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Chairman: Mr. Agha SHAHI (Pakistan).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Kolo (Nigeria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 32

Question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind: report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction (continued)* (A/7622 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/7750)

1. The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will first consider the question of the holding of the summer session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed at Geneva.
2. I call on the Secretary of the First Committee to make a statement in reply to a number of the questions raised at this morning's meeting.
3. Mr. CHACKO (Secretary of the First Committee): In response to the questions raised this morning, I wish to note that the question of authorizing the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction to meet at Geneva has been raised in the Fifth Committee and is the subject of proposals in the Fifth Committee on which it is understood that consultations are taking place. In that connexion, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions took the position in the Fifth Committee that although there was no constitutional obstacle to the matter being dealt with in that Committee,

* Resumed from the 1710th meeting.

he felt that procedurally it would be better for the First Committee to make a substantive recommendation in its report to the plenary. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee indicated that in this particular case the Committee on whose recommendation the sea-bed Committee had been established and which considered the reports relating to its work was in the best position to recommend where that body should meet.

4. The Secretary-General is in agreement with the view expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee that that would be an appropriate procedure to follow. I should add that, in that case, the Fifth Committee would, in consequence, report to the Assembly on the budgetary and calendar of conferences aspects of the First Committee's report. That report would also be before the General Assembly when it takes up the recommendation of the Fifth Committee.

5. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Ceylon): We are greatly indebted to the Secretary of the Committee for the statement that he has just read out. The proposal regarding the summer session of the sea-bed Committee being held at Geneva will, I believe, go down in the history of the First Committee as a "shuttlecock" proposal. It has been thrown from one Committee to the other, but I hope that it will now finally come to rest here with the categorical statement made by the Secretariat, which is an endorsement of the opinion expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. I am rather surprised that it was necessary for us to go to such lengths to decide what the procedure should be.

6. When I last raised the question [1710th meeting] I suggested to the Chairman of this Committee a very simple formula requesting this Committee to take a decision in principle that the summer session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor should be held in Geneva, and that the final recommendation should be left to the Fifth Committee having regard to all the relevant implications. By relevant implications I meant primarily the financial implications. But once again, it seems to me, the question of procedure has been raised, and therefore it is now necessary for this Committee to decide this matter finally.

7. Procedure is established either by rule or by precedent. In this case, not only is there ample precedent for the procedure that the parent Committee should take the decision in the first instance, but there is even a decision of the General Assembly. I should like to draw the Committee's attention to General Assembly resolution 2478 (XXIII), operative paragraph 3 of which should leave no doubt in the minds of any member of this Committee

regarding the correct procedure to be adopted. Operative paragraph 3 of that resolution states that the General Assembly:

“Approves further the recommendations regarding the pattern of recurrent conferences and meetings contained in paragraph 24 of the report of the Committee on Conferences and in this connexion requests the United Nations bodies, committees and commissions concerned to review their meetings programmes and to report to their parent organs so as to enable them”—that is, of course, the parent organs—“to make their decisions available to the Committee on Conferences in time for the latter to present its relevant conclusions to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session”.

8. Quite apart from that there is the procedure recently followed in regard to the 1970 meeting of the Special Committee on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States. In the case of that Committee, its parent Committee, namely, the Sixth Committee, took up a draft resolution¹ which stated in one paragraph that the Committee shall meet at . . . and left the place blank, or at any other place if an invitation was issued to it. By an oral amendment in the Sixth Committee the venue was fixed at Geneva. I believe that the representative of Ghana has the credit for having moved that oral amendment. The resolution was adopted by the Sixth Committee, presumably after considering the financial implications which were given as \$117,800—incidentally, more than it would cost the sea-bed Committee to hold its summer session in Geneva. The statement on the financial implications of this draft resolution merely states in paragraph 6:

“In addition, it should also be borne in mind that under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2478 (XXIII) all proposals for new conferences and meetings are subject to the recommendations of the Committee on Conferences and to final approval by the General Assembly”.²

9. That is precisely what I stated in my earlier statement regarding the Sea-Bed Committee’s summer session: that the final decision would have to be taken by the General Assembly in the light of the financial implications. The Committee on Conferences does not consider financial implications. It merely considers the physical possibility of arranging for a meeting at a particular time to be held in Geneva. Of course the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would have the right and the duty to comment on the financial implications.

10. It was my intention and desire that all these steps and procedures should be scrupulously observed, but I did consider it correct that this question should be raised in the First Committee, that is, the parent Committee of the sea-bed Committee, and that a decision in principle should be taken.

11. This is not the appropriate place for me to indicate how we can avoid unnecessary expenditure in regard to

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Annexes*, item 89, document A/7809, para. 6.

² Document A/C.6/L.784, para. 6 (mimeographed).

changes in the established pattern of conferences, but I do wish to state that the pattern of conferences should not remain immutable; that the only thing that should remain immutable is the additional expenditure that has been imposed on this Organization by regular exceptions being made to the general principle that bodies should meet more normally at their established headquarters.

12. From time to time we know that exceptions have been made and have been blithely inserted in the pattern of conferences resolution. Once that is done, although in considering the exception the financial implications are taken into account, after the exception is admitted, that additional expenditure becomes part of the general budget of this Organization. What I should like to see is that that list of exceptions be not frozen, that merely because committees have been brought into existence after that list of exceptions had been drawn up they should not be deprived of the privilege of meeting in Geneva. They are entitled to the same treatment as other bodies of the United Nations, and if there is a limit to expenditure to which this Organization is prepared to go in accommodating those exceptions, these additional exceptions ought to be taken into consideration and a system of equitable rotation should be adopted.

13. However, as I said, it is not for this Committee to take decisions or to offer advice to the Fifth Committee, but I would wish the advocates of economy—and I am one of them—to seek that this approach is taken to the problem instead of merely raising objections on financial grounds to a particular proposal. There is no reason why the sea-bed Committee should be the Cinderella of United Nations bodies and be ignored.

14. I understand that it is the intention of the parent body of the Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression itself to take a decision that it meet in Geneva next year. What is the procedure to be followed? Are the same objections on financial grounds to be raised and persisted in, or are we going to allow that meeting to be added to the Geneva calendar at additional expense to this Organization?

15. Similarly, another proposal is in the offing, if it has not already been adopted by its parent body, that the 1971 UNIDO session be held in Geneva. Are we going to have these exceptions added to the already formidable list and, merely because we can secure a vote, get additional expenditure included in the general budget? I say it is time to cry a halt to this, and I feel that by raising the matter in this form in this Committee, and also in the Fifth Committee where we have already taken on the subject, we might help to stabilize the expenditure of this Organization.

16. I suggested a certain formula the other day. If that formula is not acceptable or if we cannot proceed by a consensus, then I shall have no alternative but to ask for a straight vote on the proposal that the sea-bed Committee hold its 1970 summer session in Geneva.

17. Mr. KOH (Singapore): I have listened with close attention to the discussion that has taken place on the request of the Chairman of the sea-bed Committee to have

the 1970 summer session of that Committee meet in Geneva instead of New York. Two reasons have been adduced in support of that request. I think I may categorize the first reason as the argument of parity.

18. The argument of parity, however, needs clarification, for it must not be taken to mean that if other Committees are permitted to hold some of their sessions at venues outside their established headquarters, it follows that the sea-bed Committee should also be permitted to hold one of its sessions in a venue outside its established headquarters. The argument of parity should, in our opinion, mean that the request of all Committees for holding their meetings outside their established headquarters must be judged by a constant criterion, which is whether the work of the Committee requires that its meetings be held in the suggested venue.

19. Does the work of the sea-bed Committee require that its 1970 summer session be held in Geneva? The proponents of the request have not advanced any argument to show that to be the case, and if there is some affinity between the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the mountains of Switzerland, I confess that the affinity has eluded me.

20. I now turn to the second reason advanced for the request. This is that the holding of the 1970 summer session in Geneva will advance the objective of disseminating information on the work of the sea-bed Committee to the people of the world. I am not persuaded that the mass media of the world are better represented in Geneva than they are in New York; and even if there were some merit in this argument, it must be weighed against the countervailing disadvantages.

21. Firstly, the additional expenses to the United Nations, which have been estimated at \$US110,000. Secondly, the expenses to the Governments of those Member States which are members of the sea-bed Committee. Thirdly, bearing in mind that most of the regular attendants at meetings of the sea-bed Committee are members of the Permanent Missions in New York, to hold a meeting of the Committee in Geneva is to run the risk that some of these members would be unable to attend its meetings, either because they cannot be spared from their other duties in New York, or because their Governments are unwilling to pay for the expenses involved. Fourthly, holding the meeting of the sea-bed Committee in Geneva will also mean that those Member States which are not members of the sea-bed Committee, and which do not have resident representatives in Geneva, will be unable to observe the meetings of the sea-bed Committee there.

22. For all these reasons, my delegation is reluctantly compelled to oppose the request of the Chairman of the sea-bed Committee. We have, however, listened with sympathy to the argument of the representative of the Byelorussian SSR [1713th meeting] that the First Committee is not competent to pronounce on the request. If the Committee upholds this view, it follows that the First Committee should refrain from expressing its approval or disapproval of the request, but should refer it to the Fifth Committee. But if the First Committee decides that it is competent to express, in principle, its approval or disapproval of the request, then my delegation requests that a

vote be taken on it, and we shall be compelled to vote against it.

23. Mr. DEJAMMET (France) (*translated from French*): When the possibility of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor holding its summer session at Geneva was first raised here, some delegations remarked, as the representative of Singapore has just reminded us, that the First Committee was perhaps not competent to decide the matter and that the normal procedure would be to ask the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor for its opinion or recommendation, which would then be examined directly by the Fifth Committee.

24. My delegation would have had no objection to the Fifth Committee's directly considering the opinion of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor. The Chairman of that Committee had, as it happens, suggested at the August session that the 1970 summer session should be held at Geneva—and his suggestion had not been challenged by that Committee, although some delegations had quite naturally reserved their right to make comments on its financial aspect, no doubt intending to raise the financial implications in the organ qualified to consider such matters—the Fifth Committee. A position of principle had, however, been taken, since the Chairman's recommendation had not been opposed, and that position was that the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor might hold a session at Geneva in August 1970.

25. Why did that Committee agree with its Chairman? Because it knew from experience that holding a session at Geneva had certain material advantages. It is those advantages that I would comment upon, since the question has been raised by the representative of Singapore. I believe that there are indeed practical advantages in the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor holding its August session at Geneva. The fact is that many of the aspects raised at such a session are technical and even extremely technical, and do not necessarily require the presence of members of permanent missions, extensive as their knowledge may be, a point which my delegation is ready to concede *a priori*. Many experts sometimes have to take part in these meetings and a great many European, African and Asian delegations would find the relatively short distance from their respective capitals to Geneva a distinct advantage. That is why, when this question was raised, no delegation member of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor—hence fully competent to comment on the practical problems or arranging for a session of that Committee—denied the practical advantages of such an arrangement.

26. However—I repeat—some delegations mentioned financial implications, certainly intending to take up that problem in the competent organ—the Fifth Committee.

27. The question put before us here, in the First Committee, however, is not financial. It is a question of principle, and it therefore calls for a judgement on the possible practical advantages of a Geneva session. Once again, a great many representatives on the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor are aware of these advantages since, far from opposing the suggestion made by their Chairman, Mr. Amerasinghe, they approved it at their third session, held this summer in New York.

28. Hence, if we must rule here once again on the question of principle—I repeat, solely on the question of principle—my delegation can only support the suggestion of the Chairman of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor, a suggestion which was also supported by the Italian representative, who pointed out its practical advantages at the 1710th meeting.

29. Mr. MENDELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): My delegation has been trying to puzzle out just what the Committee is now discussing. No one here appears to be contesting the simple and natural fact that whether an organ should hold its session in New York or Geneva should of course be examined by the Fifth Committee, which deals with all such matters. I do not believe that anyone has denied that the Fifth Committee is qualified and obliged to take up this question, naturally bearing in mind the financial implications of the proposal that one of the sessions of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor should be held at Geneva rather than in New York.

30. So far, everything is clear and is not being questioned. However, new elements are being introduced. Some representatives, for whom we have the greatest respect, and in particular, Mr. Amerasinghe, Chairman of the Committee in question—and I would make it plain that, although I do not agree with him in the present case, I have the greatest respect for him—some representatives propose that, in addition and prior to this question being examined by the Fifth Committee, it should be considered by the First Committee. It is being suggested to us that, while being aware of the considerable financial implications of the holding one of those sessions at Geneva, we should set those implications aside for the time being, shut them out of our minds, ignore them, act at the present stage as if they did not exist, consider this organizational matter, which normally is for the Fifth Committee, and take a political decision on it here and now. Then, when the matter has been decided politically, without heed for the financial implications and quite apart from them, the First Committee is to transmit its political recommendation to the Fifth Committee, so that the latter would consider not only the proposal itself, not only its financial implications, but also a political recommendation by the First Committee.

31. Such an approach would, I believe, create a very dangerous precedent in the United Nations, and one fraught with unforeseen consequences. First, questions relating to the organization of work simply cannot be considered without taking account of their financial implications. Yet it is suggested to us that at this stage we should examine the question in purely political terms, setting aside the financial implications. Secondly, such an approach may lead in the future to the appearance of quite surprising proposals which we shall be asked to approve politically in the First Committee and then transmit to the Fifth Committee, leaving the latter to cope with the financial implications as best it can.

32. For example, another item on our agenda is “International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space”. Let us suppose that some delegation, the members of which

have seen the film *2001, A Space Odyssey* by Stanley Kubrick and Alfred C. Clarke, propose a joint expedition to Jupiter and the taking of a political decision on the matter in the First Committee, leaving it to the Fifth Committee to find out whether or not enough money is available. I am, of course, giving an exaggerated example; I think, however, that it does illustrate the undesirability of such precedents and the impossibility of foreseeing the startling proposals to which it might later give rise.

33. There is another aspect that calls for comment. I quite understand that a special committee of the United Nations, whether one on peace-keeping operations, on the sea-bed and the ocean floor, on *apartheid*, or on decolonization, has a right to express a preference for the place of its sessions. As a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, it informs the latter of its wishes, which then considers and takes a decision on them in the Fifth Committee. Now, however, we seem to be trying to have one Main Committee of the General Assembly exert pressure on another, by taking a political decision of the First Committee in order to influence the organizational and financial decisions of the Fifth Committee. Is this legitimate?

34. I again have a question for the Secretariat. It seems to me that we cannot simply take it that one Main Committee of the General Assembly is entitled, by taking a political decision, to exert pressure on another Main Committee, which is its equal, and thereby prejudice the latter's action or, in any event, tie its hands. This seems to me to raise a great many complex procedural and legal questions, and I once again ask Mr. Chacko, the Committee Secretary, to give us a full explanation as to whether the legal aspects I have raised are part of the present practice of the United Nations. Would we not create dangerous precedents, with whose consequences we might be unable to cope?

35. In view of the complex legal situation, my delegation is certainly not prepared to acquiesce in any such political decision in the First Committee.

36. Mr. HILDYARD (United Kingdom): I should like to request clarification on one aspect. When we previously discussed this question, we debated three possibilities: first, that this Committee should decide that the next session of the Committee on the sea-bed be held in Geneva and make a favourable recommendation to that effect to the Fifth Committee; second, that it should ask the Fifth Committee to consider this question in the light of the financial implications and, as I understood it, the other proposals it might have received for meetings to be held in Geneva—and that, I think, was the suggestion made by the Chairman of the Committee on the sea-bed whose views already command a great deal of weight and respect in this Committee. The third possibility was that this Committee had no right to make pronouncements on those matters and should merely refer the whole question to the Fifth Committee. We were therefore very restrained; we considered all the possibilities; we made no definite decision or even recommendations.

37. Meanwhile, other Main Committees of the Assembly seem to have jumped straight to positive decisions—not recommendations, but actual decisions. As the Chairman of the Committee on the sea-bed has told us, the Sixth

Committee has decided, so far as I can make out, that two of the legal Committees should meet in Geneva this year. In that connexion, my delegation was most interested to see that some delegations, including the delegation of the last speaker, voted in favour of this decision, quite regardless of the arguments that have been produced in this particular forum about the meeting of the Committee on the sea-bed and the financial implications, which his delegation, as well as my own, has described as serious and needing considerable further study. The extra costs of the sea-bed Committee would, in fact, be less than the extra costs of the Committee on the definition of aggression.

38. My question is as follows: will there be a possibility of considering these recommendations or decisions against the background of their financial implications and all the other proposals for meetings in Geneva, or will there be no such possibility? From what previous speakers have said, it would appear that the only body which would now consider any recommendation in favour of Geneva by this Committee would be the General Assembly itself. We all know that it would not really be appropriate for the General Assembly to engage in a protracted discussion on the relative merits of different venues for different Committees.

39. If there is a possibility that the Fifth Committee or the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions can look at all the proposals that have been made concerning meetings next year in Geneva against the background of their relative merits and implications, it might be logical to suppose that one of the two legal Committees should meet in Geneva and that the Committee on the sea-bed should meet there also; or it might be decided that both legal Committees should meet in Geneva in the coming year and that the Committee on the sea-bed should meet there the following year. At least there could be a co-ordinated and thought-out position. If there is no possibility of viewing all the proposals in relation to each other and in relation to their financial implications, then the decision we must take seems to me to be merely a matter of saying yes or no as to whether we are in favour of meeting in Geneva. We can no longer send a recommendation to another body, asking it to view this question in perspective.

40. Mr. IMAM (Kuwait): My delegation favours convening the summer session of the Committee on the sea-bed in Geneva. We believe that there are no practical considerations which make New York preferable to Geneva as a venue. The Committee on the sea-bed is a highly specialized body. Its meetings are attended by experts who are not normally members of the missions in New York. Moreover, on grounds of parity, we agree that the Committee on the sea-bed should not be discriminated against purely on grounds of financial implications, which are equally valid for other bodies. My delegation therefore endorses the arguments which were so eloquently given by the Chairman of the Committee on the sea-bed and the representatives of France and Italy and others who advocate holding the summer session in Geneva.

41. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): We are again asked to pronounce on the question of principle. As between Geneva and New York, I have, as I said before, a very distinct

prejudice in favour of Geneva, since I am a resident of that city and would not have to move to participate in the work of the Committee on the sea-bed and to meet my many friends.

42. The question that worries me is the one put forward by several speakers, particularly the representatives of Singapore and the United Kingdom. That is: What is to be the criterion for this Committee, or any other organ, to decide where meetings are to take place? As the representative of Ceylon pointed out, there exists a Committee on Conferences whose precise duty it is to clarify the problem of where conferences are to be held, their pattern, and so on. It reports to the Fifth Committee.

43. I do not see how this Committee or any other can be in a position to take the decision on principle that we should meet in this or that place until it has obtained from the Committee on Conferences information concerning next summer's pattern of conferences.

44. I quite appreciate the importance many delegations attach to expertise and the other attractions of Geneva, but, as I understand it, the problem is the additional expense involved in transferring the Secretariat personnel necessary to handle these conferences. There will be several other conferences, to which the representative of Ceylon referred, taking place there also.

45. As I said earlier, I think the decision should be left to the Fifth Committee, which, as a result of the report of the Committee on Conferences, has all the necessary information before it. I believe that this Committee should not take a position on principle one way or another but that the decision should be left—as we understood it would be—to the Fifth Committee.

46. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*translated from Russian*): In connexion with the statement made by the Secretary of the Committee at the beginning of this meeting, my feeling, frankly, is that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee really told us nothing. Naturally, his work as Chairman of the Advisory Committee would be greatly facilitated if the First Committee were to take what the USSR representative has called a political decision. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would then sit down, add up the Secretary-General's statement calling for \$110,000 and say that the amount should be \$108,000 or \$112,000, or some such figure; it would have no other option, as it would have to obey the will of a Main Committee—namely, the First Committee. I therefore feel that the doubts expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee merely indicate that he would rather have this question decided by someone else, rather than in accordance with the existing procedure.

47. I should like to mention once again that there is no analogy between the question we are now considering and what happened in the Sixth Committee. That Committee directly provided for the place of a session in its resolution; it thus also decided on the financial implications.

48. The First Committee has completed its consideration of the item on the peaceful uses of the sea-bed and the

ocean floor. It is merely awaiting the Rapporteur's report, which has been a long time in the writing. It cannot, consequently, reopen the question. I would also say that when we adopted a resolution on the item, not all of us knew whether the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor would hold one session or two or three sessions, or would resume one session several times. We discussed here what that Committee should take up (a matter on which there was some disagreement), but we did not consider how many sessions it should hold, and certainly not where it should hold them.

49. Why should we discuss the place of the session now that we have completed the item? I therefore feel that the references to what occurred in the Sixth Committee are inapposite. I would add the following. The representative of Ceylon said that the whole schedule of conferences could be reviewed, and the United Kingdom representative seemed to agree with him; but are we empowered to review the entire schedule of conferences and to say that some organs scheduled to meet at Geneva should stay here so that some other organ could go to Geneva instead? Are we the First Committee, the political committee of the General Assembly, or are we the central accounting office of the United Nations, dealing solely with financial matters? I therefore feel that resolution 2478 (XXIII), to which the representative of Ceylon has referred, has absolutely no bearing on the present situation. That resolution deals with an entirely different matter—the general manner in which all conferences should be scheduled in the United Nations system. It charts the correct course for settling such matters.

50. In conclusion I would say that Geneva is, of course, a fine place for a conference. I would even confess that my country's representatives sometimes beg for permission to support the holding of some session at Geneva; they are tired of meeting in New York, and would prefer to go to Geneva. However, such personal preferences are no reason for immediately taking any such decision. I fully agree with the Singapore representative and feel that the most we can do is to transmit the records of this discussion to the Fifth Committee.

51. Mr. VINCI (Italy): I think that this debate is becoming rather lengthy and out of proportion to the dimensions of the simple topic we have before us. Having followed this exchange of views and arguments, I have felt that I was no longer in the First Committee. It seemed to me that this discussion was like a rocket that has gone off its course, so I shall attempt at least to bring the rocket back to its correct course. I am not an expert in outer space, but I will try, anyway. I think that no one here among the delegations that have supported the idea of having a summer meeting of the sea-bed Committee in Geneva has ever questioned that the final decision is in the hands of the Fifth Committee. As a matter of fact, the formulation which has been put forward by the representative of Ceylon makes that quite clear.

52. I do not think there is any danger of creating a precedent if we make any recommendation to the Fifth Committee. I would say that if there is a precedent, it has been against the sea-bed Committee. What has happened? Since last year there has been a suggestion to try to move

the summer session of this year to Geneva and there was a meeting of the sea-bed Committee which had agreed to consult the membership to see if there was any preference for Geneva. Now, perhaps the initiative was a little late and delegations were not certain about their decisions or about their views. This year the Chairman of the sea-bed Committee has himself taken up this question and when he suggested again, and expressed a preference for, the meeting in Geneva in the summer, no one has objected.

53. It seems to me rather strange that with our past experiences we should now meet so many objections and so many arguments against this idea. It is my feeling and my conviction that there is a duty for this Committee, as the parent body, to defend a Committee which belongs to this Committee. This is a question of principle that has been raised and if we are to take a decision and if we vote at once we should take this matter into account. This is our Committee, a Committee of which we are the parent body, and we should defend it when we see that the treatment which it has received is not equal to that of other bodies.

54. We do feel that we should have fair and equal treatment for the sea-bed Committee as well as for other Committees. There has never been any question of a preference for the sea-bed Committee but just equal treatment and I think that it is the duty of this First Committee to come to the defence of that body.

55. Mr. PARDO (Malta): For the reasons just given by the representative of Italy, my delegation would support the proposal that the session of the sea-bed Committee takes place in Geneva. We would add, too, that Geneva is much closer to the expertise of the specialized agencies, an expertise which is so necessary to the sea-bed Committee in many areas of its work. We do not have such easy access to the expertise of the specialized agencies in New York.

56. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Ceylon): I merely wish to reply to some of the statements that have been made in the course of this discussion. First of all, may I refer to the argument adduced by the representative of Singapore. His opposition to the proposal made by me was certainly not softened by the fact that he added the superlative to the conventional honorific epithet employed in referring to representatives here. He referred to two arguments, first of all, the argument on parity. He said that because other bodies were allowed to meet in Geneva it did not follow that the sea-bed Committee, too, should be allowed to meet in Geneva. I cannot agree with him more if there were any substance in that argument but there is absolutely no substance in it. My first statement on this subject was that the reason that justified other Committees and bodies meeting in Geneva are no less cogent in the case of the sea-bed Committee. I hope that answers that argument of the representative of Singapore.

57. He then stated that there should be constant criteria applied in determining these questions, and he said one of the criteria was whether the work of the particular body requires that it should meet in Geneva. He went on to say that he could see no connexion between the sea-bed Committee and the mountains of Geneva. I am quite sure that he was only intending to be humorous when he made that statement. I do not wish to treat this serious question

on that level but I would ask whether the discussion on the subject of friendly relations requires that it should be held in the shadow of Mont Blanc or more appropriately the Jungfrau.

58. As regards the question of cost, the representative of Singapore stated that many delegations would find it less expensive and less inconvenient to meet in New York than in Geneva. May I say that having seen the composition of the delegations to the various sessions of the sea-bed Committee, I am quite convinced that all the countries east of the Swiss Alps would find it cheaper to come to Geneva.

59. The representative of the Soviet Union stated that he did not see why in addition to or before the consideration of this question in the Fifth Committee we should seek to take a decision in this Committee. It is a well established principle, a well established practice of procedure in matters of this nature that what you have to agree upon first is the question of principle. Having decided whether there are reasons that justify any particular body meeting in Geneva you must then go on to consider whether it is really possible to meet in Geneva. That is why I made special reference to all the relevant implications, particularly the financial implications. It is the only procedure that is possible. We might, of course, find our purse does not permit us to pursue our principles, that is a different matter. But, after considering the financial implications, let us then take a position. It is for the Fifth Committee to advise us on that point, and to make a recommendation. The Fifth Committee is a committee of the whole and, those who object on principle could persist in their objection in the Fifth Committee just as strenuously as they do here.

60. Finally, the representative of Byelorussia said that there is no analogy between this proposal that the sea-bed Committee should meet in Geneva and the proposal regarding the Special Committee on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States when he stated that the resolution regarding the meeting of the Committee on friendly relations included a provision that it should meet in Geneva, I can see no difference, at all, between the two. I would, therefore, ask that this matter be settled once and for all, as it is not possible by consensus, by a vote.

61. The CHAIRMAN: I give the floor to the representative of Sudan on a point of order.

62. Mr. ABU SINN (Sudan): This question was brought in front of this Committee by the Chair. May I ask you then, Sir, if this question was brought to this Committee at this late stage according to one of the rules of procedure, to request the representatives to limit themselves and their statements to the substance of the question as to whether we would like the sea-bed Committee to meet in Geneva or not and, at the same time, I would like to know which rule of procedure made it possible for the Chair to bring the question in front of the Committee. On the other hand, if the decision to discuss the question in this Committee was a ruling by the Chair, may I ask you, Sir, to make another ruling as to whether we should take a vote on this question at this stage or not.

63. The CHAIRMAN: I should like to state that this matter about the venue of the sea-bed Committee was, if I remember rightly, not brought to the attention of the Committee by the Chair but it was raised by the representative of Ceylon after we had concluded our vote on the draft resolution connected with the report of the sea-bed Committee. Now, we have had sufficient debate on this item and I would invite the Committee to proceed to a vote on the proposal made by the representative of Ceylon.

64. I give the floor to the representative of the Soviet Union who wishes to speak on a point of order.

65. Mr. MENDELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): I apologize for speaking again, but I asked the Secretariat a question to which I have had no reply.

66. The question is a legal one. I asked whether it was lawful for the First Committee to take a political decision on an organizational matter—in this case, the holding of the summer session of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor at Geneva—a political decision on an organizational matter, which will be a component part in the consideration of this same organizational matter by the Fifth Committee, along with such other component parts as the request of the Chairman of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and the Secretary-General's report on financial implications. When I put my question, I took it that the normal practice was for the Fifth Committee in such cases to consider two component elements: a proposal by a delegation or an organ, and the financial implications of that proposal. We are now asked to create a precedent (I repeat, this would be a precedent) by placing a third element, a new element, before the Fifth Committee for consideration and decision, for a political decision voted by the First Committee would constitute such an element.

67. I asked the Secretariat whether this is lawful, and I would like my question to be answered on behalf of the Legal Counsel.

68. The CHAIRMAN: In response to the point of order raised by the representative of the Soviet Union, I would again invite the Committee to look at the statement read out by the Secretary of the Committee to the effect that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee indicated that in this particular case the Committee on whose recommendation the sea-bed Committee had been established, and which considered the reports relating to its work, was in the best position to recommend where the body should meet. The Secretary-General is in agreement with the view expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee that this would be an appropriate procedure to follow. It was as a result of this opinion given by the Secretary-General that, in order to cut short this interminable procedural debate, I suggested to the Committee that they proceed to vote on the matter. However, the representative of the Soviet Union is obviously not satisfied with the statement and, apparently, he wants the considered legal opinion of the Legal Counsel in the Secretariat. Therefore, I would suggest to the Committee that we stop further debate on this matter and take it up again as soon as the Legal Counsel is able to express an opinion which, of course, will be placed before the Committee.

69. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Ceylon): I am obliged to raise an objection. I should like very much to co-operate with you in this matter, but it seems to me that this discussion is being prolonged unnecessarily.

70. The Secretary-General has stated in quite clear terms that he agrees with the opinion expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. I must presume that the Secretary-General, before expressing an opinion of this nature in such categorical terms, seeks the advice of his Legal Counsel.

71. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*translated from Russian*): I should like to ask a simpler question, which I hope the Secretariat can answer at once. I have just looked over all the resolutions submitted to us on the item relating to the peaceful uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. In no resolution do I find any reference to the Committee in question holding several sessions. The Belgian resolution perhaps comes closest, in that it asks that Committee to consider some matters, to make further efforts with regard to others, etc.

72. I want to ask the Secretariat: in what document of the First Committee is it stated that there is to be any session of that Committee at all in the summer of 1970? Where is there a document saying that there will be a summer session, or any additional meetings? I see no such document. Consequently, since there is no document before us stating that a summer session is to be held, how can we decide where it should be held?

Mr. Shahi (Pakistan) resumed the Chair.

73. Mr. PARDO (Malta): With regard to the question just asked by the representative of the Byelorussian SSR, I believe I recall that in the report of the Sea-Bed Committee it is stated there should be one procedural session and two substantive sessions. I could be mistaken, but I do believe I recall this, I do not have the report in front of me, but it is stated there, and the report of the sea-bed Committee, of course, has come to the attention of the General Assembly and of this Committee.

74. With regard to the request made by the representative of the Soviet Union, I am advised that the Fifth Committee will vote tomorrow, and, therefore, if we ask the opinion of the Legal Counsel such opinion will reach us after the Fifth Committee has voted, and, therefore, our own opinion can hardly be considered by the Fifth Committee.

75. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Ceylon): In answer to the point raised by the representative of the Byelorussian SSR, it is strange that he should now be questioning the right of the sea-bed Committee to meet at all. The sea-bed Committee originally decided to hold two sessions, a spring session and a summer session, each of four weeks duration.

76. At the suggestion of the representative of the United States a third session was added—a procedural session, of about two days' duration. May I also draw the attention of the representative of the Byelorussian SSR to the fact that in paragraph 19 of the report of the Committee on

Conferences,³ reference is made to the proposal to hold a summer session in Geneva.

77. I hope this will finally lay that objection to rest.

78. Mr. DEJAMMET (France) (*translated from French*): I merely wish to repeat what has been said by the representatives of Malta and Ceylon and refer the Byelorussian representative to paragraph 20 of the report of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor [A/7622], which very clearly states that Committee's view that it should be allotted two sessions of four weeks each during 1970, and a short preliminary meeting to discuss procedural matters before the main sessions.

79. Mr. MENDELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): I am naturally aggrieved both because we have engaged in such a long discussion without the rocket fuel mentioned by Mr. Vinci and because, with all my respect for the representative of Ceylon, I must again disagree with him.

80. It is true that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has given us his conclusion, read out to us by the Committee Secretary. It is true that the Chairman mentioned in his conclusion that the Secretary-General agreed with his opinion. I do not contest this, as I do not contest the possibility—but this is only a possibility—that the Legal Counsel's opinion was then taken into account. I do, however, have doubts in that last regard, because at that time the legal aspects of the question had not been raised. The matter had been raised in its purely administrative aspects and the appropriate organ to state its view on it had been the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The Secretary-General had agreed with that Committee's conclusion in viewing the matter from the administrative viewpoint.

81. The USSR delegation is raising a legal question which in its opinion goes far beyond the practical decision of whether or not the session should be held at Geneva. I shall read out the question once again: Is it lawful for the First Committee to adopt a political decision on an organizational matter which will become a component part of the consideration by the Fifth Committee of the same organizational matter, along with such other component parts as the proposal of the Chairman of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and the report of the Secretary-General on financial implications? I am putting this question now and asking the Legal Counsel for his opinion.

82. As regards the statement by Mr. Pardo, the Maltese representative, that the Fifth Committee intends to vote tomorrow and that we shall therefore have no time to consider the Legal Counsel's opinion, is there any reason why our Chairman should not ask the Chairman of the Fifth Committee not to take the vote tomorrow? This is a very simple administrative matter which can certainly be decided without a vote.

83. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*translated from Russian*): I am grateful to the

³ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 26 and Corr.1.

representatives of Malta, Ceylon and France for reminding me of something of which I was aware—the contents of the Committee's report, I know that it mentions first two and then three sessions. I am well aware of this. My question is, what does this have to do with the First Committee? In what resolution, in what document of the First Committee have we said: Very well, let there be three sessions? Nowhere. The representative of Ceylon pointed out quite rightly that this is to be found in the report of the Committee on Conferences, in which it is stated at what times, and for what periods, such conferences could be held. In some cases, the report also indicates where the conferences are to be held; but in this very special case no clear indication is given of the place of the conference. Thus, the First Committee has taken no decision on these questions, as I have already pointed out. The reference of the representative of Ceylon to the report of the Committee on Conferences merely supports my view. We are not examining here the report of the Committee on Conferences. That report is examined in the Fifth Committee. Let the Fifth Committee decide the many questions covered by the report and let it approve or amend or supplement the recommendations contained therein. That is a matter which is no part of our duties, and certainly not at the present time, when we have already completed our substantive consideration of the item relating to the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

84. Mr. KARASIMEONOV (Bulgaria) (*translated from French*): I should like to make it clear that I do not want to take a position on substance—whether a session of the Committee on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor should be held at Geneva. I would rather revert to the USSR representative's proposal. Our discussion seems to have exceeded the bounds of mere procedure, since we are discussing a very important principle of our work.

85. As an extremely important legal aspect is under discussion, the question put by the USSR representative seems to me entirely legitimate. It is perfectly possible to obtain the opinion of the Legal Counsel very rapidly, so that the Committee can take a decision upon mature reflection and in full knowledge of the facts.

86. I believe that the Chairman himself inclines to this view. For my part, I strongly support the USSR representative's proposal that we ask the Legal Counsel for his opinion and postpone our decision until he has given it.

87. The CHAIRMAN: I should like to make it clear that, as Chairman, I did not make a proposal. I was simply trying to ascertain the views of the Committee in regard to the proposal made by the Soviet representative in order to help to bring this procedural discussion to a close so that the Committee could act in a united manner. But no sooner had I put that suggestion, than there was an objection. In view of the lack of agreement on this matter and in order not to spend more time on a discussion which would be profitless, I wonder whether it would be agreeable to the Committee if we suspended discussion on this item now, and that in the meanwhile legal opinion may be requested and the Fifth Committee approached with a request that it consider postponing a decision in regard to this matter for a little while, until some time tomorrow, in order to enable this Committee to reach a decision, which could then be remitted to the Fifth Committee.

88. I suggest this course of action with a view to helping the Committee to proceed expeditiously to a conclusion of the consideration of this matter now, so that we may take up the other items before us.

89. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Ceylon): As I was responsible for the objection, I certainly would not persist with my objection, in deference to the Soviet representative who has been supported by the representative of Bulgaria. I would only ask that the Legal Counsel be requested to express his opinion and to submit it to this Committee tomorrow morning. Thereupon, we can proceed to a vote immediately.

90. I have only one observation to make, and that is that when the Fourth Committee recommended that the Committee of Twenty-Four⁴ should hold a meeting somewhere else, it was not found necessary to obtain legal opinion.

91. Mr. MENDELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): I merely want to thank my friend Mr. Amerasinghe for not maintaining his objections.

92. The CHAIRMAN: In my turn, I should like to thank the representatives of Ceylon and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for their co-operation. The matter will be referred to the Legal Counsel with a request that he make his opinion available to this Committee by 10.30 a.m. tomorrow, if that is at all possible. If not, then as near that time as possible.

It was so decided.

93. Mr. HAMBRO (Norway): I hesitate to take the floor now because such interventions generally lose more time than they gain. But may I ask the Chairman to use all his acumen, all his experience and all his authority, combined with the legal wisdom of the Secretariat, to try to make our discussion tomorrow a little briefer than it has been today. We are discussing a matter that will cost money, and the chief reason is that meeting in Geneva will cost money, but every hour we discuss this here deducts money that we might have saved.

AGENDA ITEM 29

Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (*continued*) (A/7639, A/7681 and A/7741-DC/232; A/C.1/989, A/C.1/992-995, A/C.1/L.490 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.492-495, A/C.1/L.498 and A/C.1/L.499)

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

94. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (*translated from Spanish*): I merely wish to contribute to the efforts to save time referred to by the representative of Norway. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to announce a very minor amendment to the original text made by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.495.

⁴ Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

95. This draft resolution has been sponsored by Canada, Ecuador, Iran, Mexico and Nigeria. The sponsors request the Secretariat to take note of these two minor amendments so that a revised text of the draft resolution can be circulated.

96. These amendments apply only to paragraph 3. The text of this paragraph begins with the word “*Declares*”, which should be replaced by “*Expresses its conviction*”. Then, in the last line of that paragraph, the word “shall” should be replaced by the word “should”.

97. Mr. VINCI (Italy): Mr. Chairman, I wish to ask your indulgence and that of all members of the Committee if I take up a little more of your time. I understand that tomorrow we may proceed to the vote on several draft resolutions on general and complete disarmament, so I thought that, even at this late hour, it would be helpful to all delegations if I could introduce the two draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/L.498 and A/C.1/L.499 which were circulated this afternoon.

98. I shall start by speaking of draft resolution A/C.1/L.499, sponsored by Ireland, Japan and Italy. We have been encouraged to take this initiative by the recurrent references made to general and complete disarmament in the course of the general debate on disarmament items that has taken place during the last three weeks. We have heard many delegations stress this point during this most constructive debate and, if we understood the views expressed in this Committee, they also stressed the fundamental importance they give it as a means providing new impetus to the negotiations on disarmament.

99. General Assembly resolution 2454 B (XXIII), adopted on 20 December 1968, was, in fact, recalled in a number of statements. In that resolution, as we all remember, the General Assembly

“*Requests* the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to make renewed efforts towards achieving substantial progress in reaching agreement on the question of general and complete disarmament under effective international control . . .

“*Further requests* the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to continue its urgent efforts to negotiate collateral measures of disarmament.”

100. I would not go as far as some representatives who have stated that no progress has been achieved along the lines then advocated since the adoption of the above-quoted resolution. My delegation is not so pessimistic. In my statement of 20 November [1695th meeting], I mentioned that, on the contrary, we believe that some steps forward have been taken during the last two sessions of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in specific fields and in the general approach to the problem of disarmament; very small steps, it is true, but nevertheless potentially significant. They are not meaningless, especially if we consider realistically how long the road ahead of us is and how many hurdles, military, political and psychological it contains. From what we have heard, we believe even more that the present moment is a propitious one for renewed efforts in the field of disarmament.

101. Most of the speakers who have taken part in the general debate referred to two recent events of great political significance which could brighten the prospects for our endeavour: the beginning of the strategic arms limitation talks between the United States of America and the Soviet Union and the decision of the two major nuclear Powers to ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Since I did not have an opportunity of doing so before, I now wish to join previous speakers in expressing the congratulations of the Italian Government to the United States and Soviet Governments on the latter important decision, which could open the way for the entry into force at an early date of the non-proliferation Treaty.

102. The developments to which I have referred have created a favourable climate for the work undertaken by this Committee during the current session of the General Assembly. For its part the Italian delegation has felt encouraged, as I have said, to take advantage of this positive situation, in the hope that, in accordance with the general wishes of our people, a new momentum will be given to our common enterprise in this field.

103. We therefore decided to join our efforts with those of other delegations which were equally anxious to make an attempt to move forward on the path already traced by General Assembly resolution 2454 (XXIII) and to produce a new resolution that would embody the largest possible measure of consensus on the major problems of disarmament negotiations. The result of our efforts is represented by draft resolution A/C.1/L.499, which I have the honour of introducing in this Committee today.

104. First of all, I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to those paragraphs of the draft resolution which its sponsors regard as the essential ones. I refer to paragraphs 3 and 4, which read:

“3. *Requests* the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to resume its work as early as possible, along the lines set forth in paragraph 37 of its report to the General Assembly, bearing in mind that the ultimate goal is general and complete disarmament;

“4. *Further requests* the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, while continuing intensive negotiations with a view to reaching the widest possible agreement on collateral measures, at the same time to work towards a comprehensive programme, dealing with all aspects of the problem of the cessation of the armaments race and disarmament, which would provide the Conference with a guideline charting the course of its further work and of its further negotiations, and report thereon to the twenty-fifth General Assembly.”

105. In our view, these paragraphs represent a follow-up of General Assembly resolution 2454 (XXIII). In putting forward this formulation the delegations sponsoring this draft resolution have been inspired by a desire to promote a more comprehensive approach to the problem of disarmament negotiations. We feel that such a formulation could stimulate new initiatives, encourage more decisive efforts and give a clear view of the path which is being, or will be, followed, without taking our feet off the solid ground where something can be negotiated effectively and agreed

upon now. In other words, a parallel action in both fields—general and complete disarmament and partial measures—would be mutually beneficial.

106. We do know from experience that while schemes and designs which are too ambitious are of no real assistance around the negotiating table, negotiations which are carried on without some insight into the process being followed or their final goal give rise to doubts and scepticism. Furthermore they risk remaining fruitless, creating imbalance or producing mere technical results void of real political meaning.

107. That is why it seems to us that the correct approach should aim, in fact, at pursuing negotiations of collateral measures, the implementation of which would pave the way to the beginning of the real disarmament process and, at the same time, of seeking an understanding on the guidelines charting the course towards measures of real disarmament.

108. Let me recall, in this connexion, what was said by the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Aldo Moro, in a statement on 8 October 1969, before the General Assembly:

“Precisely in response to the General Assembly’s appeal, the Italian Government took the initiative at Geneva and, in the form of a specific working document, submitted a proposal for the discussion of an organic disarmament programme. We aim at the opening of discussions on a programme which establishes the directives for the inauguration and successive development of the disarmament process. In such a programme, which could form part of a “Disarmament Decade”, which the Secretary-General has so brilliantly proposed in the introduction to his annual report. We hope to see plans made for the beginning of negotiations on arms reduction, which should constitute the first phase of this process.” [1783rd meeting, para. 27.]

109. The Italian delegation was gratified to note that the same concepts explained by our Minister for Foreign Affairs were echoed by other delegates during the course of the debate when they emphasized the need to start discussions at Geneva for the elaboration of a comprehensive programme.

110. The request contained in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution referring to the elaboration of such a programme is, in fact, inspired by what was stated in paragraph 37 of the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament [A/7741-DC/232],⁵ which recognizes the need for “maintaining a balance among various measures to prevent armament, to limit armament and of disarmament”.

111. We believe that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, by capitalizing on the agreement which has already been reached on this approach, and guided by the new resolution which we hope will be approved by the General Assembly, will be able to make progress along those lines during the coming year. We firmly hope that, in

so doing, we shall come closer to an understanding on how the comprehensive programme should be worked out in order to provide, in realistic but effective terms, a helpful incentive to the present negotiations on disarmament. I have no doubt that if the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament were able to report next year that significant progress had been achieved in this direction it would receive a most grateful response from the General Assembly and from the peoples of the world.

112. With your permission, I shall now comment briefly on other points of the draft resolution. The first four paragraphs of the preamble are intended to reaffirm and recall previous resolutions of the General Assembly directly related to the subject of the present draft. The fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs point out two important conditions pertaining to the success of any endeavour in the disarmament field; notably, that the new multilateral international agreements which have been reached in this field should enter into force without delay and that all nuclear Powers should join their efforts in the common intent of curbing the nuclear arms race and attaining disarmament.

113. The seventh and eighth preambular paragraphs stress anew two basic concepts which are respectively contained in the Declaration of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States⁶ and endorsed by General Assembly resolution 2456 A (XXIII) and in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

114. The ninth and tenth preambular paragraphs refer to the report submitted to the General Assembly by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

115. The eleventh and twelfth preambular paragraphs reaffirm the connexion which exists between disarmament and economic and social advancement, in particular, of the developing countries.

116. The thirteenth preambular paragraph endorses the call of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the proclamation of a Disarmament Decade and contains an appeal to Member States to sign or ratify the multilateral international instruments in the field of disarmament.

117. In the operative part, paragraphs 1 and 7 concern the dedication of the decade of the 1970s as a Disarmament Decade.

118. Paragraph 2 is self-explanatory. It contains an appeal to Governments to intensify, without delay, their concerted and concentrated efforts in the field of disarmament.

119. Paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 refer to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, and I have already commented on them.

120. Paragraph 6 concerns the economic advancement of developing countries, which could greatly benefit from any substantial progress in the field of disarmament.

⁵ *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1969*, document DC/232.

⁶ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session*, agenda item 96, document A/7277 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 17.

121. Finally, paragraph 8 requests the Secretary-General to provide all appropriate facilities and assistance with a view to furthering the fullest implementation of the resolution.

122. We are, of course, ready to give any further clarification which might be requested by other delegations in the hope that our draft resolution will meet the general feelings and expectations of this Committee in its endeavour to promote, at the earliest possible stage, a historic switch from the limitation of armaments to the real measures of disarmament which alone can enable the international community to meet the tremendous challenges of our troubled world.

123. I shall wait until tomorrow to speak on the other draft resolution sponsored by Italy [A/C.1/L.498], which concerns chemical and bacteriological weapons.

124. The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Italy for introducing draft resolution A/C.1/L.499.

125. Mr. PARDO (Malta): Since the hour is late, I shall try to be brief. With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/L.493 on radiological weapons, which was introduced by my delegation, we should like to say that we have made a few changes in this draft resolution. It was suggested that it would not be within the competence of the General Assembly to make suggestions with regard to the strategic arms limitation talks that are taking place at Helsinki. We recognize that there may be some substance to this point of view and we are accordingly deleting paragraph 1. This would necessitate a renumbering of the other paragraphs. We have also taken this opportunity of making slight modifications to the present paragraph 2, which we hope will clarify the contents of this paragraph. The modifications are as follows: to delete the word "possible" in the second line between the word "priorities" and the words "effective methods of control"; to insert the words "against the use" between the word "control" in the second line and the words "of radiological" in the third line; and to insert the words "methods of" between the word "radiological" and the word "warfare".

126. The revised paragraph 2 would therefore read as follows:

"Invites the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to consider, without prejudice to existing priorities, effective methods of control against the use of radiological methods of warfare conducted independently of nuclear explosions."

We believe this would clarify the contents of that paragraph.

127. With regard to resolution A/C.1/L.494, here again we have made a rather substantial modification. The opinion was expressed by a few delegations that it might be premature to request the Secretary-General to undertake a study or a report on the military applications of laser technology this year, and that preliminary consideration of this subject could be undertaken by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament before the Secretary-General was requested to make a report on the subject. In

accordance with that opinion we have therefore deleted paragraphs 1 and 2 and substituted a single paragraph reading as follows:

"*Recommends* that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament give consideration, without prejudice to existing priorities, to the implications of the possible military applications of laser technology."

This is far shorter and would enable the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to acquaint itself completely with the background of this important subject.

128. With regard to our first resolution [A/C.1/L.492], it has been suggested that such a resolution is not really necessary and that the same objective could be attained were you, Mr. Chairman, to read out a statement expressing the consensus of the Committee on the substance of the draft resolution. We have made a preliminary draft of such a statement, which reads:

"It is the feeling of the First Committee that the volume prepared by the Secretariat entitled *The United Nations and Disarmament, 1945-1965*⁷ contains a useful reference guide to the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, and that, in view of the arms control agreements that have been or are being negotiated, it would be desirable to revise this publication and to issue an updated edition. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations would seem an appropriate occasion for this updating, which should subsequently be undertaken at periodic intervals of five years."

Should there be consensus on this type of statement, we would withdraw our resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.492.

129. Mr. ESCHAUZIER (Netherlands): My delegation would like to introduce document A/C.1/L.501, containing an amendment to draft resolution A/C.1/L.490 and Add.1 concerning a moratorium on the further testing and deployment of new offensive and defensive strategic nuclear weapons. I submit this amendment on behalf of five delegations, but before proceeding to explain what motivated us to present this amendment, I should like to apologize to the Committee for the fact that we did so at such a late stage in our debate. The fact is, however, that over the past few days consultations have taken place with the twelve sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.490 and Add.1 in a most friendly spirit, but they did not lead to a common viewpoint.

130. I should like to make it clear from the outset that I have the greatest respect for the high motives and the genuine concern which prompted the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.490 and Add.1 to present that draft resolution. Speaking for myself, I believe that we share the same objectives; the only difference seems to be that of the best way to achieve those aims. There is a bifurcation of the road.

131. In my intervention during the general debate [1699th meeting], I made it quite clear that the Netherlands delegation regards the decision taken by the Govern-

⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 67.I.9.

ments of the United States and the Soviet Union as the most important and momentous event which may lead to a turn for the better. It augurs well for the prospects of the limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic armaments. At the same time, however, I felt bound to sound a note of warning, and to express our sincere conviction that, in respect of the high complexity of the matters now being discussed in preliminary talks at Helsinki, it would be undesirable to make any recommendations of a specific character. The effect of such recommendations might be to direct the negotiations between the two major nuclear Powers towards one particular facet of the range of subjects which have to be encompassed in connexion with the most important question of how to achieve—and I repeat—the limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic armaments. Such a recommendation, in our view, might well have the effect of hampering rather than promoting the negotiations which are now taking place. We therefore express the opinion that it would not be desirable to introduce such suggestions during the current session of the General Assembly.

132. It appeared to us that the draft resolution A/C.1/L.490 and Add.1 could be improved in several respects so as to meet the criteria which I have just set out.

133. I should like now to explain the amendments we propose. We propose the deletion of the third and fourth preambular paragraphs. I wish to add that the third preambular paragraph reappears in the first operative paragraph we suggest, in, I think, a more explicit and strengthened form. Furthermore, our suggestion is that the operative paragraph which now reads:

“The General Assembly,

“... ”

“Appeals to the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to agree, as an urgent preliminary measure, on a moratorium on further testing and deployment of new offensive and defensive strategic nuclear-weapon systems”

should be replaced by two paragraphs. The first would read:

“Expresses its sincere hope that these talks will, in due course, lead to substantial agreements on the limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic armaments”.

As I just pointed out, this is a revised and strengthened version of the third preambular paragraph in document A/C.1/L.490 and Add.1.

134. The second would read:

“Calls upon the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to refrain from any action which might be prejudicial to the achievement of this aim.”

The aim is, of course, the limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic armaments.

135. To sum up, I think that, far from detracting from the proposal made by the twelve Powers, we have to a certain extent strengthened it as regards the original third preambular paragraph by substituting language in the operative paragraph, and on the other hand we have by no means excluded the possibility that the two major Powers may at some stage arrive at a decision to stop, either by unilateral action, by agreement or in any manner that seems most appropriate to them, the testing and further deployment of new weapon systems. This is implicit in our draft and we have tried to broaden the scope of the recommendation made by the General Assembly to the effect that the two major Powers now negotiating at Helsinki ought to refrain from any action that might be prejudicial to the achievement of those aims.

136. In view of the late hour, Mr. Chairman, I think that I have made myself sufficiently clear and I do not want to take up the time of this Committee watching the hands of the clock to elaborate further on the amendment proposed in the name of Canada, Hungary, Poland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Netherlands.

137. The CHAIRMAN: If the Committee has no objection, I give the floor to the representative of Kuwait who wishes to make a correction of his vote on the draft resolution under agenda item 30, namely, the urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests.

138. Mr. IMAM (Kuwait): I am sorry to speak at this late hour, but my delegation was absent last Thursday [1712th meeting] when a vote was taken on draft resolutions A/C.1/L.485 and Add.1-4 and A/C.1/L.486. In view of the importance of these resolutions and the earnest desire of my delegation to define its position on this vital question, I should like to state that my delegation would have liked to cast a vote in favour of the two draft resolutions, both in the part separately voted upon and the two drafts as a whole. I should be very grateful if our vote could be recorded at this late stage in the records of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.