



# General Assembly

Sixty-second session

First Committee

**25**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 2 November 2007, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*Chairperson:* Mr. Badji ..... (Senegal)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

## Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

### Action on all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): This afternoon, the Committee will take up the draft resolutions listed in revision 1 of informal working paper No. 4, beginning with draft resolutions submitted under cluster 2, “Other weapons of mass destruction”. The Committee will then proceed cluster by cluster.

Before giving the floor to representatives wishing to make general statements or to introduce revised draft resolutions, I call on the representative of Indonesia.

**Mr. Ruddyard** (Indonesia): I would like to suggest a technical correction with regard to the 24th meeting, held yesterday afternoon. Prior to our taking action on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.19/Rev.1, entitled “Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)”, which was subsequently adopted with the overwhelming support of member States, the Secretary of the Committee announced that the draft resolution had been introduced by the representative of Indonesia. Instead, he should have said that the draft resolution had been introduced by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the States parties to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone that are also members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): The Secretariat has taken note of the statement by the representative of Indonesia. We shall turn now to our consideration of draft resolutions listed in revision 1 of informal working paper No. 4.

**Mr. Ngoh Ngoh** (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to inform the Committee of a technical correction with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1. The reference in paragraph 10 to the progress made by the Standing Advisory Committee in implementing its programme of work for “the period 2005-2006” should actually be to “the period 2006-2007”. The footnote in that connection should also be removed.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): We are now taking action on draft resolutions under cluster 2, as listed in revision 1 of unofficial working paper No. 4, “Other weapons of mass destruction”. I call now on representatives wishing to make statements in connection with those draft resolutions.

**Mr. Degia** (Barbados): I take the floor briefly on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to inform the Committee that CARICOM has decided to withdraw document A/C.1/62/L.53, which contained amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1, entitled “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources”. CARICOM will articulate its position on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1 in a general statement when action is taken on that draft resolution.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



**Mr. Dobelle** (France) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor in connection with the draft resolution submitted by my delegation under the symbol A/C.1/62/L.46, entitled “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources”.

I should like to remind the Committee that that draft resolution follows up resolution 60/73 — on the same subject — which the General Assembly adopted by consensus in 2005. Other than some updating, this year’s text aims at supporting the objectives of resolution 60/73, in particular by calling on States to strengthen their national capacities to detect the illicit trafficking in radioactive materials and by welcoming the efforts undertaken at the national and international levels to search for, locate and secure unsecured and/or uncontrolled sources — so-called orphan radioactive sources.

In the first consultations held by my delegation we took account of various observations on the draft resolution. Nevertheless, some delegations told us that they still had difficulties with certain elements of the text, and changes were made in writing. My delegation then held additional consultations, which made it possible to overcome all the difficulties and to confirm the support of delegations for a draft resolution addressing an issue that is crucial to the entire international community: preventing radiological terrorism.

My delegation has listened closely to the statement made by the representative of Barbados, who announced that he was withdrawing the amendments he had submitted on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community. We would like to thank the delegation of Barbados and the group he represents for their constructive attitude. We assure them that the concerns they expressed in connection with the transport of radioactive materials in the area of small island developing States have been understood, even if we continue to believe that the First Committee is not the place to address those issues. Dialogue therefore continues.

Thanks to the efforts of all the delegations that actively participated in the consultations of recent days, my delegation has been able to submit a revised draft resolution under the symbol A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1, which we hope will be adopted by consensus. The following are the main revisions to document A/C.1/62/L.46.

With regard to the preamble, we are reverting to the language of resolution 60/73 of 2005 in the fifth preambular paragraph, which in its revised form reads as follows:

“Noting that actions of the international community to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and prevent access by non-State actors to weapons of mass destruction and related material, notably Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) of 28 April 2004, constitute contributions to the protection against nuclear and radiological terrorism”.

Furthermore, a new paragraph has been inserted after the twelfth preambular paragraph; this reads as follows:

“Mindful of the responsibilities of every Member State, in accordance with international obligations, to maintain effective nuclear safety and security, asserting that responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State, and noting the important contribution of international cooperation in supporting the efforts of States to fulfil their responsibilities”.

With regard to its operative part, paragraph 3 has been revised to include a reference to strengthening national capacity to detect trafficking in radioactive materials. Paragraphs 7 and 8 have also been revised, to include references to the efforts of Member States and to efforts made at the international level to secure radioactive sources.

I want to thank all delegations that have sponsored this draft resolution, as well as those that have supported efforts to produce a text acceptable to all.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1. As members are aware, that revised draft resolution was distributed to delegations only this morning. I therefore propose to waive rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly — concerning the 24-hour rule — in order that the Committee can take a decision on the draft resolution. May I take it that the Committee agrees to waive rule 120 in connection with draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before the Committee takes action on the draft resolution.

**Mr. Benítez Versón** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation would like to explain its position on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1, entitled “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources”.

Cuba shares the legitimate concern about the risk of terrorists acquiring radioactive materials, and we support all legitimate international efforts to prevent it from happening. It is very important that any draft resolution introduced on this subject be very carefully prepared, so as to preserve consensus among Member States. The consultations held in connection with draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1 were both extensive and difficult. In fact, the final version of the text that we are about to adopt was made available only a few hours ago. In our opinion, this process could have been less protracted and complicated if the sponsors had, from the very beginning, duly taken into account the concerns expressed by a group of delegations, including the Cuban delegation.

A consensus acceptable to all was eventually reached. The change made to the fifth preambular paragraph, as well as those made to operative paragraphs 7 and 8, made it possible for Cuba to support the draft resolution. Our delegation would not have agreed to wording such as that originally proposed by the sponsors, whose dangerous ambiguity would have left the door open to unilateral actions that could have been inconsistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. That includes, for example, the Proliferation Security Initiative. We reiterate that strategies to prevent terrorists from acquiring radioactive materials and sources should be based on a multilateral and non-discriminatory approach and should be fully in line with international law.

With regard to paragraph 2, my delegation would like to point out that sources of radioactive materials are regulated by instruments that are not legally binding. As such, they do not establish international obligations. That is the case with the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): We shall now proceed to take action on draft resolution

A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1. I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

**Mr. Sareva** (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1, entitled “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources” was introduced by the representative of France at the 14th meeting, on 23 October 2007. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in documents A/C.1/62/L.46, A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1 and A/C.1/62/CRP.3 and Add.3. In addition, the following delegations have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Canada, Moldova, Montenegro and Turkey.

The delegation of Barbados, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Caribbean Community, had submitted written amendments to the original draft resolution. Those amendments are contained in document A/C.1/62/L.53. The representative of Barbados, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community this afternoon, formally withdrew the amendments contained in document A/C.1/62/L.53. Also this afternoon, the representative of France introduced the revised draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): The sponsors have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly.

*Draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1 was adopted.*

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): I shall now give the floor to speakers wishing to speak in explanation of position on the draft resolution just adopted.

**Mr. Prabhat Kumar** (India): My delegation has requested the floor to explain its position on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1, entitled “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources”.

The States Members of the United Nations, aware of the threat posed by terrorists acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction and radiological materials and sources, have supported international efforts to combat the dangers posed by terrorists acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction and to deny terrorists any opportunity to acquire or use radiological

materials and sources. We joined the consensus on the draft resolution, as it complements India's successive resolutions on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, which also have enjoyed consensus in the First Committee and in the General Assembly.

**Mr. Degia** (Barbados): I take the floor on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1, entitled "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources".

The issue of combating terrorism is extremely important to the countries of the Caribbean Community. Like the acquisition of nuclear materials by terrorists, this is a frightening and alarming prospect. Although we are a set of small island States with no nuclear capacity or materials, except for minor nuclear technology in the medical field, the practice of trans-shipment of nuclear materials through our waters by some States brings the risk of nuclear terrorism right into our homes. The real possibility of an accident — or, worse yet, a terrorist hijacking or attack against one of those shipments — poses a grave threat not only to the environmental and economic sustainability of the region, but also to our very existence in the Caribbean.

In that respect, we thought that it was very logical that our concerns be included in this draft resolution on preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear materials. Initially, we had contemplated proposing strong language from the Panama Declaration, which emanated from summit of heads of State or Government of the Association of Caribbean States. But, in a gesture of goodwill, we decided to propose agreed language from the 2005 World Summit Outcome. However, that language was rejected by the main sponsors. In every instance of an attempt to achieve consensus, the language that was suggested to us was too weak and moved many steps backwards from what was achieved at the World Summit, in 2005.

We are confident that, had we sought to include our amendments, as circulated in document A/C.1/62/L.53, through a democratic vote, we would have comfortably secured significant majority support. At this point, let me express our sincere appreciation to all those delegations that shared our concern and supported our position. However, we are also aware

that the main sponsor is adamant about the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus and was willing to withdraw the draft resolution in the absence of such consensus and because the amendments would have been accepted into the draft resolution if they had been put to the vote.

CARICOM is a very reasonable and moderate grouping of States, and, in the interests of consensus, we decided to withdraw our proposal. However, we must emphasize here that that decision does not in any way have any bearing on the strong position we maintain on the trans-shipment of nuclear and hazardous wastes through our waters or on our insistence on the total cessation of that very dangerous practice. Indeed, the resistance by some delegations to recognizing the fact that our very survival is threatened by their practices in this regard only serves to strengthen our convictions.

We also cannot accept the contention that there has been no accident or incident before, and that the practice is therefore a safe one. No country, no matter how powerful or secure, can claim to be safe from the actions of terrorists. We therefore cannot comprehend that absolute conviction about the safety and security of the trans-shipment of nuclear material. We cannot stress enough the point that no country or area is exempt from acts of terrorism.

While we are a peaceful neighbourhood, the Caribbean is not immune to terrorist attacks, as witnessed from the bombing of a Cubana airliner off the coast of Barbados in 1976. All 73 people on board were killed in what was, at the time, the most deadly terrorist strike in the Western Hemisphere. Terrorists target everyday activities, and we are all very aware of the vulnerability of ships and airliners. To act as if a ship in the Caribbean Sea were somehow not susceptible to the depraved actions of a terror group is folly.

CARICOM repeats its strong and well-grounded position that our amendments were very pertinent to the thrust of this draft resolution. Not only do we rebuff any contention to the contrary, we also believe strongly that the region has been done an injustice by virtue of the rejection of our proposals. For us in the region, the issue goes beyond any economic, political, environmental or legal considerations. For the threat posed by the trans-shipment of nuclear material and a

terrorist hijacking or attack is one that speaks to the very survival of our peoples.

Heads of Government of CARICOM and the Association of Caribbean States have called consistently for the total cessation of those shipments through our waters. We reiterate our strenuous and forceful rejection of the continued use of the Caribbean Sea for the shipment and trans-shipment of nuclear material and toxic waste. We call upon the countries that produce nuclear and toxic waste to implement urgently relevant measures and establish reprocessing facilities that put an end to the need for the trans-shipment of nuclear and toxic waste.

CARICOM also urges those countries currently involved in the production or shipment of nuclear waste to adopt measures aimed at strengthening international cooperation in order to comply with security measures on the transportation of radioactive material, especially those adopted at the forty-seventh General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, held in Austria in 2003.

**Ms. Leong** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.46/Rev.1, entitled "Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources". We did so in order to reaffirm our commitment to the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation and to underscore our rejection of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of the motivation behind it.

Venezuela believes in the importance of international efforts to preserve the security and physical protection of radioactive materials and sources. Nevertheless, our delegation would like to emphasize that the best way to prevent terrorist groups from acquiring or having access to such materials is through the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant international legal instruments.

In that connection, States that possess weapons of mass destruction have the primary responsibility to adopt the necessary measures to permanently eliminate those weapons, which pose the greatest threat to the continued existence of humankind. The strict implementation by States that possess weapons of mass destruction of the commitments undertaken through

those instruments would make a meaningful contribution to preventing such weapons from being used by terrorist groups to threaten international peace and security.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): The Committee will now turn to draft resolutions submitted under cluster 5, "Regional disarmament and security". As no delegation wishes to take the floor, the Committee will take action on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1. I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

**Mr. Sareva** (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1, entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa", was introduced by the representative of Cameroon, on behalf of States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Economic Community of Central African States, at the 21st meeting, on 30 October 2007. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1.

As we heard a moment ago, the representative of Cameroon orally corrected paragraph 10 of the draft resolution to refer to the biennium 2006-2007, instead of 2005-2006.

With the permission of the Chairperson, I shall now read out for the record the oral statement by the Secretary-General regarding financial implications that accompanies draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1.

"Under the terms of paragraphs 7, 13, 14 and 17 of draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1, the General Assembly would

'[Request] the Secretary-General, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1197 (1998), to provide the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee with the necessary support for the smooth functioning of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa';

'[Request] the Secretary-General and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue their assistance to the countries of Central Africa in tackling the problems of refugees and displaced persons in their territories';

‘[Request] the Secretary-General and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide their full assistance for the proper functioning of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa’; and

‘[Request] the Secretary-General to continue to provide assistance to the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee to ensure the continuation of their efforts’.

“The activities of the Standing Advisory Committee related to the functioning of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, referred to in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, are expected to be funded from voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

“Implementation of the request contained in operative paragraph 13 of the draft resolution, regarding the provision of assistance to the countries of Central Africa in tackling the problems of refugees and displaced persons in their territories, would be subject to the availability of voluntary contributions to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

“Implementation of the request contained in operative paragraph 14 of the draft resolution, regarding the provision of full assistance for the proper functioning of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, would be carried out within the resources provided under section 23, ‘Human rights’ of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

“Implementation of the request contained in operative paragraph 17 of the draft resolution, regarding the provision of assistance to the States members of Standing Advisory Committee, would be carried out within the resources already provided under section 4, ‘Disarmament’, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

“Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1, no

additional requirements would arise under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

“The attention of the Committee is drawn to the provisions of section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, of 21 December 1990, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, and also reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.”

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1 have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly.

*Draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.52/Rev.1, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): The Committee has thus finished taking action on the draft resolution submitted under cluster 5. The Committee will now turn to draft resolutions submitted under cluster 7, “Disarmament machinery”. I shall first give the floor to speakers who wish to make general statements.

**Mr. Obisakin** (Nigeria) (*spoke in French*): I am taking the floor on behalf of the African Group.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak again on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1, entitled “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa”.

We find it necessary to reiterate that the Secretary-General stated explicitly in his report (A/62/140) that the Centre’s ability to fulfil its mandate continued to be hampered by the lack of funding, in particular core funding; that voluntary contributions were continuing to decline and remained insufficient for the Centre to fulfil its mandate effectively and efficiently; and that there was no foreseeable reliable source of funding that would ensure its operational sustainability. Incidentally, that precarious situation was also noted recently by the chief of the United

Nations Regional Centre in Africa during her informal briefing to the First Committee.

However, the Centre has proven to be extremely useful in disarmament efforts, specifically as they pertain to reducing the excessive accumulation, circulation, use and volume of small arms and light weapons in Africa in general, and especially in the West Africa subregion. It has also played a catalytic role in post-conflict peacebuilding.

Last year, the General Assembly endorsed the establishment of a Consultative Mechanism. We cannot ignore its recommendations. Merely taking note of the recommendations would be tantamount to advocating no action on the present precarious state of the Regional Centre in Africa, located in Lomé, Togo.

Following the reform that is envisaged, the Centre should certainly be more efficient and dynamic, and consequently more relevant in the promotion of peace and sustainable development in its region of the world. The Committee will agree with Africa that that is what the United Nations stands for.

To accommodate all our partners, paragraphs 2 to 5 of the draft resolution have been revised to include more flexible language. We have tried to reduce the financial and budgetary implications of the draft resolution to the barest minimum. The budgetary implications — about \$12,000 monthly — are quite small and are practically insignificant compared to the huge expenditures on armaments, including the illicit weapons that are virtually being dumped on Africa today.

We have a proverb in Africa that says that nobody, however strong, can clap with only one hand. You need two hands to clap. Africa therefore prays that the Committee will give us a helping hand, so that we can applaud together. It is Africa's sincere wish that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

**Mr. Ruddyard** (Indonesia): The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) would like to stress the important role that regional centres can play in promoting confidence-building and disarmament measures at the regional level, thereby promoting progress in attaining the goals of sustainable development.

In view of the many challenge faced by Africa in the security and development fields, the group of Non-Aligned States would like to express its support for the efforts by African States to ensure the necessary

operation and functioning of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. NAM also notes that the Secretary-General has stated that the African Regional Centre's ability to fulfil its mandate in assisting African States in the fields of peace, disarmament and security remains hampered by the lack of funding, in particular core funding.

Therefore, NAM expresses its strong support for draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1, submitted by the African Group, which aims to ensure the predictable operation and functioning of the Regional Centre in support of Africa.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): We shall now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1. A recorded vote has been requested. I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

**Mr. Sareva** (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa", was introduced by the representative of Nigeria at the 15th meeting, on 23 October 2007, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1 and A/C.1/62/CRP.3 and Add.1, Add.2\* and Add.3.

In connection with draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24, the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on programme budget implications of the draft resolution was issued as document A/C.1/62/L.54.

Again on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States, this afternoon the representative of Nigeria introduced a revised draft resolution, which is contained in document A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1. In that connection, I would like to draw attention to the revised statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1, which is contained in document A/C.1/62/L.54/Rev.1.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*Against:*

United States of America

*Abstaining:*

Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

*Draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1 was adopted by 164 votes to 1, with 5 abstentions.*

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): I shall now give the floor to representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

**Ms. Rocca** (United States of America): The United States supports the efforts of nations to work among themselves to solve regional problems and believes that United Nations regional centres can facilitate such work. However, funding for those centres should come from either existing resources or voluntary regional contributions. Draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa", requests that the costs of three new posts and the operating costs of the Centre be paid from the regular budget of the United Nations. The money for the costs created through the draft resolution is not in the United Nations budget for the next biennium, and we are informed by the Secretariat that it is not possible to identify United Nations disarmament activities that could be modified in order to pay for those costs. The budget for 2008-2009 — with additional add-ons identified by the Secretariat, not including this funding — already represents a 15 per cent increase above the budget approved for 2006-2007.

The United States voted "no" on this draft resolution, as we are convinced that it is fiscally imprudent to support the commencement of long-term ongoing United Nations operations without identified funding. We are equally committed to supporting restraint in the growth of the overall budget of the United Nations.

**Mr. Tarui** (Japan): I would like to explain Japan's position concerning its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa".

Japan strongly agrees that poverty reduction and development are prerequisites for peace and security in Africa. We share the concern that the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, despite its positive work for peace and disarmament, will be greatly hindered by the recent cuts in voluntary contributions. But, at the same time, Japan believes that the ever-increasing budget of the United Nations is also a problem, especially in cases where the regular budget is used, such as under



operative paragraphs 4 and 5 of the draft resolution. Such cases need to be resolved through the “scrap and build” principle, such as through the reallocation of existing resources. We are opposed to the occurrence of programme budget implications.

From that perspective, while Japan fully understands the purpose of the draft resolution on this topic, we unfortunately had no choice other than to abstain in the voting on it, as in the past.

**Mr. Grinius** (Canada): Canada abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1, regarding the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. However, our abstention should not be interpreted as a lack of support for the aims and purposes of the Centre. Indeed, Canada has supported the work of the Centre in the past, through the provision of research interns.

Canada abstained in the voting on this draft resolution because of our concerns regarding operative paragraphs 4 and 5. We would have preferred the draft resolution to request the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive budget proposal for the Centre, taking into consideration its mandate and current available resources, for consideration by the appropriate committee in the context of the next biennial budget. That would have been consistent with the rules governing programme planning and budgeting and would have avoided the need to draw resources away from the contingency fund.

It is inappropriate for the First Committee to have made these recommendations on the allocation of regular budget resources and the establishment of new positions. That is properly the role of the Fifth Committee, where the full range of budgetary considerations can be taken into account.

**Mr. Maclachlan** (Australia): Like other countries whose representatives have spoken before me, Australia supports the purpose and work of regional centres for disarmament, and we have supported past resolutions to that effect. However, it is and has been a matter of established policy and United Nations convention that budget matters are properly left to the work of the Fifth Committee. Australia considers that the text of draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1 covers matters concerning specific expenditures that fall within the responsibilities of the Fifth Committee. For that reason, we were unable to support the draft resolution.

**Ms. Paterson** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom reluctantly abstained in the voting on this year’s draft resolution on the United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1). We acknowledge the considerable efforts made to reach a consensus on the text of the draft resolution, and we deeply regret that a consensus text could not be agreed upon.

The United Kingdom supports the principle of, and the valuable work undertaken by, the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament. However, on this occasion, the United Kingdom position on this draft resolution stems from the fact that the operating costs of the United Nations regional centres are currently funded on a voluntary basis, and we do not believe that this time of intense pressure on the regular budget is the right time to change that policy. The United Kingdom therefore considers that this recommendation should be on an exceptional basis and should not set any form of precedent. The United Kingdom further notes that it is the Fifth Committee alone that has the competence and the authority to take decisions on administrative and budgetary matters.

**Mr. Brasack** (Germany): Germany voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/62/L.24/Rev.1, because we are, in general, staunch supporters of the activities of the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, including, to be sure, the one in Africa, which is the subject of this draft resolution. Nevertheless, I cannot hide the fact that my Government has serious reservations concerning operative paragraphs 4 and 5 of the draft resolution. We are of the view that decisions on the establishment of new posts and on budgetary issues have to be taken by the Fifth Committee on the basis of recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, not by other committees of the General Assembly.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The First Committee has taken action on all draft resolutions under this cluster, and has thus concluded the third stage of its work, namely, action on all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items.

## Agenda item 121

### Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): I would like to refer delegations to document A/C.1/62/1, specifically to the explanation contained in paragraph 20:

“The General Assembly decided to allocate item 121 also to all the Main Committees for the sole purpose of considering and taking action on their respective tentative programme of work.”

A draft proposed programme of work and timetable for the First Committee for 2008, document A/C.1/62/CRP.5, was circulated to all delegations yesterday for their consideration.

I would recall that the draft programme was prepared following consultations with the Chairman of the Fourth Committee. It has been agreed that both the First and Fourth Committees will begin their work in the first week, as they have always done in the past, and that they will not hold simultaneous meetings. However, the Fourth Committee has agreed to allow our Committee to use both the morning and the afternoon meeting on the Tuesday of the week beginning 20 October 2008. The total number of meetings, and the allocation of meetings to the three segments of the session, remain the same as during the present session.

Next year, we will be able to stretch our session over four weeks and two days. For that reason, we also propose to extend the deadline for submission of all draft resolutions and decisions to the Friday of the second week. We hope that this will facilitate the work of delegations in preparing and consulting on their drafts. The draft programme will, of course, be finalized and issued in its final form before the Committee starts its substantive work at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Rowe** (Sierra Leone): Concerning the thematic debates, I indicated yesterday that my delegation had suggested a thematic debate or discussion on the theme of disarmament and non-proliferation and human security under the aegis of the First and Third Committees, and perhaps the Second Committee as well. I indicated that it could be accommodated without explicitly mentioning it in the timetable. But on second thought, the Committee may want to consider the possibility of including provision for such a discussion, as item (d), so we are sure that it will take place. It is in your

hands, Mr. Chairman. If the Committee feels that I have an assurance that this will be given due consideration during the next session, without it being explicitly expressed in the programme of work, we are prepared to go along with that.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for that proposal, which I find particularly pertinent. In responding yesterday, I put forward my opinion, as Chairman, that it was perhaps preferable to leave things as they are and not mention it. That would permit us to leave the door open — to have a certain flexibility. I think that is all the more important since the First Committee could take a decision now, but it would then be in the hands of the Chairperson of the First Committee at the next session. The Secretariat or the delegations represented here could take a decision on the matter — in an informal matter, especially since the other Committees involved have not yet been contacted in order to enable the Committee to take official note of it in the document.

In my opinion, we should leave this issue open and allow the next Chairperson to work it out together with the Chairs of the other Committees and with the delegations represented in the Committees. That can be done, I think, without any difficulty. I am not rejecting the proposal; on the contrary, it can be adequately handled in our programme for next year. I hope I have given an adequate response to that request.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the draft programme of work and timetable for its next session, as contained in document A/C.1/62/CRP.5?

*It was so decided.*

### Statement by the Chairperson

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in French*): Before adjourning the meeting, allow me to make a brief statement in my capacity as Chairperson.

The First Committee has reached the last phase of its work, after four weeks of intensive discussions, and I welcome the rigour and effectiveness with which delegations worked during that period. During the general debate on all the agenda items, 93 representatives made statements. But the fact that I would like to highlight is that 142 delegations spoke during the meetings over the past weeks dedicated to

the thematic debate. Moreover, almost 100 delegations made statements, either general statements or explanations of vote or position, during the phase dedicated to the consideration and adoption of draft resolutions. We have adopted 52 draft texts in all, of which 49 were draft resolutions and 3 draft decisions, a little over half of them without a vote.

I would like to thank all the delegations for all of their work to make this session active and productive. From the general debate, through the thematic discussions, to the consideration of and action on draft resolutions and the many parallel activities, we have undertaken our work in the spirit of openness and cooperation that we have always aspired to in this forum. The First Committee must remain the forum in which ideas can take root and flower into appropriate action to further the cause of disarmament and international security. I sincerely hope that this atmosphere of mutual respect, of listening and of fruitful exchanges carries over into the future work of other disarmament bodies, whose work we have taken into account and for which we have proposed measures to improve their operation.

Without stopping to analyse the votes we have taken on the draft resolutions adopted over the past few days, I would like to make some comments on substantive issues that fell within the competence of our Committee during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

There is no doubt that all delegations take very seriously the problem of weapons of mass destruction, in particular the risks posed by the simple fact that those weapons continue to exist, that they are found in an increasing number of regions in the world and that there is a serious threat that they will fall into the hands of non-State entities, in particular terrorists. The gravity of the problem is reflected both in the number of draft resolutions adopted by our Committee on the issue of weapons of mass destruction and in the time that we have dedicated to considering the issue.

In addition, our Committee has highlighted the need to achieve disarmament goals that concern other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, in particular biological and chemical weapons. In that regard, we have not failed to highlight the importance of the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, and we have all reaffirmed our commitment to the goal of

universalizing those conventions and to full compliance with their provisions.

Issues relating to conventional weapons were also well represented in our agenda, whether in a regional or a global context. The Committee weighed in on the questions of a future arms trade treaty; the trade in small arms and light weapons, especially on the implementation of the Programme of Action on these inhumane weapons; the measures taken to regulate or prevent the use of anti-personnel mines and cluster bombs; regulations on man-portable air defence systems; national legislation on arms transfers; and various initiatives aimed at strengthening regional cooperation on those issues.

In my humble opinion, the thematic debates at this session were even more fruitful than previously, and the round table discussions in which eminent experts participated led to high-quality discussions on each of the clusters of issues presented for our common consideration.

The Committee also heard informed and highly interesting presentations from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; the representatives of non-governmental organizations that deal with disarmament issues; the heads of groups of governmental experts, in particular the Groups of Governmental Experts on tracing small arms and light weapons and on verification; the President of the Conference on Disarmament; the heads of the Disarmament Commission, of the open-ended working group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters; and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

The Committee celebrated several events, in particular the tenth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention; the tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Mine-Ban Convention; and the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty.

Given everything I have just mentioned, has our Committee advanced the cause of disarmament and international security through its work? It is up to each delegation — and certainly up to outside observers above all — to evaluate our performance.

Of course, differences persist within the Committee, especially on questions regarding nuclear weapons. But we must appreciate — and it is

encouraging to note — the positive and constructive tone of our discussions. I hope that this will provide fertile ground upon which to make progress in future discussions and negotiations on questions of disarmament in Geneva, in other disarmament bodies and even here in New York in the coming weeks and months.

The First Committee has continued the practice established two years ago by my predecessors, that is, making room in the Committee's programme of work for the participation of civil society in the thematic debate on nuclear issues, outer space and conventional weapons, in particular on the process of developing an arms trade treaty. We highly appreciate the vigour, perseverance and contribution of civil society in developing, promoting and implementing arms control norms. It is in that more general framework that we can justify the participation of non-governmental organizations in the debate of the First Committee, which is and should remain — and this should be emphasized — an intergovernmental body.

I was highly honoured and moved by the privilege granted to me to chair the First Committee, a Committee that has earned its accolades. I express my profound gratitude to all delegations. My thanks go, of course, to the African Group, which kindly promoted and supported the candidature of my country, Senegal.

To my fellow members of the Bureau, these eminent colleagues with whom I worked every day — the Vice-Chairpersons, Mr. Bassam Darwish of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Ricardo Morote of Peru and Mr. Roman Hunger of Switzerland, and to our Rapporteur, Mr. Dainius Baublys of Lithuania — I wish to say how pleased I am to hail their commitment and their active contributions to the Bureau's deliberations. Nor can I fail to express deep appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, and to all his colleagues from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, who have intellectually stimulated me and supported me.

I cannot forget Mr. Jarmo Sareva, the Secretary of the Committee, along with his dynamic and able team, whose valuable assistance and professionalism before and during our session is much appreciated.

Finally, I would also like to extend, on behalf of the First Committee, our sincere appreciation to all the interpreters, translators, verbatim reporters, press

officers, documents officers, conference officers, sound engineers and security staff, whose diligent and vigilant work has made possible the smooth operation of the Committee's deliberations.

I would like to recall that the Committee will reconvene in May or June 2008 to elect its Chairperson for the sixty-third session.

**Mr. Darwish** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for taking the floor at the conclusion of our work, but I wish to have my statement recorded as part of our celebration of the successful and fruitful conclusion of our work here in the First Committee. I wish to place on record, Sir, that your excellent guidance of the work of the Committee has been characterized by your personal qualities of excellence, poise, gravity, flexibility, ease, wisdom and kindness. I also wish to pay tribute to Mr. Sergio Duarte for his efforts in the work of our Committee at this session. I wish to thank my fellow members of the Bureau, all my colleagues in the Committee secretariat, foremost among whom is Mr. Sareva, and all my dear colleagues, the members of the Committee.

**Mr. Ruddyard** (Indonesia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Allow me first of all to extend our gratitude and appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, for your able and effective leadership in steering the work of the First Committee. The Committee's work has proceeded in admirable fashion, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and productive exchange, as you have just rightly observed, and we commend you for that.

As in previous years, during the course of the Committee's work this year, the Non-Aligned Movement has continued to be active and constructive and to exhibit a positive outlook. During the session, we submitted seven draft resolutions and a draft decision for the consideration of the Committee. One of the draft resolutions was completely new. Those draft resolutions and the draft decision enjoyed the overwhelming support of Member States. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to extend its appreciation and gratitude to all the delegations that have offered their support.

Allow me also to take this opportunity, through you, Mr. Chairman, to express our sincere appreciation to the members of the Bureau, who are also very good colleagues and who have worked hard by your side.

Specific commendation goes to the Secretary of the Committee and all of his staff for their commitment and cooperation during our session. The Secretariat team did their utmost to facilitate the work of Member States, and we hope to continue the positive working relationship with them in the future. The Quickfirst website, the new tool that was devised and introduced by the Secretariat during the sixty-second session, has also proved its usefulness. We hope we can continue to build on that in the future.

Finally, the Non-Aligned Movement remains committed to promoting international peace and security primarily through disarmament measures. We strongly believe that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, remain the only sustainable way to address disarmament and international security issues. It is our hope that multilateralism, within the framework of the United Nations, will provide the much-needed impetus for moving forward the agenda of disarmament and non-proliferation in our future endeavours.

Before I end this statement, allow me, in my national capacity, to announce that, as a gesture of appreciation for the excellent cooperation we have enjoyed, and to congratulate everyone for the successful conclusion of our work in the First Committee, the Indonesian Mission would like to invite you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Bureau, delegates of States members of the First Committee and all members of the Secretariat and First Committee non-governmental organizations to a party — not a function, a party — that we will be hosting on the evening of Friday, 16 November 2007, at our Mission. Invitations to the party will be sent out shortly.

**Mr. Marrakchi** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At this, the conclusion of the First Committee's work, my delegation would like to solemnly congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on the rigour, professionalism, wisdom and — when it was needed — aplomb with which you led the work of the First Committee during this session. My delegation believes that your conduct was, in large part, responsible for the diligence and fluidity, punctuated with good humour, with which we were able to consider, negotiate and adopt so many draft resolutions in such a short time frame, as compared to the other committees of the General Assembly. My delegation subscribes, of course, to the statement made by the Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement in congratulating and thanking you, Sir.

Finally, although I am not formally charged with speaking on their behalf, I am sure that many delegations, in particular African and Arab delegations, share the opinion of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, and I encourage them to express their views in due time.

**Mr. Pereira Gomes** (Portugal): Now that the First Committee is about to complete its work, the presidency of the European Union would also like to take this opportunity to say a few words of thanks.

First and foremost, I would like to thank you, our Chairman, Ambassador Paul Badji, for your wise and skilled performance in carrying out your tasks. You have dignified the First Committee, the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole. You conducted our deliberations with remarkable efficiency, exercising firm leadership but also showing flexibility when needed. That was key to our success. We also thank all the other Bureau members and your dedicated colleagues from the Permanent Mission of Senegal.

The presidency of the European Union would also like to express its appreciation for the work of the Secretariat, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, the members of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Jarmo Sareva, and his team. The efficiency and skill of the Secretariat has greatly facilitated our work this year.

**Mr. Obisakin** (Nigeria): On behalf of the African Group, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, Committee Secretary Jarmo Sareva, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Sergio Duarte, the entire Bureau, the Secretariat and all the members of the delegations here present for the wonderful cooperation, the manner in which the Chairman guided all of our deliberations and the quality of the draft resolutions adopted. On behalf of Africa, I want to particularly thank everyone for adopting the draft resolutions presented by Africa. We are very grateful.

I wish to end by quoting an African proverb, which states that when you take your masquerade to the market, and it dances very well, the owner must be proud. We are proud of you, Mr. Chairman, as an illustrious son of Africa, and proud of the entire Secretariat and the Bureau.

*The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.*