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CONTENTS

	Page
Opening statement by the Chairman	1
Election of the Vice-Chairman	2
Election of the Rapporteur	2
Organization of work	3

Chairman: Mr. Milko TARABANOV (Bulgaria).

Opening statement by the Chairman

1. The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Both on behalf of the delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and personally I wish to express to all the delegations in the United Nations my warmest and most sincere thanks for the confidence they have shown in me by electing me to preside over the First Committee. I wish particularly to thank my predecessor, the representative of Venezuela, my friend Ambassador Aguilar, who nominated me.

2. I regard this confidence, which does me great honour, as recognition of the policy of peace and co-operation pursued by my country and the attachment of the people and Government of Bulgaria to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and also of the concrete implementation of that policy in our relations with all countries, particularly those of the Balkan and neighbouring regions, the untiring efforts made to introduce these principles into international relations, and finally the contribution the people and Government of Bulgaria have made to the safeguarding of peace and the strengthening of international security—the main task of our Organization.

3. The First Committee is entrusted with examining concrete problems linked with the achieving of that task, problems in the solution of which all States and peoples of the world are interested. It is the duty of the United Nations, and therefore our duty, to utilize to the full and effectively the possibilities which this Organization and the machinery of the First Committee provide for facilitating the solution of these problems in the interests of strengthening international security and safeguarding peace, putting an end to the arms race and encouraging disarmament, and ensuring co-operation among States in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter in such important fields as the sea-bed and the ocean floor, outer space and the moon.

4. I am convinced that if all delegations in the First Committee would mobilize all the energy they can muster

our Committee would be able to arrive at decisions which, after being adopted by the General Assembly, should make a constructive contribution to the solution of the most urgent international problems, such as strengthening the role and effectiveness of the United Nations as an instrument for peace and co-operation among Member States large and small.

5. The question of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, which was unanimously adopted at the twenty-fifth anniversary session of the General Assembly [*resolution 2734 (XXV)*], is included in the agenda of the First Committee and is doubtless one of the most important items before the twenty-sixth session. The broad discussion on this question that has already taken place during this session of the General Assembly will without doubt contribute to drawing the attention and increasing the efforts of our Organization with regard to its main task, namely, to maintain and strengthen peace. This idea has been widely developed in the statements made by many delegations during the general debate. There can be no doubt that a constructive discussion in the First Committee will contribute to the implementation of the main provisions of the Declaration.

6. For many years now, the disarmament question has occupied a place of first importance in the work of our Committee. The struggle to reduce armaments, both nuclear and conventional, so as to put an end to the murderous arms race and to achieve general and complete disarmament, has always been and continues to be the main objective of the United Nations. This objective is defined in the Charter and in decisions of the General Assembly. A number of delegations have stressed the importance of this during the general debate in the Assembly. All peoples are interested in seeing the problems of disarmament solved. Therefore, all States, large and small, advanced or developing, nuclear or non-nuclear, must make their effective contribution towards solving these problems.

7. We realize more and more the need to take concrete measures toward true disarmament. The increasing number of problems which, within the framework of putting an end to the arms race, are open to a practical solution is encouraging.

8. In this connexion the question of the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons has assumed increased significance. In the course of the general debate, we have heard the voices of large and small nations asking to take an active part in the discussion of all disarmament problems. The question of the holding of a world disarmament conference, which the General Assembly is to consider at the present session, will give all States an opportunity to express themselves freely on the subject.

9. On the agenda of the Committee also we have such questions as the great and bold initiative of mankind: the conquest of outer space, as well as the encouragement of international co-operation in the exploration and exploitation of the celestial body closest to the earth—the moon—an exploration and exploitation for peaceful purposes in the interests of present and future generations.

10. Finally, the question of the utilization of sea-bed and ocean floor exclusively for peaceful purposes and the preparation of an international conference on the sea-bed and on the international law that shall govern it are also closely linked to the interests of all States. The United Nations can and should contribute effectively to the solution of all these problems.

11. These are the problems which the Committee will have to examine and on which it will have to concentrate its efforts.

12. I believe that I shall be speaking on behalf of all members of the Committee in welcoming among us all the States recently admitted to membership which are taking part in the work of the First Committee for the first time. I am sure that their contribution to the solution of the grave problems that confront us will be both constructive and positive.

13. Before taking up the items on the agenda for today, I would like to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the decision of the General Assembly taken at its 1935th meeting on 22 September 1971 concerning the procedure regarding the election of officers of the Main Committees. According to that decision, the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will follow this procedure in regard to the first two items on its agenda for today.

Election of the Vice-Chairman

14. Mr. FARAH (Somalia): It is my privilege to propose the name of my dear friend and colleague, Ambassador Radha Krishna Ramphul of Mauritius, for the post of Vice-Chairman of this Committee. In doing so, I should like the Committee to know his candidature has the support of all the members of the African group. The unique qualifications of Ambassador Ramphul make him eminently suitable for this important position. He can draw on the rich experience gained in the many fields of activity in which he has distinguished himself. Trained in the legal profession, and a successful businessman, he has also devoted himself to questions of human rights and to the promotion of the struggle of African peoples for independence—in particular, the struggle for independence of his own country, Mauritius.

15. He has worked effectively towards that end through the many links forged during his 20 years' stay in Europe. For the past two years he has represented his country in the United Nations. In this position he has distinguished himself by his effective diplomacy and his unfailing courtesy and spirit of co-operation. Within the African group he has been a strong supporter and vocal exponent of African causes.

16. Ambassador Ramphul has not allowed the difficulties of heading a small delegation to prevent him from taking an active role in international affairs and from taking on positions of responsibility. He represents his country in the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and on the Commission on Human Rights. He served as Vice-President of the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session, and is a Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction. In all these capacities he has shown his personal worth and has exemplified the spirit of internationalism.

17. My delegation is convinced that Ambassador Ramphul will discharge his responsibility as Vice-Chairman of this Committee as successfully as he has done in other Committees.

18. The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Since there are no other nominations, I declare Ambassador Ramphul of Mauritius unanimously elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

Mr. Ramphul (Mauritius) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

19. The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I congratulate Ambassador Ramphul on his election to the post of Vice-Chairman and invite him to take a seat at the podium.

20. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius), (*interpretation from French*): I should like first of all to thank my brother from Africa, my distinguished colleague Ambassador Farah from Somalia, who was good enough to recommend my candidacy as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations. All I would reproach Ambassador Farah for is having presented me in such flattering terms that I find it difficult to recognize myself.

21. Mr. Farah himself has been Vice-Chairman of this Committee and, although he had other even more important functions to discharge, evinced the dynamism and effectiveness which characterize him. Succeeding somebody so talented is a very difficult task indeed. I shall do my best and I hope that I shall be worthy of the trust of the Committee.

22. I also thank the members of the Secretariat who have explained to me what the post to which I have just been elected entails. I should also like to take the opportunity afforded by this first meeting of the Committee to congratulate our Chairman on his election and assure him that he will have my full co-operation. I shall of course work under the guidance of the Committee, but at the same time I expect from the Chairman that he will guide me in my activities. In any case we shall not have any linguistic difficulties since both of us speak French.

Election of the Rapporteur

23. Mr. SPÁČIL (Czechoslovakia) (*translation from Russian*): Permit me first of all to congratulate you on behalf of my delegation on your election to the important

post of Chairman of the First Committee. Your election is not only a compliment to your country, Bulgaria, with which Czechoslovakia has been linked during many years of fraternal co-operation, but also a guarantee that when we consider the serious matters before our Committee we shall be in reliable and experienced hands.

24. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate warmly Ambassador Ramphul on his election as Vice-Chairman.

25. Now it is my great pleasure to nominate the representative of Italy, Mr. Giovanni Migliuolo, for the office of Rapporteur. I do so with pleasure, since I know Mr. Migliuolo well, and have had the honour of working with him both on other diplomatic assignments and here in New York. I, like all of my other colleagues with whom he has worked, was able to appreciate his extensive diplomatic experience and his talents. Final proof is given in the large number of offices and posts which he has occupied.

26. I should like to remind the Committee that Mr. Migliuolo has held senior posts in Italian embassies in Prague, Moscow, Paris and Tunis and was until recently head of the Department of Multilateral Economic and Technological Co-operation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome. At present, Mr. Migliuolo is Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy.

27. All this, together with his personal qualities, gives us ample reason to believe that he will cope well with the responsible tasks involved in the office for which I have the honour to nominate him, that of Rapporteur of the First Committee.

28. The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Since there are no other nominations for the post of Rapporteur, I declare Mr. Giovanni Migliuolo of Italy unanimously elected Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Mr. Migliuolo (Italy) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

29. The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I congratulate Mr. Migliuolo on his unanimous election to the post of Rapporteur and I invite him to take his place at the podium.

30. Mr. MIGLIUOLO (Italy) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank you for your congratulations. It is a great pleasure for me to work with you again as I did last year.

[The speaker continued in English.]

31. I should like to add a word of appreciation to the representative of Czechoslovakia for having nominated me for the post of Rapporteur. It is gratifying for me that this nomination came from the representative of Czechoslovakia, where I had the honour to serve more than 23 years ago in my first diplomatic assignment. Moreover, it was a pleasure for me that this nomination was presented by Dr. Spáčil, with whom I have worked for a number of years and whom I hold in high esteem.

32. May I say that I am most grateful to the members of the Committee for the confidence they have placed in me. Any election is at the same time an honour and a burden. I shall regard the honour as going to the delegation of Italy and its Permanent Representative, and the burden to myself. What I can say is that I pledge myself to fulfil my duties to the best of my ability and with complete impartiality.

Organization of work

33. The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): The Committee has before it two letters, one dated 25 September 1971 and the other dated 8 October 1971, addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee by the President of the General Assembly. Those letters contain the list of items allocated to the First Committee for consideration and report to the General Assembly. They have been distributed to members of the Committee in documents A/C.1/1012 and Add.1.

34. With regard to the order of priorities for consideration of the items allocated to the Committee, I have had the benefit of the views expressed to me by a number of delegations representing various regional groups, on the basis of which I should like to submit for the consideration of the Committee this suggestion—that the items be considered in the following order:

35. First, implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security: report of the Secretary-General (agenda item 34).

36. Secondly, international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space: report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (agenda item 33), and preparation of an international treaty concerning the moon (agenda item 92). With regard to those two items, I would suggest that the general debate on them be held jointly, it being understood that any delegation would be free, if it so wished, to make two separate statements in the course of the general debate. On the conclusion of that general debate, the Committee would consider the draft resolutions or proposals on each item separately, under their respective titles.

37. Thirdly, general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (agenda item 27); question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (agenda item 28); urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (agenda item 29); establishment, within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency, of an international service for nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes under appropriate international control: report of the IAEA (agenda item 30); status of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 2666 (XXV) concerning the signature and ratification of Additional Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco): report of the Secretary-General (agenda item 31); economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security: report of the Secretary-General (agenda

item 32); and declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace (agenda item 98).

38. As in the preceding case, I propose that the seven agenda items I have just mentioned be the subject of a joint general debate, it being understood that any delegation would be free, if it so wished, to make more than one statement in the course of the general debate. On the conclusion of that general debate, the Committee would consider the draft proposals or resolutions on each item separately and under their respective titles.

39. Fourthly, 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 use of their resources in the interests of mankind, and convening of a conference on the law of the sea: report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the limits of National Jurisdiction (agenda item 35).

40. Those are the suggested priorities that I would venture to propose to the Committee. If there are no comments or objections I shall take it that the Committee agrees with this proposed order of priorities.

It was so decided.

41. The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with the decision just taken by the Committee, we shall begin our substantive work with the consideration of agenda item 34, implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security. I propose that we begin the general debate on this item on Thursday, 14 October. I would request members to refer to the *Journal* for the time of the meeting, and would also ask all delegations who may wish to take part in the general debate on this subject to be good enough to have their names inscribed by the Secretariat as soon as possible.

42. Before adjourning the meeting, however, I should like to refer to another matter concerning the programme and organization of our work. As members of the Committee are aware, the General Assembly is expected to begin on 18 October consideration of the item entitled "Restoration of the Lawful Rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations". Some members of the Committee have suggested that the First Committee should not hold meetings when that matter is being discussed in the plenary Assembly. It is true that the agenda of the Committee, on the priorities for which we have just decided, is an extremely heavy one this session. It is true also that other questions are to be examined in the plenary Assembly, such as the situation in the Middle East and the item on a world disarmament conference, which are also of specific interest to members in the First Committee. In those circumstances it would be perhaps more appropriate to organize the work of the First Committee and of the plenary Assembly in such a way so as not to prevent members of the Committee from taking part in the work of the General Assembly on questions which are eminently political in content and, at the same time, to take whatever measures are necessary in order to conclude consideration of the items on the agenda of the First Committee within the time-limits set. I would therefore suggest that, instead of taking a specific decision on that matter now, the Committee entrust the Chairman with organizing the meetings of the First Committee, in consultation, as need arises, with the President of the General Assembly. In so doing, I shall of course take into account the desires of those members who have asked that the Committee should not meet when items of special interest to members of the Committee are discussed in the plenary Assembly.

43. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to leave the matter to the Chairman.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.