

**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FORTIETH SESSION

Official Records*



MAY 19 1987

FIRST COMMITTEE
62nd meeting
held on
6 December 1985
at 3 p.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 62nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 66: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF
PEACE (continued)

CONCLUSION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/40/PV.62
9 January 1986
ENGLISH

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

Ad Hoc Committee in consultation with the host country. That does not preclude the opening of the Conference in 1987 if the Ad Hoc Committee so decides. The Ad Hoc Committee is of the firm view that the Conference in Colombo would not be complete if it were not attended by the permanent members of the Security Council, the major maritime users and the littoral and hinterland States.

To achieve that objective, we have searched for an operative paragraph to replace paragraphs 5 and 6 of the document of the Ad Hoc Committee that I have already referred to. We now have the following operative paragraph 5:

"Emphasizes that the Conference called for in General Assembly resolution 34/80 B and subsequent resolutions and the establishment and maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace requires the full and active participation and co-operation of all the permanent members of the Security Council, the major maritime users and the littoral and hinterland States."

We have sought by that paragraph to stress that for the success of the Conference on the Indian Ocean to establish and maintain a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean there should be full and active participation and co-operation of all the permanent members of the Security Council, the major maritime users and the littoral and hinterland States. We have now replaced operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of the first draft with this new operative paragraph 5. As I said earlier, the operative paragraph 5 that we recommend is part of a package to be read with operative paragraph 4.

We have also reintroduced into the present draft resolution a new operative paragraph 7, which takes the place of operative paragraph 6 in resolution 39/149. This has been brought back by our Committee in a bid to make the draft resolution acceptable to all groups.

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

As regards the duration of our work in 1986, which we propose for acceptance by the General Assembly, we propose to have three sessions of two weeks each to complete the preparatory work. It will be noted that this preparatory work, we visualize, would comprise both organizational matters and substantive issues, including the provisional agenda for the Conference, rules of procedure, participation, stages of Conference, level of representation, documentation, consideration of appropriate arrangements for any international agreements that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and the preparation of the draft final document of the Conference.

I wish to share with representatives my personal appreciation of the skills, diplomacy and extremely likeable qualities of the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Ali Alatas, who presides over the proceedings of the First Committee. My intervention flows from an observation of the skilful handling of the work of this Committee, according to a prescribed timetable, and it is a genuine and sincere tribute that I pay him.

I must also say that I have had the privilege in the past few months of coming to see at close quarters the qualities of understanding, co-operation and goodwill displayed by groups of representatives who have joined me both in the Group of Friends of the Chairman and in the Ad Hoc Committee. I say to all of them, and to members of the Secretariat and the service staff, a big "Thank you", for it would not have been possible for me to come before the Committee today with this happy conclusion to our work without their untiring efforts and dedication.

I now ask the First Committee to accept the draft resolution by consensus, as it has the approval of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, also by consensus.

Mr. TAHINDRO (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): As Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, I should like to express my pleasure that the Committee was able to adopt its report as a whole after the meeting of 5 December 1985 - after, it is true, lengthy and difficult negotiations in the Group of the Friends of the Chairman and sometimes among the officers of the Committee.

The adoption of the report now enables the Committee to come forward with recommendations at this fortieth session of the General Assembly, particularly with regard to the date of the Colombo Conference, as well as the date for completing the preparatory work.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Wijewardane, of Sri Lanka, for his untiring work and his constant patience, without which the Committee would not have been able to present a report today. I also thank all delegations and members of the Secretariat who helped me draw up the report.

However, as representative of Madagascar to the Ad Hoc Committee, I should like to express my delegation's disappointment at the results of the Ad Hoc Committee's work for 1985 and at its recommendations to the First Committee. It is proposed once again that the Colombo Conference be deferred to a date as distant as 1988. Taking advantage of the Ad Hoc Committee's decision-making method, consensus, some delegations have stated that in the light of the security and political situation in the area it would not be realistic to hold the Conference in the near future, in that way raising matters basically alien to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and concerning which the Committee has no mandate, thus showing utter scorn for the legitimate interests of the Indian Ocean States.

(Mr. Tahindro, Madagascar)

We would note that such matters did not prevent the convening at Geneva of a Soviet-United States summit meeting. We wonder why they should prevent the convening of the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean. Along with most other non-aligned countries, we believe that the Colombo Conference should be held as soon as possible. In that connection, the draft resolution submitted to the Ad Hoc Committee in document A/AC.159/L.68 had proposed 1986 for the Conference.

We also consider that all the permanent members of the Security Council, the maritime users of the Indian Ocean, and the littoral and hinterland States should all participate in the Conference so that it may effectively meet the goals and objectives defined for it in the 1971 Declaration.

In the name of consensus, my delegation will join in adopting the report in the hope that the present deferral of the Conference will be the last, and that the Conference will take place at Colombo as planned, and as recommended in the draft resolution before us at an early date soon after preparatory work is completed, but not later than 1988.

Miss KUNADI (India): We have before us in document A/40/29 the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, adopted by consensus, containing the consensus recommendation of that Committee for adoption by the General Assembly. I should like to thank Ambassador Wijewardane of Sri Lanka, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, for his lucid introduction of that Committee's report. I express my appreciation of his perseverance and diplomatic skill and for the manner in which he guided the deliberations of the Committee in 1985. It is largely due to his patience and untiring efforts that the Ad Hoc Committee was able to adopt, during the final moments of its work, a consensus draft resolution, after several months of intensive negotiations.

(Miss Kunadi, India)

While India, in a spirit of compromise and goodwill, will join in the consensus in favour of the draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, we feel a sense of deep disappointment at the results of our work and at the decision being taken to postpone yet again the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean. Our draft resolution this year, inter alia, requests the Ad Hoc Committee to complete preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean during 1986 in order to permit the opening of the Conference at Colombo at an early date soon thereafter, but not later than 1988, to be decided by the Committee in consultation with the host country. We look forward to the early convening of the Conference.

Some time ago, the Ad Hoc Committee unanimously reiterated its conviction that decisions in matters affecting the Indian Ocean would be taken by consensus. We hope that the working methods of the Ad Hoc Committee, aimed at securing the widest co-operation of all delegations in the important task of implementing the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, will not be used to obstruct our action in that direction. On the other hand, they should provide an impetus to carry forward our task in a constructive spirit to achieve the desired goals.

During the three sessions of its work in 1985, the Ad Hoc Committee has endeavoured to implement the mandate entrusted to it by the terms of resolution 39/149. The Committee focused attention on both organizational and substantive issues. We set up a working group with a specific mandate to streamline our work. It is our understanding that the working group will carry out its task in a manner which will contribute to the early convening of the Conference for the implementation of the 1971 Declaration. While substantial work has already been done by the Ad Hoc Committee, we hope that it will be able to complete its remaining preparatory work during 1986 on matters such as the provisional agenda,

(Miss Kunadi, India)

the rules of procedure, participation, the stages of the Conference, documentation and consideration of appropriate arrangements for any international agreement that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

Efforts to introduce extraneous issues into our work and to lay down pre-conditions with regard either to the harmonization of views or to the political and security climate in the region are not conducive, and will prove to be counter-productive, to the early realization of the objectives of the 1971 Declaration. While it is generally accepted that some degree of harmonization of views is necessary before a conference of this kind is convened, harmonization is an ongoing process and cannot become a pre-condition for convening the Conference. As regards the political and security climate, we feel that it is the very seriousness of the situation in the Indian Ocean, caused by the military presence of great Powers, that necessitates an early convening of the Conference. Attempts to alter the concepts of the zone of peace, which have been clearly spelled out in resolution 2832 (XXVI), or to shift the focus of attention away from the dangers posed to the littoral and hinterland States by the increasing military presence of great Powers in the Indian Ocean area, may only result in undermining the very basis of the Ad Hoc Committee's work.

The draft resolution before us further emphasizes that the Conference on the Indian Ocean and the establishment and maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace require the full and active participation and co-operation of all the permanent members of the Security Council, the major maritime users, and the littoral and hinterland States. In that context, we wish to express our profound concern at the pre-conditions laid down by some delegations for their own participation in the Conference. We believe that the Colombo Conference, to be successful, should be attended in a spirit of constructive co-operation by the

(Miss Kunadi, India)

great Powers and major maritime users as well as by the littoral and hinterland States. The Indian Ocean Conference without the participation of the great Powers and the major maritime users would be meaningless. We therefore urge the States concerned to display the necessary political will and to co-operate actively in the task of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

India attaches great importance to the early convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean as a necessary step in the implementation of the Declaration adopted in 1971. The tense situation in the Indian Ocean and the increasing militarization of that area makes it imperative that we pursue the concept of a zone of peace more vigorously than ever before. Successive resolutions since 1971 have reiterated the call upon the great Powers to enter into consultations with the littoral and hinterland States with a view, first, to halting the further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean and, secondly, to eliminating from the Indian Ocean bases, military installations, logistical supply facilities, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and any other manifestation of great-Power military presence in the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of the rivalry and confrontation between those Powers.

That process of consultation, strictly speaking, began with the expansion of the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to securing the co-operation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users in the implementation of the Committee's mandate. The proposal to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean was put forward by the littoral and hinterland States with a view to finding practical measures to implement resolution 2832 (XXVI), and we look upon the proposed Conference on the Indian Ocean as a first important step towards achieving that objective. We believe that the Conference will provide an appropriate forum for arriving at agreements that will govern the use of the waters of the Indian

(Miss Kunadi, India)

Ocean solely for peaceful purposes, and the reduction and eventual elimination of an external military presence from the area.

The year 1986 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, contained in resolution 2832 (XXVI). We hope that that occasion will provide an opportunity for a renewed commitment on the part of all members of the Ad Hoc Committee to implementing the provisions of the Declaration. We seek the co-operation of all in achieving that objective.

Mr. ALI (Bangladesh): At the outset, my delegation would like to place on record its deep appreciation to Ambassador Wijewardane of Sri Lanka for the exemplary manner in which he has been guiding the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee (A/40/29), which he presented a short while ago, sets forth the outcome of our deliberations in the Ad Hoc Committee during the current year and a consensus draft resolution submitted to this body for consideration. I should like to underline the fact that it was possible for the members of the Ad Hoc Committee to achieve that consensus text largely as a result of the patience, understanding and proven diplomatic skill of our Chairman, Ambassador Wijewardane.

The draft resolution before us represents the outcome of long and arduous negotiations, and we hope that this Committee and the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus, which would undoubtedly facilitate our work in the Ad Hoc Committee next year.

My delegation joined the consensus in a spirit of compromise and understanding. At the same time, we should like to express our disappointment at the decision further to postpone the convening of the proposed United Nations Conference at Colombo. As a littoral State of the Indian Ocean, we have consistently attached particular importance to the establishment of that Ocean as a

(Mr. Ali, Bangladesh)

zone of peace and have fully associated ourselves with all initiatives undertaken by the non-aligned members of the Ad Hoc Committee for the early convening of the Colombo Conference.

The littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean have been making persistent efforts for the past decade to bring about a peaceful climate for strengthening peace, security and development in the region. In the past year, as the report indicates, the Ad Hoc Committee achieved some - limited - progress in various areas. We are particularly happy to note that after protracted negotiations and consultations it was possible to set up an open-ended working group to identify, expand and facilitate agreement on substantive issues. Owing to lack of time, the working group could not begin its work in 1985. It is obvious that in the coming year the Committee will have to achieve substantial progress in both substantive and organizational areas, as enumerated in the draft resolution, for the successful convening of the Colombo Conference.

The deteriorating political and security climate in the region has added an urgency to the early convening of the Conference. The continued and intensified military presence of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean area, conceived in the context of bloc confrontation, has further heightened tension in the region. At the same time, armed intervention and the continued presence of foreign troops in the Indian Ocean area have seriously affected the peace, security and stability of the littoral and hinterland States. Such ominous developments in the area pose a great threat to both regional and international peace and security. We should therefore proceed in this matter with greater determination and dedication. My delegation firmly maintains that active participation by the full co-operation among littoral and hinterland States, the major maritime users and the permanent members of the Security Council are essential to the successful convening of the Colombo Conference.

(Mr. Ali, Bangladesh)

Bangladesh firmly believes that the promotion and preservation of peace and security are at the heart of our initiative for the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace so that littoral and hinterland States may fully devote their attention to social and economic development, without any tension or threats. In order to achieve that cherished objective, we should proceed with a comprehensive approach, which must take into account the inter-related regional and extra-regional issues involved. We maintain that the reduction and eventual elimination of the foreign military presence in the area and from the littoral and hinterland States are essential requirements for the establishment of such a zone of peace. But at the same time, we believe that the countries of the area should enter into a regional arrangement to guarantee the security of all participants. My delegation's views on seven important aspects of the question have been set out in document A/AC.159/L.55/Add.5. We remain ready to take part in future deliberations on this issue with objectivity, understanding and an open mind.

My delegation wishes in conclusion to underline that the Ad Hoc Committee has a difficult and arduous task before it for the coming year. We sincerely hope that considering the urgency of the situation all members of the Ad Hoc Committee will demonstrate greater political will and make a determined and renewed effort next year for the early and successful conclusion of our mandated tasks so that the Colombo Conference may be convened at the earliest possible date. My delegation once again pledges its full co-operation to the Chairman and the other members of the Ad Hoc Committee. We trust we shall continue to work together and to focus our full attention on completion of the preparatory work ahead of us.

Mr. SAEED (Pakistan): Pakistan is joining in the consensus on the draft resolution contained in document A/40/29 in the interest of advancing the objective of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region, even though the draft resolution falls far short of what we should have liked to see. We continue as in the past to support the early convening of the proposed Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean, and are convinced that it could prove to be a step in the right direction.

Among the several initiatives undertaken within the United Nations framework for the strengthening of the peace and security of our area, Sri Lanka's proposal for the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region is the most comprehensive and all-encompassing; its value and import are not diminished by the fact that the political realities of the region have excluded its coming to fruition in the near future.

The concept of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region was embodied in embryonic form in the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The idea was further developed through certain principles adopted by the littoral and hinterland States, which met in July 1979.

Soon afterwards the region was shaken by an unprecedented foreign military intervention in a hinterland State, which cast a bleak shadow on the already troubled political and security climate of the region. This development had a vital bearing on the Sri Lankan proposal and brought into sharp relief the fundamental requirements for a zone of peace in the region.

At the present stage, it is essential to evolve a comprehensive set of agreed principles germane to the zone of peace concept. We believe that the adoption of such principles is indeed a worthy goal which we should set for the proposed Colombo Conference.

Pakistan has on previous occasions expressed its views in detail on the principles and issues relating to the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian

(Mr. Saeed, Pakistan)

Ocean region. I would now touch upon one issue, which is central to the concept - namely, the security of the littoral and hinterland States. It has two aspects: first, threats from within the region, which are rooted in the ambitions of powerful regional States; secondly, extra-regional threats arising from foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean region, including the territories of littoral and hinterland States. Large-scale military activity, deployment or build-up in the vicinity of the region also constitutes an extra-regional dimension of threat to the security of the littoral and hinterland States. Substantive work on relevant principles must address all these aspects and define appropriate commitments and obligations on the part of both regional States and extra-regional Powers.

Besides security, there is a need to elaborate principles in respect of geographical limits, foreign military presence, nuclear weapons, peaceful settlement of disputes and use of the Indian Ocean by foreign vessels and aircraft. These topics, together with security, were the subject of a useful debate in the Ad Hoc Committee during the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth sessions, but the debate did not produce the desired results and stopped short of distilling such ideas and principles which could serve as a sound basis for substantive agreements to be worked out at the Colombo Conference. Instead, the subsequent sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee got embroiled in repetitive and sterile discussions on fixing the dates for the proposed Conference, harmonization of views and what substantive preparations must be completed prior to the Conference.

Pakistan's support for the early convening of the Conference is without prejudice to its keen interest in ensuring a successful Conference whenever it takes place. For this purpose, we emphasize prior accomplishment of the necessary substantive work.

(Mr. Saeed, Pakistan)

Another relevant issue which surfaced in the Ad Hoc Committee during the course of this year pertains to participation. We believe that for the success of the Conference, the active participation of all members of the Committee is indispensable. A partially attended Conference is likely to lapse into a propaganda exercise which could hurt the pursuit of the objectives of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region.

Mr. GRUNDMANN (German Democratic Republic): The delegation of the German Democratic Republic would like first to thank Ambassador Wijewardane of Sri Lanka, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, for presenting document A/40/29, which contains the Ad Hoc Committee's report as well as a consensus draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee for adoption by the General Assembly.

My delegation wishes to explain its position on the recommendation in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean contained in part III, paragraph 22.

The Ad Hoc Committee was again this year able to complete its report, with its recommendation and the draft resolution, only during the current session of the General Assembly. A draft resolution introduced by the representative of Sri Lanka on behalf of the non-aligned countries at the 290th meeting of the Committee called for the opening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean in Colombo "at the earliest date in the first half of 1986". The German Democratic Republic supported that draft resolution (A/AC.159/L.68), and once again stressed its strong commitment to the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace at the earliest possible date.

Much to our regret and disappointment, we have to note, however, that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean was again this year induced further to postpone the Colombo Conference. The tactics of delaying the Conference imposed upon the Committee have become discernible once again. In discussions during the

(Mr. Grundmann, German Democratic Republic)

meetings, both formal and informal, of the Ad Hoc Committee in 1985, certain well-known Western countries continued their strategy of hampering the practical preparation of the Conference by insisting on pre-conditions, to keep the Conference in limbo by preventing a concrete opening date being set for the Conference, thus, in the final analysis so far making it impossible to implement the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, in resolution 2832 (XXVI).

The German Democratic Republic shares the concern of many members of this Committee over the dangers inherent in imperialist plans for increasing militarization of the Indian Ocean region. Particularly dangerous are the plans, and even practical steps, to involve the Indian Ocean in efforts to militarize outer space. This entails threats to the security and independence of non-aligned littoral and hinterland States as well as strategic threats of a new dimension to the Soviet Union and the other socialist States in Asia and Europe.

Therefore, the German Democratic Republic welcomes all activities of the countries of the region and other States aimed at scaling down tensions and creating a climate of stability and security. In that context, the demand by the non-aligned States to transform the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace is of the highest topicality.

We believe that the draft resolution now before us contains elements which are important for the future work of the Ad Hoc Committee. It calls for completing preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean during 1986, in order to make possible the opening of the Conference in Colombo at an early date soon thereafter, but not later than 1988.

The task before the Ad Hoc Committee now is to use all the time available in the most constructive manner in order to complete preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean and to stick faithfully to the agreed time limit for the opening of the Conference in Colombo.

(Mr. Grundmann, German Democratic Republic)

At the same time, the draft resolution, unfortunately, contains some elements which practically set pre-conditions and place obstacles in the way of completing the preparation of the Colombo Conference and making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to reaffirm that the German Democratic Republic, together with other States, will do all it can to ensure that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee is carried out. Only recently, in a joint press release on the official visit of the Vice-President of the Republic of India, Ramaswami Venkataraman, to the German Democratic Republic from 5 to 9 November 1985, the two States reiterated their resolve

"to support all steps serving the transformation of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, including the convening of the Conference on the subject proposed by the United Nations".

Before concluding, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, Ambassador Wijewardane, of Sri Lanka, for his tireless efforts, patience, diplomatic skills and perseverance in completing the Committee's report. As a member of the Group of Friends of the Chairman, I should like to add my personal appreciation.

Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen): In its resolution 39/149 the General Assembly requested the Ad Hoc Committee to complete preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean in 1985 in order to enable the opening of the Conference at Colombo at the earliest date in the first half of 1986, to be determined by the Ad Hoc Committee in consultation with the host country.

Needless to say, the decision to hold the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean in the first half of 1986 was, in fact, to postpone the Conference yet another time. It was the result of the obstacles set up by certain Powers, which

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

regarded the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI), as counter to their actual policies and actions in that Ocean, policies that are clearly demonstrated by the increase in their naval forces, the increase and expansion of their bases in the area - in particular the base at Diego Garcia - and by their intention to consolidate their hegemony over the peoples and States of the region and continue the exploitation of the area's natural resources.

This year, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean covered a great portion of its preparatory work on organizational and substantive matters in the hope of fulfilling the General Assembly's renewed mandate on resolution 39/149. Those results were in fact achieved thanks to the tremendous efforts put forth by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement members of the Ad Hoc Committee, which have long been anxiously waiting to see the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in resolution 2832 (XXVI) implemented, particularly in the light of the increase of the dangers in the region owing to the increase of imperialist naval forces and bases there, which has in turn led to an escalation of the arms race in the region counter to the objectives of the aforesaid Declaration. Those efforts by the non-aligned countries have always been supported by the group of socialist States members of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The draft resolution contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which is now before the Committee in document A/40/29 of 5 December 1985, once again reiterates the importance of the Conference on the Indian Ocean as a means to lead to implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. It also calls for the renewal of genuinely constructive efforts through the exercise of the political will necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration. Nevertheless, the draft resolution regrettably

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

once again postpones the opening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, this time for two years, from 1986 until 1988.

I do not need to go into detail as to who is responsible in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee for this unfortunate postponement. Those who are hindering the speedy completion of preparatory work for the conference speak for themselves, and there is no need to elaborate on the subject here, since they can be clearly and easily spotted through a quick review of the Ad Hoc Committee's records. My delegation joined in the consensus in the Ad Hoc Committee in favour of adopting the draft resolution, with the clear position that this further postponement of the Colombo Conference must be the last one with which the Ad Hoc Committee and the General Assembly will be faced. It was made clear that such a postponement was not to constitute a precedent.

It is to be hoped that those countries that have taken a narrow view of the matter and are attempting to use the consensus reached in the Ad Hoc Committee as a pretext for dictating their views to others will realize that our patience is limited and that we, as part of the Indian Ocean region, are deeply concerned at the increasing dangers that their acts and actions in the region pose.

It is to be hoped that we can look forward to the success of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, and in this regard we agree that the full and active participation and co-operation of all the permanent members of the Security Council, the major maritime users and the littoral and hinterland States are essential to achieving that goal.

Finally, I should like to express our great appreciation to the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, whose continued efforts and understanding led to the achievement of the results now before us.

Mr. OKELY (Australia): I am speaking to explain why my delegation will support the adoption by consensus of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, part III of which includes a draft resolution.

The process of achieving a draft resolution capable of attracting consensus this year has been a long and arduous one. I do not, however, see any purpose at all to be served by going into the gory detail of who did what to whom and, least of all, how they did it. Sufficient to say that, with the guidance, patience and above all, perseverance of our Chairman, Ambassador Wijewardane, we all crossed the line, but only slightly in advance of the steward's calling the race off. For that, he has the profound thanks of my delegation and, if I may be so bold, of the entire group of Western countries, which labour so tirelessly to ensure that the Ad Hoc Committee continues to operate and to approach its work with vigour but, above all, with realistic expectations.

In the view of my delegation the draft resolution is one of the best we have had in the long saga of Indian Ocean resolutions. I commend it to all delegations. I should like also to express to you, Mr. Chairman, the appreciation of my delegation for your patience and leniency in allowing us on the Ad Hoc Committee the liberty of passing up immutable deadline after immutable deadline.

As I have said, the draft resolution before the Committee is a realistic text. It provides for preparatory work to be completed in 1986 towards a conference in Colombo at an early date soon thereafter, which would establish a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. It is the sincere hope of my delegation that the political and the security circumstances in the Indian Ocean region will permit not just a conference to be held, but one that successfully achieves our common objective of establishing a zone of peace that is in fact a zone of peace and not just in name.

(Mr. Okely, Australia)

As a final note I should like, on behalf of my colleagues in the group of 11 Western nations and on my own behalf, to express my respect for those with whom I have worked so closely in the past weeks. The hours we spent closeted together must have created at least the odd, uncomplimentary rumour. It is with great pleasure - and, I might add, some relief - that my delegation will associate itself with the adoption by consensus of the report and draft resolution before us.

It was my firm intention to speak at position two or three on the list of speakers today. My own tardiness, regrettably, prevented my doing so. The eighth slot was the earliest possible slot soon thereafter that I was able to secure.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now proceed to take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/40/29, the programme budget implications of which are set out in document A/C.1/40/L.90.

It is my assumption that the Committee wishes to adopt the draft resolution without vote. Unless I hear anything to the contrary, I shall take it that that is indeed the Committee's wish.

The draft resolution was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call upon those members who wish to speak in explanation of their positions after the decision.

Mr. RODRIGO (Sri Lanka): Let me at the outset hasten to assure the Committee that I am in no way usurping the authority of my country's Permanent Representative, Ambassador Wijewardane, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, nor am I staging a coup against him when I speak after him from the seat of Sri Lanka. I am speaking now in Sri Lanka's other capacity in the Ad Hoc Committee, as Co-ordinator of the Non-Aligned Group of Countries, and also as representative of the host country for the proposed Conference on the Indian Ocean. From under both those hats, let me sincerely thank Ambassador Wijewardane for his patience, perseverance

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

and diplomatic skill, which have led us successfully to a consensus on the draft resolution and report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

You, Sir, as a representative of Indonesia, will readily appreciate the complexities involved in reaching consensus, because the concepts of Mushawara and Mufercut are very much a part of traditional Indonesian decision-making and political life. The members of the Ad Hoc Committee have chosen to submit to the Great God Consensus. Each of the groups in the Committee, as well as others, has no doubt had to make sacrifices of various sorts to satisfy that god. It is now an academic question as to who made the greatest sacrifice, and I will not go into that. The Ad Hoc Committee has also maintained the dubious distinction of being perhaps the last committee to come before the First Committee with a report and a recommendation in the form of a draft resolution. No one, least of all the non-aligned countries, has been happy about this ritual, but as we have resisted the temptation to go for a vote and have instead sought to reach agreement on the basis of consensus, decisions at the eleventh hour have been unavoidable.

The Group of Non-Aligned Countries in the Ad Hoc Committee, most of which are regional States of the Indian Ocean which, more than others, acutely feel the sense of tension and instability in the region, have resisted the easy temptation of the vote - and with good reason. Had consensus failed - as it almost did - a massive vote in support of draft resolution A/AC.159/L.68, revised or not, would have been easy to achieve. But such a victory would have been pyrrhic, and we are glad such action was avoided in this case in a rather dramatic eleventh-hour exercise. For the non-aligned countries, having the permanent members of the Security Council - the great Powers, as they are sometimes reverently called - on board along with the major maritime users is essential, even indispensable, to ensure the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI) and as considered at the 1979 meeting of littoral and

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

hinterland States. That 1979 meeting advanced among the regional States certain principles of understanding for the implementation of the Declaration, and extra-regional States that perceive interests in the region have also been involved in that endeavour.

If there has been some hesitation or doubt or reluctance among any of the extra-regional States about participating in the Indian Ocean Conference at Colombo, the non-aligned countries sincerely hope, in terms of operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution we have just adopted, that we can be confident that full and active participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and of the major maritime users, as well as their co-operation with the littoral and hinterland States, is now assured.

In submitting to the sometimes difficult dictates of consensus, the countries members of the Non-Aligned Group have taken account of the concerns of other groups. All groups have worshipped at the alter of consensus. Devotion to consensus does not, of course, end with the adoption of resolutions. In a sense, real devotion to consensus is only proved thereafter, in the implementation of the resolution adopted. All those submitting to consensus accept the resolution in full sincerity and owe a sense of genuine commitment to honour it. The sacrifices, compromises and concessions made by each of us can be redeemed only if the resolution is implemented with determination and with the exertion of the requisite political will. It is with this expectation - or shall I say, with this consolation - that the Group of Non-Aligned Countries has accepted the considerable number of amendments to draft resolution A/AC.159/L.68.

The paragraph that took the longest to negotiate was, of course, operative paragraph 5. The non-aligned position is that the Conference on the Indian Ocean is vital for the creation of the Indian Ocean region as a zone of peace. The political and security climate in the entire region is tense and dangerous. We,

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

the non-aligned States in the Indian Ocean, or in the region surrounding it, are the States directly involved. It is our immediate political and economic environment, our security, our independence and our peace that are at stake. It is the very instability and tension in the region that we deem to be the cause of the urgent convening of a conference. The other view maintained by some other extra-regional States has been that such conditions should abate to enable a conference to take place. The political and security climate is seen by them as an impediment to a conference. We have disagreed. Although the non-aligned countries certainly see the political and security climate as an impediment to peace, we do not wish the convening of the conference blocked or delayed because of that climate. It is, in fact, as I have said, the very gravity of the situation which makes a conference on a high political level so urgent.

It is therefore with considerable disappointment, and even some apprehension, that the non-aligned countries have resigned themselves to another postponement of the conference. This was in order to maintain consensus and to ensure the participation in the conference of all concerned, including the permanent members of the Security Council which maintain a presence in the Indian Ocean. As I said before, operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution is therefore of vital importance to the non-aligned countries and should be considered in close relationship to operative paragraph 4.

It is our expectation that a sincere and genuine effort in accordance with paragraph 4 of the draft resolution will be made to complete preparatory work for the Conference in 1986, without wallowing in fruitless procedural wrangles. Consensus should never be invoked to withhold co-operation. Although the draft resolution does not specify it, in the past year we agreed to set up a working group for the preparatory work. My delegation will be having informal consultations within the non-aligned group, and thereafter with other groups, on

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

how best that working group could operate. What preparatory work for the Conference is involved is clearly indicated in paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, and the Ad Hoc Committee, happily, has already completed the vast bulk of the preparatory work, related, at least, to the draft agenda of the Conference and to the draft rules of procedure.

We understand that, once the preparatory work is completed in 1986, convening the conference in 1987 will not be precluded, as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee himself has stated.

Sri Lanka, as host country, will be ready at the appropriate time to provide all facilities necessary for a Conference in Colombo. We have in fact been making financial and other provisions for a Conference even in 1986. We are gratified that the Commonwealth Heads of Government, meeting recently in the Bahamas, reiterated the need

"to carry forward the preparations in order that the holding of the Conference could be made possible, with the participation of all concerned States, in the first half of 1986". (A/40/817, p. 16)

The Commonwealth, as members know, counts among its members several littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, including non-aligned States and the co-ordinator of the group of Western European and other States, Australia, as well as the United Kingdom and Canada. But perhaps the Heads of Government meeting in the Bahamas could not have foreseen the complexities of the New York negotiating process.

Finally, on behalf of my colleagues in the non-aligned group, let me thank all those involved in the tortuous, sometimes even heated, negotiations for their efforts, particularly Mr. John Okely of the semi-Indian Ocean State of Australia and Mr. Wilhelm Grundmann of the German Democratic Republic; I also thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the tolerance you manifested by giving us time to complete our work.

Mr. NEYCHEV (Bulgaria): Guided by its principled position of support for the effort to convene a Conference on converting the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, the Bulgarian delegation joins in the consensus on the draft resolution adopted without a vote and contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean (A/40/29).

But at the same time I should like to express our deep disappointment at the fact that, this year again, the Ad Hoc Committee was unable to make decisive steps towards reaching agreement on the most important issue: the date for the convening of the Conference at Colombo, Sri Lanka. Moreover, at any sign of progress towards reaching a certain degree of agreement on specific aspects of the preparations for the Conference, one group of countries made numerous efforts to disrupt the completion of our work and to block it, on various pretexts extraneous to the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee. That course of blocking our business-like work and of preventing any specific agreement was clear also during the work of the group of "Friends of the Chairman" to co-ordinate the text of the draft resolution.

Beyond their pretexts and their eloquent-sounding arguments, it cannot be disputed that it was the same group of countries that for so long delayed agreement on the text of a draft resolution. On the excuse of a need for a consensus resolution, that group has tried to impose a tendency to go beyond the framework of the language of the annual draft resolution accepted in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The overall activities of the Ad Hoc Committee this year - particularly its work on the rules of procedure, participation, stages of the Conference, level of representation and other specific Conference issues - demonstrated unequivocally that the lack of political will on the part of one of the geographical group is the sole factor impeding the achievement of mutually acceptable agreement on all those problems, the settlement of all the contentious issues and the attainment of

(Mr. Neychev, Bulgaria)

consent for the convening of the Conference itself. If in the final analysis a consensus draft resolution was achieved that came about as a result of the socialists and non-aligned countries' flexibility and readiness to compromise.

In that connection, the Bulgarian delegation would like to convey its gratitude to all the non-aligned countries which participated most actively in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and, in particular, to the delegations of Sri Lanka, Democratic Yemen, India, Madagascar and others. We should like also to thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Nissanka Wijewardane of Sri Lanka, for his tact and competence in guiding the work of the Committee. Our gratitude goes also to the officials of the Secretariat, in particular to Mr. Zaleski, the interpreters and the translators, for their tireless work in support of the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee.

In conclusion, the Bulgarian delegation would like once again to reaffirm its hope and conviction that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee next year will be concrete, business-like and fruitful, and that all delegations will exhibit the requisite political will so that the Committee may fulfil its responsible task of finalizing all preparations for the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean as early as 1986, which is fully realistic and possible so long as all States display a desire for that outcome.

Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation did not stand in the way of the adoption without a vote of the draft resolution contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean (A/40/29). At the same time, however, we should like to make the following statement.

Yet again this year, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean has been unable to adopt a concrete decision on the convening of a Conference on declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. The work of that body provides a striking example of

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

how we can discern two diametrically opposed approaches to the very broad and complex issue of ensuring safety and security in the Indian Ocean. One of those approaches is taken by the initiators of this idea, the non-aligned countries, and by the socialist States. It is oriented towards implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, which would involve the elimination of military bases, the withdrawal of an immense foreign naval force, and a treaty committing all States to observe the régime governing the zone of peace.

The other approach, taken from the outset by the United States and some of its allies, aims to block the implementation of any practical steps which could stand in the way of the establishment by the United States of political and military control in that region of the world.

One clear example of the constructive approach of the non-aligned countries was the draft resolution they submitted at this year's summer session of the Ad Hoc Committee, which contained the necessary language to hold out genuine hope for convening the international Conference on the Indian Ocean as early as the first half of 1986. The Soviet Union supported all the fundamental elements of the proposal made by the non-aligned countries. We entirely share their concern at attempts to continue to intensify the foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean, and we consider that any further delay in convening the Conference is unwarranted. That position was underscored, inter alia, in the joint Soviet-Indian statement adopted at the conclusion of the friendly official visit to the Soviet Union made in May this year by the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. It was stressed in that statement that

"The parties favour speedy implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, and support the position of the General Assembly that a Conference on the Indian Ocean be convened to that end".

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

The statement reiterates the Soviet Union's firm support for the desire of India and other non-aligned countries to achieve that goal.

The fact is that solution of this problem will brook no delay. There must be an end to actions aimed at involving that extensive region in the arms race. We must strive to prevent the further accumulation of the latest means of waging war, including nuclear weapons, and the expansion of the network of military bases, which amount to turning the Indian Ocean into a future proving ground for dangerous "star wars" plans.

Yet again implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace faced the direct opposition of the so-called group of 11: the group of Western countries members of the Ad Hoc Committee. We cannot fail to note that once more a decision adopted by consensus at the last session of the General Assembly could not be implemented owing to the opposition of those countries. Despite earlier decisions by the General Assembly, the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean has once again been postponed.

We reaffirm again that we shall make every effort to ensure that in 1986, on the basis of the considerable amount of work already accomplished, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean completes its preparations for the Colombo Conference, as provided for in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution we have just adopted.

Because of our wish to ensure progress in action to convert the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, and in an effort not to hamper the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Soviet Union made no objection to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, despite the formulations relating to the convening of the Conference and its timetable, which we consider to be unsatisfactory. At the same time, the Soviet Union, along with other socialist countries, believes that the draft resolution's reference to the year 1988 must by no means preclude the

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

possibility of the convening of the Conference as soon as possible after the conclusion of the preparatory work, that is, in 1987.

I wish to join all those who have paid a deserved tribute to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Wijewardane, who truly demonstrated enormous patience, diplomatic tact and skill in the course of the more than three months of work on the draft resolution just adopted. We hope that this time the draft resolution will be implemented; we take paragraph 5 especially seriously. On behalf of the Soviet Union I affirm that we shall participate fully and actively in the preparations for the convening of the Conference. We look forward once this draft resolution is implemented to being hospitably welcomed at Colombo to a Conference devoted to turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.

I wish to express my agreement with all that was said by the representatives of Madagascar, India and Democratic Yemen, whose statements emphasized a very important idea: whatever the difficulties., we should not inject secondary issues into taking a decision on the conversion of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. Indeed, all those who are concerned about improving the political climate in that region should realize that it is precisely by convening a Conference on the Indian Ocean and by the realization of the idea of turning that vast expanse into a field of peaceful co-operation that we can make the most effective contribution to improving the political climate there, establishing relations of co-operation, and instituting political and military détente.

I wish finally to convey the heartfelt thanks of my delegation to the Secretariat staff members who helped us in performing our very difficult task. Conference staff, interpreters and translators alike did their best to ensure that we had successful discussions at our very lengthy meetings. I also thank the staff of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, who provided excellent assistance, and the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, whose effective work deserves full support and all praise.

Mr. MORRISON (Canada): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, let me join most sincerely with those delegations which this afternoon have thanked you for your extreme patience and very kind understanding with regard to the well known and long-standing practices and procedures of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. I am afraid, Sir, that we shall continue to try you and shall continue to seek your understanding for a bit longer today.

My delegation had not meant initially to make a statement this afternoon, and we had hoped that, upon the adoption of the report by consensus, we should soon be taking leave of the Committee room. However, that was not to be.

In the opinion of my delegation, it is extremely necessary, in view of certain words spoken today, to state a few of what we consider to be facts concerning the true situation of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and perhaps to lend some clarity to some statements which, we think, have not been notable for that much sought-after quality.

We should like to thank the Ambassador of Sri Lanka for his extraordinary patience and perception as he chaired so many formal meetings, informal meetings, gatherings and "friends of the Chairman" congregations over the past year. We have been highly impressed by his outstanding strategic vision and tactical sense, and we hope that his continued exercise of those qualities will achieve certain concrete results in future deliberations of the Committee.

Canada is indeed sincerely committed to the idea of a Conference on the Indian Ocean. We agree most heartily with the sentiments expressed by the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics when he said how much he was looking forward to going to Colombo, and we hope it is not too many days or weeks before we in the Committee have that pleasure.

Yesterday, close to the hour of 2 p.m. it appeared as if we would come to the First Committee with no consensus, with no Ad Hoc Committee, and with no Conference; that we would be faced after 292 meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on

(Mr. Morrison, Canada)

the Indian Ocean with a failure. But in literally the last minutes the two outstanding "sticking points" were resolved in what my delegation took to be a genuine spirit of esteemed good will. My delegation thought yesterday - and it appears wrongly so - that we would come to this meeting today united behind not only the letter of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee, but also the spirit of that report.

It appears that we were mistaken. Today, since the adoption of the resolution, we have been treated to what amounts to a virtual re-run of what happened in the latest group of those 292 meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

Without going into our opinion of the accuracy of many of those statements, I would state the belief of my delegation that the Ad Hoc Committee has accomplished during 292 meetings precious little. Accusations have been hurled today one way and another. Language such as "groups of countries", "certain countries", "certain groups" has been used. If we are to have a full debate here today of the merits of holding a conference on the Indian Ocean, by all means let us do so. Let us follow the example of certain delegations, such as that of the Soviet Union, which has named names. Let us not hide behind euphemisms, and let us not use smokescreens to mask exactly what we mean.

Is the Ad Hoc Committee to go forward or not? Let our record show exactly what has been achieved. Paragraph 6 of the resolution outlines what preparatory work comprises. It is no exaggeration to say that precious few of the items in paragraph 6 have even been debated fully and openly, let alone to say that we have arrived at certain factual decisions and have completed work on some of those items. It is the opinion of my delegation that after 292 meetings, and after many sessions, each year probably costing well over \$1 million, we have achieved nothing of significance.

(Mr. Morrison, Canada)

Perhaps we should turn the clock back to 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon, when we left the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee smiling, shaking hands with one another, convinced that we had done something good. We should freeze that moment in time and reflect upon it; we should reflect upon it from that time yesterday afternoon when we had achieved consensus until the beginning of our first session in 1986. Let us not allow the potential of the consensus we reached yesterday to go unfulfilled.

The Ad Hoc Committee can succeed. A conference can be held, if we begin our sessions in 1986 charged with the enthusiasm with which we left the Ad Hoc Committee room yesterday. My delegation certainly will not dwell on the statements which have been made here today, but will concentrate upon the spirit which was shown by everyone in the Ad Hoc Committee yesterday. It is upon that firm base that my delegation will build in 1986.

CONCLUSION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has concluded consideration of agenda item 66 and all other agenda items allocated to the First Committee.

I now call on the Secretary of the Committee, who has a statement to make.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to bring to the attention of representatives a conference room paper which bears the symbol A/C.1/40/CPR.1, which provides a summary of programme budget implications for the 1986-1987 biennium resulting from draft resolutions adopted by the First Committee during the fortieth session of the General Assembly, and is submitted in accordance with rule 154 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Burundi, Mr. Jean Ngendanganya, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of African States.

Mr. NGENDANGANYA (Burundi) (interpretation from French): In speaking on behalf of the Group of African States at the end of the work of the First Committee, the delegation of Burundi would like to express its heartfelt thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, the other officers of the Committee, the Secretariat and the interpreters for your commendable and helpful contribution which has made it possible for the Committee to carry out within the timetable laid down the work assigned to it by the General Assembly.

The credit is due in particular to you, Sir. With your competence and your unusual qualities as an experienced diplomat and your spirit of compromise, you succeeded in maintaining a climate conducive to work and a spirit of negotiation during our debates.

We also sincerely thank Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, the Secretary of our Committee.

I should be remiss if I did not express appreciation to the delegations represented on this Committee, which, in spite of differences of opinion sometimes on agenda items before us, have shown a spirit of co-operation and have always been open to dialogue and compromise, thus avoiding the stormy meetings that have sometimes characterized the work of the Committee in the past.

That atmosphere of hard work was encouraged particularly by the happy occasion of the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, which made it possible once again for leaders of the entire world to reaffirm their peoples' faith in, and loyalty to, the ideals of the Charter, to condemn the threat of a nuclear holocaust and to reaffirm the right of all peoples to peace and development.

It is essential that their renewed commitment be translated into strengthening the United Nations role in the field of arms limitation and disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security - at this particularly critical juncture, when the survival of mankind is threatened by nuclear disaster, a time when hotbeds of tension throughout the world pose a serious threat to international

(Mr. Ngendanganya, Burundi)

peace and security, when immense financial resources are devoted to the arms race, and when millions of human beings throughout the world are suffering in dire poverty.

We can only hope, therefore, that the disarmament negotiations that were recently resumed on the occasion of the summit meeting between the leaders of the two super-Powers in November will lead to the adoption of effective measures to bring about nuclear disarmament and a lessening of tensions.

Furthermore, bearing in mind the unanimously recognized interdependence of the goals of security, disarmament and development, the strengthening of the work of the United Nations, the highest embodiment of multilateral co-operation, must be reflected in an ever-more active participation by its bodies in all activities involving the survival and well-being of peoples. We venture to hope that the forthcoming conference on the link between disarmament and development to be held at Paris will further strengthen the role of the United Nations in that field.

In keeping, as always, with that constant concern to ensure the security and well-being of mankind, the African countries, together with other countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement, are in favour of an active role by the United Nations in all activities relating to outer space and to the exploitation of the seabed and Antarctica, activities that can contribute to the advancement of science and enrich the civilization of all mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call upon the representative of Turkey, who will speak as Chairman of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. GEZER (Turkey) (interpretation from French): As the First Committee reaches the conclusion of its work for this historic session that marks the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, I should like, on behalf of all the States members of the Group of Asian States, of which my delegation has the honour and privilege to be the Chairman for the month of

(Mr. Gezer, Turkey)

December, to address to you, Sir, our sincerest and warmest congratulations on the successful outcome of the Committee's work and on the excellent way in which you guided it to that goal. Your success is also a tribute to your country, Indonesia, which occupies such an important position in Asia. Thanks to your diplomatic skill and your exceptional qualities of leadership, our Committee has been able to discharge its difficult tasks with the greatest possible effectiveness within the time allotted it and according to the programme we adopted at the outset of our work. Your co-operation with the members of the Committee, your energy and your patience enabled us at this present session to make contributions that may sometimes have differed but that were based, in essence, on a shared desire to find a solution to the most urgent problems confronting the international community.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and our sincere thanks to Mr. Hevia of Cuba and to Mr. Nzengeya of Zaire, who, as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, performed their important duties in a spirit of co-operation and responsibility. The Group of Asian States would also like to congratulate Mr. Souliotis of Greece, the Committee's Rapporteur, for having successfully performed his delicate and difficult task in the most laudable manner. We are also grateful to Mr. Martenson, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and, most specifically, Mr. Kheradi, the Committee Secretary, and to all their colleagues, for their impeccable work and for the co-operation and assistance they have been so constantly prepared to extend to all delegations.

At its present session the First Committee discussed a plethora of items, from disarmament to the strengthening of international security, in the hope that, in keeping with the expectations of the international community, proper solutions might be found for those problems at the soonest possible time. We are convinced that the spirit of understanding you, Mr. Chairman, were able to create to inform

(Mr. Gezer, Turkey)

our work - although it did not lead to consensus on all draft resolutions - is a good augury for the future work of the Committee.

In conclusion, I should like to express our appreciation for the excellent work done by the interpreters and to thank the staff of the Division of Conference Services and the documentation services for their understanding and patience in responding to our requests.

Once again, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Asian Group, for your efforts during this session to ensure the successful outcome of the Committee's work.

The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is the representative of Bulgaria, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. NEYCHEV (Bulgaria): In its capacity as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States for the current month, my delegation has the honour and privilege to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, most cordially on the occasion of the successful conclusion of the First Committee's work.

You, Sir, have been entrusted with the distinguished and responsible task of presiding over one of the most important organs of the General Assembly during the year of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. Thanks to your highly professional approach and experience and to your unflinching efforts to ensure the effectiveness of our work, we have managed to consider in a calm, business-like and constructive atmosphere all the items on our extensive agenda having a direct bearing on the most vital issues of the day in the field of disarmament and international security.

In this year, when we are commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism and militarism in the Second World War and the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the deliberations and draft resolutions adopted

(Mr. Neychev, Bulgaria)

in the First Committee have once again most unequivocally illustrated that for our countries and peoples there is no task more important than the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe and the maintenance of international peace and security. We have emphasized the growing concern over the risk of transforming outer space into a source of a grave military threat, as well as the mounting importance and urgency of taking immediate steps to avert that danger.

During our discussions this year even greater emphasis has been placed on the necessity of making more vigorous efforts and taking concrete actions to eliminate the danger of a nuclear war, to avoid an arms race in outer space, drastically to reduce nuclear weapons, to curb and halt the arms race in all directions, to cut military budgets and to reallocate the resources thus released to socio-economic development. It became evident once again that the only alternative we have for a more stable and safer world is the policy of disarmament, peaceful co-existence, détente and co-operation.

Without trying to evaluate our work, I should like to point out that we attach particular importance to the fact that the majority of the resolutions adopted by the First Committee call for the opening or active continuation of substantive disarmament negotiations with a view to elaborating relevant practical measures in this area and codifying them in concrete and mutually acceptable agreements. This is, no doubt, a positive outcome the significance of which has grown in the light of the recent Soviet-American summit meeting.

We express the hope that all States will display the political will, constructiveness and flexibility necessary for the holding of serious negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and in other bilateral and multilateral forums. The achievement of such results would contribute significantly to the strengthening of world peace and security and to the return of international relations to the mainstream of détente and mutually advantageous co-operation.

(Mr. Neychev, Bulgaria)

In conclusion I should like to convey our gratitude to the Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Carlos Lechuga Hevia of Cuba and Mr. Adeito Nzengeya Bagbeni of Zaire, as well as to the Rapporteur, Mr. Yannis Souliotis of Greece. We extend our gratitude to Mr. Ustinov and Mr. Martenson for their contributions to the work of our Committee. We are also particularly grateful to the officials of the Secretariat, to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Kheradi, and all his colleagues and to the interpreters and translators who through their devotion and hard work have contributed in the best possible way to fulfilment of the complex and responsible tasks before our Committee.

May I through you, Mr. Chairman, convey to all our colleagues my best wishes for personal happiness, further success and a happy new year.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Costa Rica, Ambassador Emilia Castro de Barish, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of Latin American States.

Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): Since Costa Rica holds the chairmanship of the Latin-American Group for the month of December, it is my honour today to address the Committee as the work of the First Committee is drawing to a close at this fortieth anniversary of the United Nations during which the International Year of Peace was proclaimed, a year whose relationship to disarmament is of particular importance.

That is one more reason to feel very gratified as we thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulate you on your diligent and tireless efforts. Our thanks go also to your colleagues on the Bureau and to Mr. Martenson and the officers of the First Committee for the commendable work accomplished during the consideration of all those items that are of crucial importance for the attainment of the objectives of the Charter - in other words, the attainment of disarmament in all its aspects as

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

well as items on international security, which no doubt will open up greater possibilities for peace, to which all in the world Organization and mankind at large so much aspire.

As the Committee is aware, Latin America has very distinguished and experienced representatives in the field of disarmament, and their contribution has been felt during the deliberations not only at this fortieth session of the General Assembly but also at past sessions in the First Committee. I also wish to express thanks to the members of the Secretariat, beginning with Mr. Kheradi, the Secretary of the Committee, and all his colleagues for the efficiency and dedication they have shown in their work, as well as to the interpreters, translators, editors, conference officers and information officers. To each and all, most heartfelt thanks on behalf of the Latin-American Group and my own delegation.

It only remains for me to express to the Chairman and all here present our best wishes for a well deserved rest after the hard work accomplished and our hope that over the holidays and in the new year they will have much happiness, health, prosperity and, above all, peace.

The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is the representative of Italy, Mr. Claudio Bay Rossi, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. BAY ROSSI (Italy) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, at a time when the First Committee is completing its work in the context of the fortieth session of the General Assembly, it is my honour to express to you on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States most sincere congratulations on the excellent way in which you have been guiding our work. I also wish to extend deep gratitude to you for having, through your sense of balance and your flexibility, made it possible for us to complete our deliberations on the many draft resolutions before us.

(Mr. Bay Rossi, Italy)

In this room we have heard that a too-high number of resolutions cannot facilitate the task before us in this Committee, and of course it would be very difficult to contradict that. None the less we can express the hope for a better selection of initiatives in future and therefore a larger number of consensus items.

The general climate has no doubt been better than in the past, Sir, thanks to your competence and sensitivity, from which we hope we have managed to benefit.

The subject of disarmament is a highly delicate one, even though we are all in favour of peace. To recall the feelings of a young Greek poet who is among us, war is a waste of lives, vitality and energy. It is up to the First Committee to do all in its power to put an end to that threat.

Before concluding I should also like to extend my most heartfelt congratulations to the Vice-Chairman, the Rapporteur and the Secretary of our Committee for the way in which they have fulfilled their tasks. We cannot fail to extend our appreciation to the interpreters and to all the Secretariat staff members for their effectiveness and their patience.

The CHAIRMAN: The last speaker is the representative of Yemen, Mr. Abdulla Alsaïdi, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of Arab States.

Mr. ALSAIDI (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. Chairman, it is my privilege to convey to you on behalf of the Arab Group our highest esteem and our gratitude for the constructive role you have played in guiding the proceedings of this Committee. Your election as Chairman of the Committee at this momentous juncture in contemporary human history was commensurate with events. The issues discussed by this Committee are issues of paramount importance, since the survival of humanity and civilization are closely linked to the finding of suitable solutions.

(Mr. Alsaïdi, Yemen)

Mr. Chairman, thanks to your wisdom and poise, you have played a notable role in achieving a convergence of viewpoints. You also contributed successfully to the work of this session against the backdrop of a volatile and strained international situation, with its feverish arms race. We are all well aware that you spared no effort in order that this Committee might adopt resolutions reflecting the desire of the peoples of the world to live on a planet where peace and security prevail.

Allow me also to express the thanks and appreciation of the Arab Group of the positive efforts made by both Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Carlos Lechuga Hevia, of Cuba, and Ambassador Adeito Nzengeya Bagbewi, of Zaire, and the Rapporteur, Mr. Yannis Souliotis, of Greece. I also wish to express our appreciation and thanks for the imaginative and effective role played by the Committee Secretary, Mr. Kheradi, as well as all the members of the Secretariat - the interpreters, translators, document officers and all the others who contributed to the Committee's success.

The CHAIRMAN: I am deeply touched by the generous and friendly sentiments that have been expressed by the representatives who have spoken on behalf of their respective Groups. On behalf of the officers of the Committee and the Secretariat, as well as on my own behalf, I thank them and assure them that those feelings are fully reciprocated.

I know that we have all been subjected to a rather heavy workload and that we have spent many hours in committee rooms for the past few weeks, but I ask representatives' indulgence once more, as I should like to share with them a few observations about our work at this session.

As we commenced our deliberations on disarmament items as well as those related to the question of Antarctica and international security, it seemed

(The Chairman)

particularly auspicious that our work was taking place at a historic moment, the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, created "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". That momentous occasion gave us an opportunity to take a close look at the record of our accomplishments with respect to the important issues that the Committee has dealt with over the past few years.

In today's nuclear age disarmament is a matter of universal concern because of the awesome threat of self-extinction that hangs over all of humanity. As proclaimed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament,

"Mankind is confronted with a choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation". (S-10/2, para. 18)

The large number of items dealing with the various aspects of disarmament which were before the Committee was once again clear testimony to the sense of preoccupation and urgency with which the international community views the unabated arms race. At this session some of the items that the Committee dealt with were new and in a way reflected new developments, while others - in fact, the majority - were recurrent ones, reflecting in part the non-implementation of previous resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly on some of those items.

At the current session the First Committee had before it a record number of draft resolutions dealing with disarmament questions - a total of 74 - as well as one draft decision. It adopted 67 of those proposals, three more than last year, while eight of them were not pressed to a vote by their respective sponsors. Of those, 21 were adopted by consensus, representing a slight increase over the previous year.

(The Chairman)

This year, the Committee began its work against the backdrop of the impending summit meeting between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States. The prospect of improved relations between the two major Powers was instrumental in generating a more constructive atmosphere for the Committee's deliberations. Although the Geneva summit did not fulfil all our expectations, the resumption of a dialogue between the two major Powers at the highest level was indicative of an earnest desire on both sides to enhance the negotiating process, which could indeed contribute to enhancing our common security. It is our sincere hope that this significant event will prove to be a prologue to a more determined and decisive search for early and effective agreements on the halting of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament as well as the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this context, it should be emphasized that the bilateral negotiations should complement and reinforce the quest for disarmament at the multilateral level.

In today's complex and increasingly dangerous and insecure world there is no practical alternative to meaningful international co-operation if there is to be hope for our common future. We have reached the stage where interdependence has become a global reality in the various fields of human endeavour, including the security field. The path towards progress in building mankind's future, a future of peace, justice and common prosperity, rests in productive negotiations, not continued competition in armaments, which only generates greater suspicion and distrust among States and ultimately erodes the very basis of the security in whose name the arms race is carried out.

The Committee adopted three resolutions on international security, one of them without a vote. In their statements on those items delegations focused on the urgent task of strengthening world peace and security, and in that context particularly underlined the vital task of achieving disarmament - first and

(The Chairman)

foremost, nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, many delegations also highlighted the interrelationship between disarmament, security and development, and stressed that substantial progress in the sphere of development was essential to enhance international peace and security.

In the course of the debate some delegations stated that unless we revived the collective security provisions of the Charter and placed greater reliance on them, the United Nations would continue to be deprived of adequate means for the maintenance of peace and security. In that respect, of course, it must be borne in mind that the power and effectiveness of the Organization depends on the support of the Member States.

In taking stock of the situation, if I may be permitted to say so from my vantage point as the Chairman of this body, I should have liked to be in the position of leaving the Committee with an unequivocally positive assessment of the overall outcome of our work. It is true, of course, that the requisite seriousness of purpose and a businesslike approach have characterized our Committee's work. I can only express my deep admiration of, and gratitude for, the commendable manner in which all delegations have worked so arduously to harmonize positions wherever and whenever possible. A clear example of those efforts bearing fruit was the draft resolutions on outer space, where the Committee was once again able to adopt a single draft resolution. On the other hand, despite strenuous and sincere efforts, we were unable to amalgamate the different viewpoints into a single resolution on the question of Antarctica. As a result, the Committee ended up with four draft resolutions on the subject, although one of them was in the end not pressed to a vote. It is my hope that next year we shall try even harder, with a view to enabling the Committee to arrive at the consensus approach again on this issue, which has aroused such great interest on the part of the international community.

(The Chairman)

One cannot escape the reality that our achievements in terms of progress towards the objective of genuine disarmament have not met with the entire range of our expectations. In part, of course, this is due to the complexity of the issues confronting us, but, at the same time, one has to be conscious of the fact that a certain measure of ritual reiteration of positions continues to be an impediment to a more meaningful outcome of our deliberations. It is my belief that, if we are to break away from this rather unproductive pattern, we will need to endeavour strenuously to achieve both a convergence of views and a convergence of purpose among us. For, in the final analysis, we all share one immediate and overriding purpose, and that is our common survival in this nuclear age.

If I may now turn to one further matter, I should like to give you some information with regard to my consultations on a subject I referred to earlier. You will recall that as a result of initiatives taken by my predecessors the Committee has adopted certain procedures that have been conducive to the more efficient and more effective conduct of our work, for example, the useful device of the clustering of draft resolutions at the stage of consideration and action upon them.

Further, you will recall that, with a view to advancing that process, Ambassador Souza e Silva, the Committee's Chairman at the thirty-ninth session, circulated a paper in document A/C.1/39/9 in which, following appropriate consultations, he set out his own ideas and suggestions on the question of a possible rearrangement of the Committee's agenda.

I had occasion to state earlier that, as the incoming Chairman, I felt it was incumbent upon me to pursue my own consultations in order to ascertain the views of delegations concerning this matter. During the course of the session I have in fact carried out quite intensive consultations, first of all among the officers of

(The Chairman)

the Committee, and subsequently with individual delegations and groups of delegations.

If I can derive any conclusion from this final stage of our work, it would appear that, if any concrete measures are to evolve with regard to this issue, further extensive consultations on the subject would be required. This is because of the fact that differences of emphasis and approach on this question continue to prevail.

Hence, as this matter continues to be explored in the future, I would certainly be available to assist the next Chairman in whatever manner he may deem necessary or appropriate. And, if I may venture to say so, I am confident in assuming that the preceding Chairmen of the First Committee would continue to offer the benefit of their own experience in this regard. I would therefore request interested delegations and groups of delegations to continue to address this issue within the framework of appropriate consultations so that, at a future session, the Committee may be able to take such action as it may deem proper.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the members of the Committee who have contributed to the successful conclusion of our work and have, in addition, made my own task quite a pleasant one by displaying a spirit of co-operation and understanding. I wish, in particular, to express my personal thanks to the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, Mr. Adeito Nzengeya Bagbewi and Mr. Carlos Lechuga Hevia, as well as to the Rapporteur, Mr. Yannis Souliotis. Their consistent co-operation and assistance have considerably lightened my own burden and have proved crucial in the effective functioning of the First Committee.

Further, on behalf of the officers of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, I should like to extend my deep gratitude to all the members of the

(The Chairman)

Secretariat, whose dedication and sense of responsibility, under the able guidance of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jan Martenson, and the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, Mr. Viacheslav Ustinov, have greatly facilitated the efficient and smooth functioning of the Committee. We are also indebted in this respect to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Miljan Komatina.

In this connection I should like to pay a special tribute to Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, Secretary of the Committee, for the dedication and meticulous care he has brought to bear in the discharge of his duties that have been an invaluable contribution to the Committee's work. I also wish to express my thanks and gratitude to all of Mr. Kheradi's colleagues in the Secretariat of the First Committee, including Mr. Sattar and Miss Patil.

Our thanks also go to the interpreters, translators, verbatim reporters and press officers, as well as to the conference and document officers and the technical staff members who have worked so hard and so well behind the scenes.

Unless there are those who still wish to speak, I shall now adjourn this meeting. Before doing so, I should like once again to thank all of you, to wish those of you who are returning to your respective capitals or posts a safe journey and to wish all of you happiness and success as we approach the beginning of a new year. It is three minutes before 6 p.m. on 6 December, and the meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.