms, including small arms, and of the dangerous impact of the illicit trade in weapons with regard to the increase and heightened threat of criminal activities, the drug trade in particular.

Today in Washington, the Organization of American States (OAS) will sign a convention against the illicit trades in weapons and their components and munitions, which was an initiative of the Rio Group. The signing of this OAS convention will be attended by the President of Mexico.

There can be no doubt about Mexico's interest in this item, but we were not invited to participate in the Panel of Governmental Experts. We are carefully studying the Panel's report and should have liked to have the opportunity to obtain the opinions of all the experts from our various ministries before the General Assembly endorsed all the Panel's recommendations. Thus, we can support the draft resolution only with the reservation that we are endorsing recommendations, the contents and implications of which we have not had time to study properly.

Mr. Cordeiro (Brazil) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to point out that Brazil's view is very similar to that just expressed by the representative of Mexico.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1. A recorded vote has been requested. A separate, recorded vote has been requested on the fifth preambular paragraph.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, entitled "Small arms", was introduced by the representative of Japan at the 16th meeting, on 6 November 1997. In addition to those countries listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/52/INF/2, except the United Kingdom and the United States, it is also co-sponsored by Benin, Guyana, Haiti.

Earlier in this meeting, the representative of Japan made an oral revision to operative paragraph 1, as follows. At the end of operative paragraph 1, the following phrase should be added:

"bearing in mind the views of the Member States on the recommendations".

The Committee is voting first on the fifth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, which reads as follows:

"Reaffirming also the right of self-determination of all peoples, in particular peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, and the importance of the effective realization of this right, as enunciated, inter alia, in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,".

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Japan on a point of order.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I am sorry to intervene. Japan and other co-sponsors have not asked for a separate vote on the fifth preambular paragraph. Is there any other delegation that wanted a separate vote?

The Chairman: Yes. To my understanding, the delegation of France has asked for a separate vote.

I call on the representative of Jordan on a point of order.

Mr. Abu-Nimah (Jordan): If people want to explain their vote before the voting, does this apply also to explaining their vote before the vote on the fifth preambular paragraph on its own?

The Chairman: You could have explained your vote, but it is too late now, because we are now in the process of voting.

I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan on a point of order.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The rules of procedure say that any representative has the right to explain his vote, either before or after the voting, when that vote is taken. The Committee was not aware that a separate vote would be taken on the fifth preambular paragraph. Now that that vote is being taken, any representative who wishes to explain his vote, either before or after the voting, can do so, and I believe that the representative of Jordan has the right to do so. And by the way, my delegation would also like to do so.

The Chairman: I appreciate the point raised by the representative of Pakistan. We cannot go back to explanations of vote once we have started the voting process and the Secretary is given the floor. We had a list of speakers to explain their votes and it was exhausted without any deliberation.

The Ambassador of Jordan was raising a point of order, not necessarily saying that they wanted to explain their vote.

I call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): With all due respect, that is not the interpretation of the rules that has been made in this house for many years; but I do not wish to enter into a procedural debate, so I shall defer to your wisdom.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his understanding.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee is now voting on the fifth preambular paragraph, as I read out.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador,

Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, El Salvador, France, Georgia, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

The fifth preambular paragraph was retained by 120 votes to none, with 23 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Nigeria informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1 as a whole, as orally revised.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Bahrain, Israel, Mongolia, Oman, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted by 137 votes to none, with 8 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Nigeria informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman: I shall now call upon those delegations wishing to explain their positions or votes after the voting.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of the

entire draft resolution on small arms, but we did not take part in the voting on the fifth preambular paragraph.

The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Panel of Governmental Experts for its efforts during the past year. We agree in principle with the analysis made in the Panel's report regarding the consequences of the excessive accumulation and illicit transfer of small arms. The Chinese delegation also believes that the excessive accumulation and excessive transfer of small arms may bring about a worsening of the situation in troubled regions, increased conflict and further spreading of terrorism and drug trafficking, and thus impede the economic and social development of the regions concerned. Their impact on the developing countries in conflict regions may be even greater.

China respects and will actively support the efforts made by the international community, particularly the developing countries and regions, for peace and development.

The Chinese delegation believes that the causes which give rise to turmoil and conflict in the regions concerned — such as political, economic and social causes, including territorial disputes and religious conflicts — are complex and varied. The accumulation of small arms per se cannot give rise to conflicts; at most the matter is but a symptom rather than the root cause. To resolve the problem of the excessive accumulation and illicit transfer of small arms, it is advisable to treat both the symptom and the root cause, with the emphasis on the root cause.

One should make specific analyses of the causes underlying turmoil in different regions and work out different measures according to varying circumstances, including different approaches in handling small arms. In handling the excessive accumulation and illicit transfer of small arms, we should first and foremost refrain from going against the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect in earnest the sovereignty of the countries concerned.

Secondly, we should act strictly in accordance with the authorization of the United Nations Security Council and within the peacekeeping framework.

Thirdly, we should respect and act according to the agreements reached voluntarily among the parties to a conflict, including those agreements reached by the regional organizations in the regions where they are located.

Fourthly, we should take full account of the reasonable needs of the countries in conflict regions for legitimate self-defence and security.

The Chinese delegation is in favour of a proper handling of the problem of the excessive accumulation of small arms. We are firmly against acts by any country which contravene international law or the international obligations it has undertaken, be they through the illicit transfer of any arms or the use of arms transfers in gross interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State, or through undermining and impeding the efforts by a sovereign State for its national unification and territorial integrity.

We understand, sympathize with and support the countries and peoples which once experienced conflicts and wars in their efforts and specific measures to maintain and consolidate peace. But we should be vigilant about any possible attempt to use the excessive accumulation and illicit transfer of small arms as a pretext for changing the focus and objectives of international arms control and disarmament. We must also be careful about taking advantage of the troubles faced by others in an attempt to meddle in and control the internal affairs of countries in a troubled region and thus to establish or expand political influence and spheres of influence. We must moreover be vigilant about attempts to strip small and medium-sized countries of the military means necessary for legitimate self-defence and for the maintenance of their security.

Although the Chinese delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, I wish to note that the Chinese delegation has serious reservations about the Panel's recommendation on extending to other regions an approach to solving the problems of one specific country or region.

My delegation did not participate in the vote on the fifth preambular paragraph because it required further time to study the implications of that paragraph.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation had intended to support the initial version of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27, but the sponsors revised it by adding a fifth preambular paragraph that changed the nature of the text. Although the provisions of the fifth preambular paragraph are not in themselves a problem for us, their inclusion in a draft resolution on small arms is inappropriate.

Our major concern was the revision to operative paragraph 1 made yesterday by one delegation. We were

therefore obliged to abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): Following its abstention on a similar text in 1995, Egypt decided this year to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, entitled "Small arms". This testifies to Egypt's steadfast commitment to the pursuit of all efforts that can lead us to a safer and more stable world. While Egypt is encouraged by the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and by the recommendations in its report, it will nevertheless continue to monitor closely the issue of small arms in order to ensure that it is dealt with in a just, balanced, non-discriminatory and comprehensive manner. It is Egypt's ardent hope that the issue of small arms will not go down the road of other issues such as transparency in armaments, an issue which is, to our great regret, being addressed in a highly selective manner.

The priorities in the field of disarmament remain the same: nuclear weapons must be eliminated on a priority basis. Efforts at non-proliferation, while necessary, do not replace concrete and irreversible disarmament measures. Other weapons of mass destruction must also be eliminated comprehensively. Conventional weapons must be dealt with, but not in a selective manner. Small arms do not exist only in conflict-ridden countries of the developing world; controlling the transfer of such arms should not be viewed as an opportunity to curb the Charter-based right of all States, including developing States, to acquire the means for their own legitimate self-defence. Furthermore, small arms do not necessarily mean primitive arms or simple arms. There exist today small arms which are highly advanced and lethal, and which must be taken as falling within the purview of the small arms issue.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): This is a bit of restating the obvious, but I just wanted to make the record clear. Of course, the United States strongly supports the principle of self-determination. We merely abstained in the vote on the fifth preambular paragraph because we felt that the mention of that principle in a draft resolution on small arms was not appropriate.

Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thanks to the revision of paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, my delegation was able to vote in favour of the draft resolution. We believe that the First Committee should take due account of the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, which will facilitate subsequent consideration of the recommendations that will appear in its final report. We view as positive the

draft resolution's explicit references to the right to individual or collective self-defence and to the need for a balanced and non-discriminatory approach to the control of small arms.

I wish to make it very clear that my delegation's affirmative vote can in no way be interpreted as constituting a commitment by Cuba to automatic implementation of recommendations that will appear in the final report of the Panel of Governmental Experts. Those recommendations will require careful consideration by Member States before any final decisions on implementation are adopted.

Mr. Danieli (Israel): My delegation abstained in the votes on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, as orally revised, and on the fifth preambular paragraph. My delegation does not agree with the introduction of the fifth preambular paragraph, which in our view has no place in the context of a draft resolution specifically on small arms. Israel expresses its views on the issue of self-determination in the discussions in the Third Committee. Had the fifth preambular paragraph been deleted, my delegation would have voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation voted in favour of the fifth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, on "Small arms". We consider that that preambular paragraph was an important addition by the sponsors, and was highly instrumental in enabling my delegation to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

We believe that the principle of self-determination, which is contained in the Charter, is most relevant to the issue of small arms. I think that history will show that all struggles for self-determination and independence, including great revolutionary wars of independence, were fought with small arms and not with weapons of mass destruction.

Therefore, we believe that this insertion in the draft resolution is important and relevant, and no recommendation on the issue of small arms can or should in any way prejudice the right of peoples under foreign and colonial domination to seek their independence and freedom from such foreign occupation.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*):

We voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, as revised this morning. Our affirmative vote does not mean that we have given an endorsement to the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, which has not been considered by the experts in my own country.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.