



Chairman: Mr. Bruce RANKIN (Canada).

**AGENDA ITEM 47**

**United Nations Conference on the Human Environment:**  
report of the Secretary-General (*continued*) (A/8688,  
A/8691, A/8703/Add.1 (Part II), A/8783 and Add.1  
and Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2, A/C.2/277,  
A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1, A/C.2/L.1247)

1. Mr. STAVROPOULOS (Legal Counsel) replied to questions which had been put to him at the previous meeting concerning draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246. In the first place, he pointed out that rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly did indeed apply to all resolutions involving expenditures which were submitted to any committee of the Assembly. It was true that the Second Committee had recently adopted, virtually by a consensus, draft resolution A/C.2/L.1235 without knowing exactly what would be the cost of the Conference-Exposition envisaged therein. However, he understood that the Canadian Government had made a generous offer to be responsible for almost all the expenditure involved, the cost of the Conference to the Organization thus being reduced to a minimum. In view of that, the requirements of the rule might be argued to have been satisfied at least in spirit by the Canadian offer. Nevertheless, in his view, there had still been a departure from the formal requirements of the rule.

2. With regard to the second question which had been put to him, he said that normally the choice of the location of the environment secretariat should be made on the basis of proposals, which could be amended. A different procedure had been adopted in the case of the UNIDO secretariat, but there again there had been a consensus. In the case in question, the Second Committee had before it a proposal to the effect that the environment secretariat should be established at Nairobi. That proposal could now be amended, several times if necessary. The fact that several locations had been proposed at Stockholm could not prevent a country which had offered to be host to the environment secretariat from submitting a draft resolution.

3. Mr. VAN GORKOM (Netherlands) said that draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1 submitted by Kenya raised two issues which were in fact quite distinct: the question of a more equitable geographical distribution of United Nations bodies' secretariats and the location of the environment secretariat. With regard to the second issue, it appeared from draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228, section II, relating to the establishment of an environment secretariat, that the main task of

the latter would be to serve as a focal point for environmental action and co-ordination. Consequently, it should be located as close as possible to the headquarters of the agencies concerned; in other words, either at Geneva or in New York. Moreover, it should remain in close contact with the organs concerned with development, in particular UNCTAD, in order to ensure that the interests of the developing countries were fully taken into account in environmental activities.

4. With regard to the first issue, he thought that some decentralization would indeed be desirable and that some agencies and units should be located in the developing countries, provided, however, that the efficiency of the Organization was not adversely affected. Efficiency in dealing with problems of development and co-operation must in fact be the most important criterion in any decision regarding the location of the secretariat, not merely the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

5. It was true that most of the organizations in the United Nations system were located in Western Europe and North America, with the exception of the headquarters of regional organizations located at Bangkok, Beirut, Addis Ababa and Santiago de Chile. It should be pointed out, however, that under that system it had in fact been possible to create a world-wide network of development co-operation. Before changing the current system in any way, all the administrative, technical and financial implications should be carefully considered. He drew the Committee's attention to a report by the Secretary-General on office accommodation at Headquarters (A/C.5/1458), which indicated the administrative and financial complexities involved in transferring or establishing certain units away from Headquarters. The problem of the geographical distribution of United Nations units was a highly complex one and should be considered by the Fifth Committee. The question should not be linked to that of the location of the environment secretariat. As the United States representative had pointed out, the Second Committee should not in any event take a decision before being apprised of the financial implications of the draft resolution. Moreover, it would be unfair not to consider the other countries which had been suggested as possible sites.

6. In his view, there were three possible courses of action: first, to put draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1 to the vote; that solution was unacceptable to his delegation. Secondly, the Committee or the General Assembly could decide on the location of the environment secretariat by secret ballot, following the procedure which had been used in the

case of UNIDO, and request the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the wider issue of equitable geographical distribution; that solution was perhaps the most sensible and should be adopted if it met with the Committee's approval. Lastly, the Committee could separate the two issues in question, refer the issue of geographical distribution to the Fifth Committee, postpone a decision on the environment secretariat until the twenty-eighth session, and request the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the question of equitable geographical distribution and a comprehensive survey of all the locations proposed for the environment secretariat. That suggestion could certainly not be unacceptable.

7. In view of those considerations, the delegations of the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland wished to propose amendments to draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1. A new preambular paragraph should be inserted after the second preambular paragraph, in which the Assembly would recall its resolution on institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation. The fourth preambular paragraph would be followed by a new paragraph which would read: "Noting in this respect the relevant chapters of the report of the Secretary-General on office accommodation at Headquarters (A/C.5/1458)". Lastly, the fifth preambular paragraph and the operative part of the draft resolution would be replaced by the following text:

*"Recognizing and welcoming the legitimate desire of developing countries to participate more actively and fully in the world-wide activities of the United Nations and, to that effect, to see more units of the United Nations family established in the developing world,*

*"1. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the executive heads of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, to examine in depth the present geographical and regional distribution of secretariat units of the United Nations and its affiliated and subsidiary organizations and to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session on the possibilities of locating certain units in developing countries;*

*"2. Requests the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive survey of all proposed locations for the environment secretariat outside one of the principal offices of the United Nations and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session;*

*"3. Decides pending the study of the Secretary-General referred to in operative paragraph 1 above to postpone a decision on the location of the environment secretariat until its twenty-eighth session."*

8. He pointed out that the sponsors of the amendments had submitted their proposals in all sincerity and out of a desire to serve the interests of all.

9. Mr. ODERO-JOWI (Kenya) thought that the proposals submitted by the Netherlands were inadmissible

since they were not amendments but a new draft resolution.

10. Mr. STAVROPOULOS (Legal Counsel) said that under rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the Netherlands proposal should be considered as a new draft resolution since it in fact completely changed the sense of the original proposal.

11. Mr. McCARTHY (United Kingdom) said that it was difficult for him to judge before having seen the Netherlands text in writing.

12. Mr. KARUNATILLEKE (Sri Lanka) observed that it was too late to submit new draft resolutions.

13. Mr. KITCHEN (United States of America) said he would like to know whether all countries which had offered locations for the environment secretariat would have the right to submit a proposal to the Second Committee.

14. The CHAIRMAN replied that any formal proposal would be considered. Moreover, he would rule on the Netherlands proposal when the text was circulated in writing.

15. Mr. CHANG HSIEN-WU (China) wholeheartedly supported draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1. The disequilibrium in the geographical distribution of United Nations units should be remedied. He requested that the draft resolution should be put to the vote without further delay and he failed to see how the Committee, on the pretext of not being informed of the financial implications, could go against the wishes of the majority, which in the present case were clear.

16. Mr. GRANQVIST (Sweden) stressed that by adopting the Kenyan proposal the Committee would be taking a decision on the basis of political considerations rather than on considerations of efficiency. For its part, Sweden was not prepared to disregard financial and practical considerations. First, with regard to the housing possibilities for members of the environment secretariat, it could probably be assumed that all the locations envisaged, except perhaps New York, fulfilled the necessary conditions. Secondly, the environment secretariat was to be composed only of about 20 professional staff. It would therefore need supporting units, and they existed only in New York and Geneva. Moreover, Geneva possessed common computer services. Thirdly, the environment secretariat should maintain close contacts with the missions of the different countries; in Geneva all the countries were represented and many missions had experts in the economic and social field. In Nairobi, on the other hand, only 22 developing countries had diplomatic missions.

17. Those factors, the financial implications of which could easily be assessed, together with others, had convinced the Swedish delegation that Geneva fulfilled all the necessary conditions. For that reason the Swedish Government had not proposed Stockholm. Since each programme to be undertaken by the environment secretariat would be new by definition, it should hold



daily consultations with the specialized agencies, especially at the outset. That argument also militated in favour of Geneva. After an initial period it would still be possible to review the situation.

18. His delegation agreed that it was time to decentralize the United Nations system to some extent. However, it was impossible to take a decision without being aware of the financial implications and hence the Netherlands proposal was the best solution. The possibility of taking a decision by consensus should be left open.

19. His delegation found it hard to see why the Netherlands proposals could not be considered as amendments. The main idea of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1 was that the location of United Nations bodies should take into account equitable geographical distribution. That idea subsisted in the Netherlands amendments, which merely requested the Secretary-General to make a comprehensive study of the possibilities of locating certain units—not just the environment secretariat—in the developing countries. It would be regrettable if, in the desire to apply a principle rigidly, the efficiency of the secretariat and hence the interests of all States should be sacrificed.

20. Mr. ROUGÉ (France) said that the question required careful study. For its part, the French Government had promised its support to the Principality of Monaco as the site of the environment secretariat. It was an attractive proposal since the Principality was near to the locations of the United Nations agencies which would work closely with the secretariat. The fact that Monaco was French-speaking was also important because the Committee should take into account not only equitable geographical distribution but also equitable linguistic distribution. The only disadvantage of Monaco as compared with Geneva would be that only a few countries had diplomatic missions there. On the other hand, scientific research on the preservation of nature and of the environment had been going on for some time in Monaco and consequently its Government would certainly be ready to support the efforts of the secretariat. The French delegation did not wish to speak on behalf of the Principality but merely to stress that the Second Committee should not take a stand without considering all the possible locations.

21. Secondly, the French delegation supported the principle that the location of United Nations units should be chosen on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. It also supported a certain number of arguments put forward on those lines by the Kenyan delegation both orally and in the note it had sent to missions. Thus, it would be unfair to adopt as a criterion the amount of the contribution of the countries offering sites. Moreover, the jurisdiction of the United Nations covered the entire world and no country could be either favoured or disfavoured and the French delegation felt that the principle of equitable geographical distribution was sufficiently important to be stated, not in the preamble of the draft resolution but in the operative part. However, his delegation could not accept the idea that a single deduction should be drawn from that

general principle, namely, that the environment secretariat should be located at Nairobi. The Netherlands proposal was certainly more balanced.

22. Thirdly, the representative of Kenya had stressed the political considerations which, in his opinion, were the most important. However, even a political decision must take into account all kinds of other factors, particularly economic and financial considerations and the requirements of efficiency. It was unfortunate that the Second Committee, where controversial matters appeared to have been eliminated, had been witnessing in recent days a clash between blocs which took no account of the intrinsic merits of the proposals put forward. The only way to put an end to that situation was to hold a vote by secret ballot which would eliminate any possibility of pressure and manoeuvre and would enable all delegations to accept without bitterness the decision to be taken.

23. Finally, his delegation stressed the importance of the question of financial implications on which it would not dwell since that aspect of the problem had already been fully emphasized.

24. Mr. GERLEIN (Colombia) said that the United Nations was composed of sovereign States and that one of the basic principles of the rules of procedure was that each member of a Committee had one vote. Any proposal for the adoption of a decision by a process other than a vote was contrary to rule 126 of the rules of procedure, for it would not allow sovereign States the right to state their opposition.

25. Mr. LEKONGA (Zaire) said that he had not clearly understood the reply given by the Legal Counsel. At the morning meeting, the question had been raised as to whether the Committee could vote on draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246 in accordance with rule 155 of the rules of procedure. The Legal Counsel had stated that the rule applied to all decisions but he had not made it clear whether the Committee could also take a stand on the financial implications. The Legal Counsel had also pointed out that any delegation could submit amendments. He himself was surprised that the Legal Counsel had been summoned before the Committee merely to tell it things that were obvious to everybody. His delegation reserved the right to speak later about the Netherlands amendment but in the meantime, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1, it wished to clarify the term "developing country" as it appeared in operative paragraph 1. His delegation was not opposed to the use of that expression in the present context since it was currently employed in the United Nations and there were many precedents for it, but it should be pointed out that the official expression to designate Zaire was "under-equipped".

26. The representative of Kenya was perfectly entitled to invoke political reasons in proposing Nairobi as a site. Undoubtedly, if only economic criteria were taken into consideration, the location of the environment secretariat would certainly be New York or Geneva, for the operating costs would be lower in those cities. The sponsors of the draft resolution were well

aware of that elementary truth and therefore Kenya had felt it necessary to mention political considerations. Zaire was itself a large country and, when it had to take a decision on the location of a body, it sought to avoid the risks of congestion by adopting a policy of decentralization. Obviously, by definition, the necessary infrastructure did not yet exist in the "under-equipped" countries but the establishment of a new body would provide an opportunity to create it. He wished to reiterate that, contrary to what the representatives of certain advanced countries might have said, his delegation was perfectly well aware of the economic aspects of the problem and felt that they were just as important as the political criteria.

27. Mr. KARUNATILLEKE (Sri Lanka) was of the opinion that the environment secretariat should be established in a developing country. The decision to be taken on the matter involved not only purely material considerations but also an essential principle of the United Nations on which the entire Organization was based. The installation of the secretariat in a developing country was in conformity with that principle and with the ideals and objectives of the United Nations, and that was why the Government of Sri Lanka supported the choice of Nairobi. The manoeuvres of certain countries were designed to delay the adoption of the draft resolution and were being engaged in by the very countries which for 25 years had been claiming that it was they who demonstrated the strictest observance of United Nations principles. It was high time that those countries assumed a more realistic attitude and tried to adapt themselves to the changes in the world political situation. If the United Nations was to become a truly universal organization, States must stop only pretending to act in accordance with the principles of the Organization and must really try to put them into practice. He wondered why it was the rich and prosperous countries which were opposed to the draft resolution when it was they who were mainly responsible for pollution. The answer was simple: the whole environment strategy as presented in the report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (A/CONF.48/14 and Corr.1) had been elaborated for the purpose of protecting the environment in the industrialized countries. If those countries were really willing to act in accordance with the Stockholm principles, why were they opposed to establishing the environment secretariat at Nairobi and why did they not support the proposal of the Group of 77? There again the answer was that they wanted to be sure that the resources of the Environment Fund would be used for their own interests and that was why they wished to instal the environment secretariat in a big city situated in an industrialized country. It was no secret that they were also opposed to the creation of a housing fund for the developing countries. A study of the results of the vote on that question made it easy to understand that they acted in that way in order to keep for themselves funds which were not intended for them. Some delegations had pointed out that the siting of United Nations bodies was the product of a historical process—a process which was continuing. Even before the United Nations was created, some countries had felt that an effort should be made to decentralize the Or-

ganization so as to prevent it from being subjected to one kind of influence. In the early years of the United Nations, the majority of Members had been developed countries and the Organization had been controlled by the great Powers, which used it to their own advantage. At present, with more than 130 Members, the situation was no longer the same. It had been alleged that the Group of 77 was a political group. That was far from being true, since it had been created for purely economic reasons and political questions played only a secondary role in the Group today. It was easy to say when things did not turn out as one would like them to that that was due to "decisions of a political nature". Such allegations could be easily disposed of: if a country had to bow to its national public opinion, the same applied to the United Nations, which had a duty to heed world public opinion.

28. As to the operating costs of the environment secretariat, it was argued that it would be more economical to establish it at Geneva, New York or Vienna. That argument had no basis in fact, for the cost of living in those cities was higher than in the developing countries and Nairobi in particular. The choice of New York and Geneva as headquarters of United Nations bodies had been purely fortuitous and could be explained by the fact that at the beginning the United Nations had been dominated by the great Powers. Again, the suggestion that Nairobi was not suitable because of poor communications was false: on the contrary, considerable progress had been made in that sphere in the last few years. It had also been mentioned that many countries did not have a diplomatic mission at Nairobi. But that was unimportant, because in any case they would have to have specialized personnel of a kind generally not assigned to diplomatic missions. It was not the first time that arguments of that kind had been put forward. For example, 30 or 40 years before, the colonial Powers had been fond of saying that the small countries they administered were not capable of self-government. However, with accession to independence those countries had shown that they were perfectly able to assume control of their own destiny. The same argument was now being advanced against the environment secretariat being located at Nairobi. In his view, experience alone could prove whether or not a site was appropriate. So far as services were concerned, their quality depended on the persons who furnished them. Even in New York, Secretariat services were far from satisfactory. Although the proposal of Kenya had been presented in July, the Secretariat had not yet furnished precise financial estimates. Consequently, it was fair to ask whether the efficiency of a secretariat really depended on the place in which it was situated. In addition, big cities were experiencing critical ecological problems. The day would come when most of the organizations situated in such cities would have to leave them owing to the increasing deterioration of the environment. The example of New York was edifying. In contrast, some United Nations bodies had long been operating in developing countries and had evoked general satisfaction.

29. Another aspect to be taken into account was the fact that the installation of United Nations bodies in



developed countries had had beneficial effects on the economy of those countries. It was therefore logical that developing countries should also have the opportunity of profiting from advantages which had so far been denied them.

30. With regard to the statement of the Netherlands representative, he expressed the view that the so-called amendments submitted by that representative actually constituted a new draft resolution. Consequently, he could not agree that they were now receivable, since their sponsor had not observed the relevant time-limits.

31. Mr. RUIZ MORALES (Spain) explained that he was taking the floor on the question under discussion for two reasons. First, Spain had offered to be host to the environment secretariat because it had already announced its intention of doing so at Stockholm and, secondly, it was Spain which had proposed, also at Stockholm, the preparation of a report on the proposed sites for the future environment secretariat. He was therefore surprised that Egypt had submitted an amendment on behalf of the Group of 77 in support of Nairobi as the site for the secretariat without taking into account proposals made by sovereign States which had acted in accordance with the procedure worked out at Stockholm. The Legal Counsel had said that there was no procedure applicable to the selection of the site of an organization. Nevertheless, the case of UNIDO constituted a precedent to show that every country must be free to make a choice without having to render accounts to anyone. It appeared that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246 and of the amendment thereto had disregarded those considerations. Consequently, he endorsed the statement of the representative of Colombia emphasizing the importance of the vote and the need to abide by rule 126 of the rules of procedure. He would also point out that the choice should also take into account the principles of neutrality and of equidistance as between developing and developed countries. It would be wrong to rely solely on political or economic arguments, for it was necessary to consider also the purely operational aspects of the matter. The site of the secretariat would have to have all the necessary equipment and services, and diplomatic missions would have to be established in the city concerned. He wished to make it clear that he would maintain the offer of Madrid as a site only if it was decided to establish the secretariat elsewhere than in New York or Geneva. He endorsed the statements of the representatives of the United States, the Netherlands and France and asked that States Members should be given an opportunity to express their opinion freely through a secret ballot, as proposed by the representative of Colombia. He appealed to the representative of Kenya not to press for a vote on his draft resolution. He wished to inform the representative of Kenya and the Group of 77 that if the procedure he was proposing was adopted and if it turned out that there was a majority view on the matter, the Spanish delegation would withdraw the offer of Madrid as a site.

32. Mr. CARIM (Turkey) felt that, while it was necessary to consider the political aspects in the choice of a site, the greatest weight must be given to the economic

and technical characteristics of the offers made by the proposed host countries. In his opinion, the Secretary-General's report (A/8483/Add.1 and Corr.1) did not contain all the information needed and a more detailed study of the matter was necessary. The choice of Nairobi as the site for the environment secretariat would have many advantages and Kenya's offer should be taken up provided that the requisite technical conditions were fulfilled. Draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246 was fairly general in scope, since it proposed locating the secretariat in a developing country. However, it could not be considered hastily because a detailed study should be made of all the technical aspects of the question.

33. His delegation thought that the views expressed by the representative of the Netherlands were very pertinent and in line with the spirit of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246. In fact, the proposals of the Netherlands would help the Committee to place the problem in its proper context. In the circumstances, although he could support the Kenyan proposal, he could only do so after having reviewed the advantages offered by all the locations proposed. He asked other delegations to support the views expressed by the representative of the Netherlands, in order to prepare the ground for the adoption of a formula that would be acceptable to all.

34. Mr. DEBRAH (Ghana) recalled that, when the Stockholm Conference had begun, many developing countries had realized that its principal aim was to solve the problems of the industrialized world. In fact, they had only been invited so as to give the impression that the principle of universality was being respected. Despite that situation, the developing countries were determined to play an active role in the environmental field and their position on the matter before the Committee was not intended to raise Kenya's prestige, but to serve the interests of mankind in general. He had supported the offer of Nairobi because he knew that the infrastructure there, though perhaps not so advanced as elsewhere, was none the less quite adequate. His delegation believed that a secretariat operating with the desired efficiency should be established to implement the Stockholm recommendations. It had supported the proposal to locate the secretariat in Nairobi, not because Nairobi was in a developing country or because Kenya was a member of the Group of 77, but because it felt that the capital of Kenya fulfilled all the required conditions. It had been said that the other offers should be studied in detail. However, some of the advanced countries had known that Kenya was going to make its offer beforehand and had therefore had time to propose alternatives if they had so wished.

35. He was prepared to consider other formulae, but thought that the Committee should avoid postponing a decision which would enable it to settle the matter. He realized the importance of the financial implications and hoped that they would be submitted to the Committee as soon as possible, so that it could take action without further delay.

*Mr. Pataki (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

36. Mr. SANTA CRUZ (Chile) said that he would vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1, out of a sense of solidarity with the developing countries and their aspirations, particularly with regard to the decentralization of United Nations activities.

37. He felt that it would not do credit to the Second Committee to hold a vote by secret ballot on the draft resolution, because such a procedure would imply that delegations did not dare to put into practice what they had publicly endorsed, or that they were willing to yield to certain pressures.

38. In his view, the question of the location of the environment secretariat should be settled quickly, on the understanding that the Committee had to examine all the proposals which might be made. The developing countries had been accused of trying to provoke a confrontation: in fact such a confrontation existed permanently, even when it remained dormant, because a large group of countries felt frustrated by the increasing deterioration of international co-operation and by the fact that, as a result, their established goals were becoming increasingly unattainable. Moreover, they were disappointed in their desire for decentralization of United Nations activities; the establishment of ECLA and other regional offices had been achieved with great difficulty and frequently against the will of some of the major developed countries.

39. While the problem of the human environment was of world importance, it was of particular interest to the advanced countries, and any action taken in the field should not be allowed to result in a downgrading of the importance of development activities. Furthermore, the advanced countries were frequently unaware of the environmental problems of the developing countries. The latter had no desire to provoke a confrontation with the advanced countries, nor to impose a decision upon them; they only wanted to make them more aware of the existence of the developing world.

*Mr. Rankin (Canada) resumed the Chair.*

40. Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria) explained why his delegation had proposed Vienna as a site for the environment secretariat. Firstly, it had wished to give the United Nations the opportunity to choose between several proposals and not to feel bound by tradition or preconceived ideas. Moreover, Vienna had certain advantages because it was centrally situated in Europe; there were already international organizations in Vienna whose activities were related to those of the environment secretariat, namely UNIDO and IAEA; in addition, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, which would give high priority to environmental problems, was to be established in Vienna.

41. His Government was prepared to contribute to the installation costs of the new secretariat. It had not made its proposal to oppose the offer of any other

country but merely in a spirit of hospitality and to give the United Nations a choice of location for the environment secretariat. Furthermore, a vote on a single proposal might give the impression that delegations were voting for or against a certain country, which might give rise to an embarrassing situation in view of the good relations which countries in general, including his own, maintained with Kenya.

42. The Stockholm Conference had proposed the establishment of an environment secretariat on the understanding that it would be essentially a co-ordinating body with a limited staff. Thus there was some doubt as to the advantages in choosing Nairobi as the site for the secretariat. On the other hand, it would be wise to undertake to give Kenya and the developing countries in general priority when the question arose of setting up an entirely new United Nations agency.

43. His delegation supported the proposal of the representative of Spain that a vote be taken on all the proposals made so as to safeguard the Committee's freedom of choice, and would not submit the amendment it had intended to present to the Committee.

44. Mr. LISOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1 and the amendments thereto were connected with the decisions and recommendations of the Stockholm Conference in which his delegation had not taken part and by which it did not consider itself bound in any way. The only document issued by the Secretariat which provided any information on the proposals made at Stockholm regarding the location of the environment secretariat was the report of the Secretary-General which unfortunately did not give a clear idea of the basic decisions taken on the question. His delegation would abstain in the vote on the texts before the Committee and on all the draft resolutions and amendments based on the decision taken at Stockholm.

45. A procedural question had been raised during the discussion regarding the location of the environment secretariat. His delegation had listened with particular sympathy to the arguments advanced by the developing countries, but it believed that it would be wise to allow the Committee to decide on such an important proposal by a secret ballot since that would be the most democratic procedure.

46. He recalled that some delegations had referred to rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly under which the Assembly could not vote on any resolution involving expenditure until it had been informed of the budgetary implications for the Organization. He referred to Annex V of the rules of procedure which contained the conclusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly. After pointing out that those conclusions had been considered and adopted by the General Assembly in 1971, he then read out paragraphs 97 and 98 of the Annex which endorsed rule 155. It was evident from those paragraphs that, if the object was to strengthen United



Nations activities in strict observance of the United Nations Charter and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Second Committee could not under any circumstances put the draft resolution and the corresponding amendments to the vote until the financial implications had been studied by the Secretariat.

47. Mr. YOKOTA (Japan) felt that further consultations were needed before the Second Committee would be able to take a decision on the question before it. He shared the opinion of the Kenyan delegation that, in view of the political, social and economic activities of the United Nations, the developing countries were qualified to accommodate United Nations bodies. However, the point at issue was whether that was the one and only criterion for determining the location of the environment secretariat. In his view, a decision could not be taken until a careful study had been carried out of all the factors which must be considered, including the financial implications, to ensure maximum effectiveness. His delegation supported the amendments submitted by Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden, but felt that if they were not acceptable to the majority, it should be left to the delegations of all the Governments which had offered to accommodate the environment secretariat to take a decision.

48. Mr. CAVAGLIERI (Italy) said that he shared many of the views of the Tunisian representative. He also appreciated the position of the Kenyan delegation and the aspirations of all the developing countries. The establishment of an environment secretariat reflected the decision taken by the Stockholm Conference, where it had been made clear that it was to be a flexible body whose role would be restricted exclusively to co-ordination. A pragmatic solution must therefore be sought, making for as effective a secretariat as possible, while cutting down expenditure to the minimum. It seemed impossible to take a decision without knowing the financial implications of the adoption of the draft resolution under consideration, and any decision ought to be reached by consensus. Accordingly, his delegation supported the view expressed by the Netherlands delegation that a decision on the question should be deferred to the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

49. Mr. McCARTHY (United Kingdom) said that it was unfortunate that the report of the Secretary-General gave no details of the financial implications of the establishment of the environment secretariat. Document A/C.2/L.1232 contained the financial implications of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228, dealing, *inter alia*, with the establishment of the environment secretariat; but it was based on the assumption that the secretariat would be located in Geneva, since no decision had been taken on the matter up to that time. In reply to the Kenyan representative who had accused the United Nations of being guided by political considerations in selecting the location of its offices, he recalled that the choice had frequently been based on accidental or historical reasons and that many international bodies had already been established in Geneva even before the United Nations came into being.

50. His delegation proposed that the environment secretariat should be located in London, which already accommodated a number of specialized organizations, offered excellent communications and had a reasonable cost of living; in addition, London possessed environmental research services and establishments, and had many permanent diplomatic missions. Placing the environment secretariat in London might entail additional expenditure, as compared with Geneva or New York, but the United Kingdom Government was prepared to make a financial contribution to the secretariat to offset the supplementary expenditure attributable to communications with United Nations Headquarters.

51. Turning to the charge by the developing countries that the developed countries were allocating more resources to the environment than to development, he pointed out that the United Kingdom Government's contribution to the Environment Fund was less than 1/500th of the British net official aid contribution, which moreover was increasing. It was obvious that the developing countries were qualified to accommodate some United Nations organs, and his delegation fully understood their feeling. However, in the case of the environment secretariat, it had to be situated close to the specialized countries and others with whose activities it would have to co-ordinate.

52. In the view of his delegation, the Second Committee had a choice of four possibilities: first, in order to reduce expenditure to the minimum, the environment secretariat could be accommodated at United Nations Headquarters in New York; another solution would be for the Kenyan delegation to agree that the text submitted by the Netherlands should be recognized as an amendment and not a new proposal, and to treat it as such; a third solution might be to accept the Spanish suggestion to vote on the various possible sites. In that connexion the Chilean representative had seemed to be under the impression that that would involve a secret ballot. Finally, the last possibility would be to adopt amendments<sup>1</sup> to the draft resolution submitted by Kenya so as to mention in operative paragraph 1 the places listed in the report of the Secretary-General, and to recommend in operative paragraph 2 that a decision should be taken at the twenty-seventh session by a ballot of the General Assembly.

53. To settle the matter by a vote on a draft resolution such as A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1 was a bad method of proceeding and was not acceptable, because it mentioned one place only as the site of the environment secretariat. It was therefore to be hoped that the text would be withdrawn.

54. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) said that since he had last spoken many representatives had informed him of their views and in consequence he wished to propose the following amendments<sup>2</sup> to draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246: in operative paragraph 1 the words "of other United Nations bodies" should be inserted after the word "secretariats" and the phrase "in a developing country" should be replaced by the phrase "in

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently circulated as document A/C.2/L.1250.

<sup>2</sup> Subsequently circulated as document A/C.2/L.1251.

developing countries"; furthermore, operative paragraph 2 should be replaced by the following new paragraph: "Further decides to locate the environment secretariat provisionally in one of the locations listed in paragraph 2 of the Secretary-General's report (A/8783/Add.1 and Corr.1) which have not been withdrawn until the General Assembly takes a final decision on the environment headquarters at its twenty-eighth session".

55. By that amendment, his delegation was endeavouring to separate two different issues which should not be confused. One was a problem of principle, and the other was a practical problem. His delegation had already indicated that, if a vote was taken, it would vote for Nairobi. However, Tunisia would abstain if a secret ballot was held, since it felt that a secret ballot would prevent countries from demonstrating their independence by expressing themselves openly.

56. Mr. ODERO-JOWI (Kenya) said that he wished to comment on some of the points touched on by representatives in their statements. For example, it had been said that draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1 infringed the right of countries to offer to accommodate the secretariat. He objected to that interpretation, since nothing prevented other applicant countries from submitting a draft resolution of their own.

57. The arguments which had been adduced in favour of the choice of Geneva, New York or other capitals of developed countries had already been used in the past, particularly when the location of UNIDO was being decided, and they would be used again in the future. However, the question of the decentralization of United Nations bodies must be dealt with at once, in view of the fact that the technological gap between developing and developed countries was becoming wider, and the situation would be even less favourable to the developing countries in five or 10 years.

58. Some representatives had mentioned the possibility of voting on the various offers. Unfortunately, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly were silent concerning the establishment of new bodies. As the Legal Counsel had explained, the Committee itself must determine the procedure to be followed. In his view, the best solution was to follow the normal procedure of voting on draft resolutions and abiding by the decision of the majority. His delegation hoped that the vote would be taken openly, because what was at issue was the principle of equitable geographical distribution, to which the developing countries were deeply attached.

59. The question of the financial implications also raised a problem. The Secretariat owed the Committee an explanation on the matter, because the Committee had been studying the question of the location of the environment secretariat for several days and in any case the United Nations Secretariat had known for a long time that the item would be on the agenda. Certain unavoidable assumptions arose in view of such inexplicable delay: either the United Nations Sec-

retariat already knew that the environment secretariat would be located in Geneva or New York, in which case there was no point in presenting financial implications, or it knew that no decision would be taken before the twenty-eighth session. When the question of choosing a location for UNIDO had arisen in 1966, the United Nations Secretariat had not been able to engage in detailed consultations but had none the less produced approximate estimates of the financial implications. He wondered why the same thing had not happened in the present case.

60. The problem of co-ordination had been advanced by many delegations as an argument in favour of selecting Geneva or New York. Kenya did not deny that co-ordination was a necessity, quite the contrary. The Administrative Committee on Co-ordination had reached certain conclusions on the matter, in particular that most United Nations bodies had some interest in the environment, that they all had activities connected with the environment in their work programmes, and that in many cases the environment was one of the aspects of development rather than a separate matter. What was more, the activities of United Nations bodies were often based on sectoral projects and it was the co-ordination machinery of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination which ensured an integrated approach. The argument of co-ordination was therefore only a pretext because, to be consistent, even Geneva would be excluded and all the United Nations bodies would have to be brought together in New York.

61. In another approach to the problem, some delegations had stated that it was important to avoid confrontation. He noted with regret that confrontation was inevitable when a minority tried to go against the will of the majority. Some developed countries gave the impression that they were living in the past, in an era when the developing countries were not represented in the United Nations and when all decisions were taken without consulting them. But that time was past and the developing countries were now in a position to express their will. When that will was entirely ignored, confrontation was the inevitable result. Similarly, some speakers had felt that the discussion ought not to be placed on a political level. His delegation, on the contrary, believed that a political approach was valid since it could serve to eliminate certain technical considerations and practical difficulties which made a decision impossible. In any case, the Second Committee was a political body and its decision had to be political.

62. With regard to the Netherlands amendment to draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1, the Kenyan delegation thought that it was in fact a new proposal and hoped that the Chairman would so rule. It was interesting to see that that amendment used the question of principle laid down in the original draft resolution as a pretext for departing from the point at issue, which was the selection of the location of the environment secretariat. Kenya was not opposed to considering the general principle, but felt that the two questions should not be confused.



63. The representative of Sweden, who no doubt thought he could speak for the developing countries, had said that a very small number of them had established diplomatic missions at Nairobi. He pointed out that the developing countries were in a better position to speak on the problem and that at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries held at Georgetown in August 1972 they had, on their own initiative, decided to strengthen their ties.

64. Finally, he reverted to the question of the financial implications and asked for an explanation from the Secretariat.

65. The CHAIRMAN said he shared the opinion just expressed by the representative of Kenya on the question of the financial implications. He had enquired from the Secretariat and it would appear that as a result of a misunderstanding the Secretariat had thought that the Committee wished to have detailed financial implications. The misunderstanding was now cleared up and a statement of financial implications would be distributed to the Committee on the morning of 10 November.

66. He requested the representative of Spain to indicate whether or not he had proposed a vote by secret ballot.

67. Mr. RUIZ MORALES (Spain) replied that he had asked for a vote on the offers which appeared in the Secretary-General's report, and which had not been withdrawn. He had not requested a vote by secret ballot. Furthermore, since his request was a procedural motion, he asked that the Committee should vote on it before proceeding to vote on the draft resolutions.

68. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had decided that the amendments submitted by the Netherlands constituted a new proposal. He announced that the new amendments and the statement of financial implications would be distributed to the Committee on the morning of 10 November.

69. Mr. KITCHEN (United States of America) also regretted that the Secretariat had not been able to issue the financial implications concerning the location of the environment secretariat earlier. However, he rejected the assumptions made by the representative of Kenya to explain that delay.

70. He was surprised that the Secretariat should now state that it would need only four days to calculate the financial implications, when it had previously announced that five weeks would be necessary. He wondered whether the statement of financial implications which would be distributed on 10 November would be in accordance with rule 155 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and he would also like to have an explanation as to why the Secretariat had changed its mind in reducing the time from five weeks to four days.

71. Mr. SADDLER (Office of Financial Services) stated that the Secretary-General always endeavoured to meet all requests for documents. There was no doubt that the financial implications were of considerable importance. Referring to paragraph 6 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/8783/Add.1 and Corr.1), he pointed out that by 14 October some countries had not yet sent in their reply to the questionnaire addressed to them. With regard to draft resolution A/C.2/L.1246/Rev.1, it was correct that under rule 155 the Secretary-General must provide indications on the financial implications. Many references had been made to UNIDO; the Secretary-General had in that connexion sought to exploit the advantages of locating that organization at Vienna. Experience had shown, however, that even more caution should have been exercised. The best way of obtaining the necessary information was an on-the-spot survey. On the basis of the information that was available, the Secretary-General would present the estimate of financial implications as soon as possible and as best as he could.

72. Mr. McCARTHY (United Kingdom) agreed with the representative of Kenya that it was regrettable that the situation should have deteriorated to such an extent. Like the representative of the United States, he was rather concerned to hear that only four days would be needed to perform a task whose original duration had been estimated at approximately 6-8 weeks. He recalled that at Stockholm several countries, including Spain, the Libyan Arab Republic and the United Kingdom, had made concrete offers. The statement of financial implications should deal with each of them, otherwise its value was likely to be considerably reduced. However, was it in fact possible to discharge such a task in four days?

73. The CHAIRMAN said that he would request a statement of the financial implications of the draft resolution submitted by the Netherlands and of the other locations which had been proposed.

74. Mr. GRANQVIST (Sweden) stated that he could not accept the allegation that his delegation had put forward the argument of co-ordination with the sole purpose of preventing the adoption of the draft resolution. He regretted that the representative of Kenya had not quoted subparagraphs 5 (a) and (b) of draft resolution A/C.2/L.1228.

75. Mr. ODERO-JOWI (Kenya) pointed out that he had very clearly said that the Governing Council for Environmental Programmes would be responsible for co-ordination, through its Co-ordinating Board, and that it would maintain contact with other bodies, in particular through the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. He therefore could not see why the new body had to be located in Geneva at all costs, as some delegations insisted.

*The meeting rose at 7.20 p.m.*