



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

## First Committee

**32**<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Friday, 4 November 2022, 3 p.m.

New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Pieris .....(Sri Lanka)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### Agenda items 90 to 108 (continued)

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

**The Chair:** This afternoon the Committee will continue to take action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 90 to 108 by exhausting the list of speakers in explanation of vote after the voting on combined clusters 7 and 1.

I shall now call on those representatives wishing to speak in explanation of vote.

**Mr. Brady (Ireland):** I have asked for the floor to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.25, entitled “Report of the Conference on Disarmament”. Ireland voted against the proposed amendment to operative paragraph 5 by the Russian Federation, which represents a politicized act by Russia designed to erase an already oblique reference to the Conference on Disarmament’s (CD) discussions on Ukraine this year.

Ireland has abstained in the unprecedented voting on this year’s draft resolution as a whole. That reflects the significant concerns we have regarding the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. It is deeply troubling that the CD has been unable to conduct negotiations and fulfil its mandate for more than 25 years.

CD reports during that period have taken a procedural rather than a substantive form. This year

the report of the CD is uniquely of a technical nature, does not address any substantive matter and fails even to reflect the number of meetings that took place in 2022. Similarly, despite Ecuador’s best efforts, the First Committee draft resolution similarly fails to engage with this year’s substantive work or offer a way forward. That is deeply problematic.

Ireland continues to attach great importance to the work of the CD. However, Ireland has abstained as the draft resolution fails to reflect the crisis of inertia that faces the CD. Working methods have delivered deadlock, and the fact is that a series of disarmament treaties have now progressed outside its auspices. The failure of the CD to reach agreement on the expansion of its membership and, on occasion, to exclude States from observing its work undermines multilateralism.

It is also deeply regrettable that the CD is unable to make simple technical amendments to its rules of procedure to reflect the necessity of equality between women and men in participating in its work. We expect more from the Conference on Disarmament and believe that the draft resolution should better reflect the reality of the challenges facing the CD so that the General Assembly can take fully informed decisions regarding the work of that body.

Ireland looks forward to engaging with all Member States and reflecting on the necessary path ahead on how we can reinvigorate the Conference on Disarmament so that it can once again deliver on its mandate.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0601 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

22-74392(E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



**Mr. Sivamohan** (Malaysia): I take the floor to deliver Malaysia's explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.25.

We thank Ecuador for having submitted this text concerning the report of the Conference on Disarmament, an important body in the global disarmament machinery, of which Malaysia is a member.

My delegation regrets the fact that although the resolution on this subject has traditionally been adopted by the First Committee without a vote, that was not the case during the present session. Against a backdrop of heightened geopolitical tension, the wider United Nations membership was faced with multiple proposals relating to operative paragraph 5, which concomitantly presented complexities with regard to the overall text.

Malaysia abstained in the voting on the proposed amendment to operative paragraph 5 and would have similarly abstained on other related amendments had they not been withdrawn. We also abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 5 itself.

Although the Conference on Disarmament is often described as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, it has, with rare exceptions, been afflicted by institutional deadlock over its programme of work since the conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in 1996. That must be redressed if the Conference is to live up to its role.

Let us ensure that today's voting exercise does not signal further erosion of the credibility and integrity of the Conference on Disarmament. We call on the relevant parties to engage in dialogue with a view to ensuring the revitalization of the Conference and the effective discharge of its mandate.

**Mr. Guerra** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to deliver an explanation of vote in relation to the amendment, on which we abstained, to draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.47, entitled "Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

While Argentina has supported the importance of that future instrument as a contribution both to disarmament and to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we are concerned at the fact that the proposal was not made during the informal consultations for discussion on the draft resolution. We are also concerned that the proposed wording could affect or

condition the beginning of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as set out in operative paragraph 1.

**The Chair:** We have heard from the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting on cluster 7, "Disarmament machinery", and cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons". The Committee has thus concluded action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under the agenda items allocated to it.

### Programme of work

**The Chair:** Our last order of business is to adopt the draft provisional programme of work and timetable of the First Committee for 2023, as contained in document A/C.1/77/CRP.5/Rev.2, which was distributed to all delegations. As delegations are aware, that programme of work and timetable is considered under item 124, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly".

Delegations will recall that at its 10th meeting, on 13 October, the Committee held a debate on its working methods and programme planning under agenda item 124, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", and item 139, "Programme planning". That meeting took place in response to the General Assembly mandate to consider working methods and to provide recommendations in the absence of conclusions by the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the disarmament subprogramme. I have since submitted a summary of the discussions to the Chair of the Fifth Committee and shared that summary with delegations.

I should now like to draw the attention of the Committee to the draft programme of work for 2023, which members have before them and which is based on the practice of the Committee in previous years. The programme of work comprises one organizational meeting, which will take place on Thursday, 28 September 2023: eight meetings for the general debate, 13 meetings for the thematic discussion segment — slightly higher than previous years based on our experience this year — and six meetings for the action phase. A meeting on the working methods of the Committee and programme planning is also scheduled.

I would like to remind all delegations that the First Committee shares its conference facilities and other resources with the Fourth Committee. Consequently, the draft provisional programme of the First Committee for 2023, which we are now considering, has been prepared

in consultation with the secretariat of the Fourth Committee. The two Committees will continue to coordinate their work and maintain a sequential pattern of conducting their meetings in order to maximize shared resources. The provisional programme of work under consideration will, of course, be finalized and issued in its final form before the First Committee starts its substantive work at its next session.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the draft provisional programme of work and timetable of the First Committee for 2023, as contained in document A/C.1/77/CRP.5/Rev.2?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** I shall now call on the representative of the Russian Federation, who has requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes.

**Mr. Shevchenko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are compelled to exercise our right of reply following the groundless, confrontational allegations levied at the Russian Federation by a number of delegations today.

During meetings of the First Committee, we have been compelled to exercise the right of reply on numerous occasions to respond to inappropriate attacks on the Russian Federation, including in the context of the situation in Ukraine. Each time we had a great deal to say on the substance. On numerous occasions we have opposed attempts to politicize our discussion aimed at leading us astray, away from the drafts under consideration in the First Committee.

Today yet again we have heard such allegations within the context of our discussions on draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.25, entitled "Report of the Conference on Disarmament". We have already submitted our detailed comments on our position, as Western States are behaving underhandedly in order to break the consensus on the draft. It is obvious that that might have deleterious consequences for the stability and holistic nature of the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

The elements flagrantly violating the Conference's rules of procedure that the Western countries did their best to introduce into the draft resolution dealt a significant blow to the very foundations and tenets of

the Conference. Given the alarmist, non-constructive position taken by those countries, it would appear that, for them, the CD has long ceased to be a body where we can discuss the pressing issues related to arms control and disarmament.

In violation of the mandate of the Conference, Western countries are using it to settle political scores and introduce their irrelevant preferences into this forum, which should be focused on disarmament. If that trend continues, we may face a further aggravation of the contradictions in this forum and the loss of the Conference's integrity, as well as its further decline. The blame for this will lie with those delegations that have been fuelling this dangerous trend for many years. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the actions being taken by these States are deliberate and form part of an overarching strategy by the collective West — one aimed at creating unacceptable conditions for States when they begin to negotiate multilateral documents by introducing wording therein that they know in advance is unacceptable to some, which leaves States no choice but to block the text or break the consensus on it.

However, the subversive efforts of these States are not taking place in isolation. Their irresponsible behaviour — which the Western delegations like so much to talk about — is obvious to all.

**The Chair:** The Committee has now concluded its consideration of the last item on its agenda.

This year the Committee finished its work in exactly five weeks, after having to convene four additional plenary meetings, including two meetings on Diwali. As members are aware, with the increased number of draft resolutions and decisions this year and related votes as well as the high level of participation during all phases of the work of the Committee this session, after the coronavirus disease pandemic, additional meetings could not be avoided. The Committee, however, progressed efficiently to conclude its work in a timely manner.

During the session, 148 delegations made statements within the general debate segment, while an impressive 365 interventions were made during the thematic discussion segment. For the 32 meetings of the Committee, delegations exercised the right of reply at least 134 times, not counting second interventions. During the action phase, the Committee adopted 74 draft resolutions and decisions, one of which was

withdrawn, 47 of which were adopted by recorded vote with 85 separate votes requested. In total, the Committee voted 128 times, and 28 draft proposals were adopted without a vote.

Before I adjourn this meeting and close the main part of the seventy-seventh session of the First Committee, I give the floor to those delegations that may wish to make final comments at this time.

**Mr. Syrymbet** (Kazakhstan): I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, for having successfully fulfilled your important mandate in the main part of this session. My delegation echoes the sentiments of all in acknowledging your very able stewardship of this session of the First Committee. Let me also express my appreciation for the work of all the members of the Bureau, the Rapporteur and, of course, the Secretary, for their willingness to shoulder that immense responsibility on our behalf. I wish all of them every success in their important undertakings.

**Mr. Elhomosany** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Mr. Chair, and all members of the Bureau for your able stewardship of the proceedings of the First Committee during the current session. I also express my appreciation for the efforts of the Secretariat throughout the work of the Committee.

Despite the hopes that we attach to disarmament machinery, including the First Committee, in facing current international challenges, we cannot deny the impact of the ongoing international tensions on the work of the Committee, as it is moving away from the consensus approach of previous years in many resolutions and in the requests made for a vote thereon. That, unfortunately, reflects an international polarization, which we are currently witnessing, as well as declining consensus among Member States.

In that situation, Egypt stresses its continued adherence to the principles that we have consistently reiterated for years and even decades regarding nuclear disarmament, particularly in terms of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In that context, we appreciate the strong support given to the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (A/C.1/77/L.1) and that on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East (A/C.1/77/L.2).

Most delegations emphasized this year once again the need to convene a conference on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, despite some attempts to undermine that objective by claiming that such a conference contravenes the guidelines of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons or by claiming that there are disagreements among the countries of the region regarding the means of establishing such a zone, in addition to claiming that the action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the right path to convening that conference.

In fact, all those claims aim at indefinitely perpetuating the status quo in the region without any serious consideration given to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which was and remains an integral part of the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We can respond to those claims by stressing that the Review Conference that adopted that resolution was convened under the auspices of the United Nations, that the resolution was adopted by consensus and based on the free will of all its members and that there are no disagreements among the countries of the region. Only one State refuses to engage in those efforts, a State that other States Members of the United Nations refrain from even naming.

If the 2010 action plan was the right way to go, why has a general conference not been held since 2012? Needless to say, the success of the first two sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East is very evident. That success refutes any such claims in that regard. There are no restrictions on the participation of any country. That is the reality. Anyone denying it will be denying reality. We look forward to the convening of the third session of the Conference from 14 to 18 November under the presidency of the sisterly Lebanese Republic.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank you once again, Mr. Chair, for all your efforts in wisely managing the work of the First Committee and to wish you every success.

**Ms. Narayanan** (India): Please accept warm wishes and congratulations from the delegation of India to you, Mr. Chair, and your team and for your stellar leadership and guidance of the work of the First Committee this year. We also wish to thank the Bureau and the secretariat for their hard work.

**Mr. Li Song** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the Bureau on your smooth leadership of the First Committee, which enabled us to conclude our work on time.

Everyone knows that this session of the First Committee is being held in the midst of the most difficult and complex international situation and environment since the cold war. During the meetings of the First Committee in the general debate and the thematic debate and on the various draft resolutions, there were spirited discussions on various topics, and serious work was done on the draft resolutions. Although we have different positions, different desires and different opinions on various topics, I believe that our work in the First Committee is conducted in an earnest, responsible and professional way, which reflects the fact that the membership of the United Nations attaches great importance to the multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation machinery within the United Nations framework and represented by the First Committee. It also made clear the prospects for the multilateral machinery at the United Nations, and we are very confident about those prospects.

I should like to take this opportunity to express to you, Mr. Chair, the Bureau and the Secretariat as well as the interpreters, translators and all other teams supporting the work of the First Committee our sincere gratitude for their work. China also expects the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and other multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms of the United Nations to join others in making further efforts to conduct serious work to advance the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

**Mr. Soares Damico** (Brazil): I am sorry to delay your statement, Mr. Chair, which we are anxiously awaiting.

I wish to associate my delegation with the comments made by the speakers that preceded me in taking the floor to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on

the way you have conducted our work under the most difficult circumstances and the way in which you have borne with us during five weeks and 32 meetings, always with a word of wisdom and in a gentlemanly fashion that made us feel privileged to work under your guidance. My congratulations go also to the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat for their assistance and dedication to our work.

### Statement by the Chair

**The Chair:** Permit me now to make some final remarks as Chair.

Since its inception, the First Committee has played a critical role in the collective efforts of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and international security. This year the Committee has, I believe, fulfilled its mandate and lived up to its time-honoured reputation and to the expectations held among delegations. True to its tradition, the Committee proved its importance and relevance as the primary multilateral forum to address disarmament issues.

This year the First Committee met in particularly challenging times. The world is confronted with multiple armed conflicts and natural disasters, which seriously threaten the lives and health of millions of people around the world. The international order has been shaken. We have had several regional conflicts, the likes of which we had not seen since the end of the cold war. Heightened tensions between large States have already eroded international cooperation in the area of disarmament and international security, causing turbulence in the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

In the face of such daunting challenges, I am pleased to observe that this body has demonstrated its relevance in the past five weeks. The Committee has engaged and made significant progress in deliberations in addressing today's most pressing security issues, from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, space security and conventional weapons to cybersecurity. New initiatives and proposals were put forward and closely examined. Different views were expressed and debated. The Committee then took action on 74 proposals affirming the existing mandate, amending them and establishing new ones. Those decisions have laid down a new direction in our cooperation and provided fresh impetus to our collective action in

tackling the most pressing challenges to international peace and security.

At just over 77 years since the founding of the Organization, we, as Members of the United Nations, appear to be facing perhaps a loss of authority, as we are seen to be increasingly bickering in what is described as a dialogue of the deaf while internecine conflicts rage all around us. That is a fact. Along with the erosion of the great Powers, together they point to a mismatch between today's challenges and our capacity to address them. We have created for ourselves a world, unfortunately, that is in disarray. The well-established rules are at a breaking point, and the role of the United Nations as the keeper of the international order may appear to be marginal at best. Our ability to promote global security is also at a low ebb.

However, I believe that we humans have the capacity to exploit that crisis to our advantage. I believe that the United Nations has the capacity to shape international law practice and norms in an impactful manner. It is pertinent, therefore, to remind ourselves of what a past Secretary-General said when he observed that he would define conflict prevention as action to prevent disputes from arising, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of conflicts as they occur. That formula is relevant in our work even today. We need to constantly remind ourselves of those fundamentals. The geopolitical and socioeconomic conditions of the world today differ from the ones our predecessors faced as much as the changed global security agenda. The global security agenda has not only widened but also deepened and is premised upon the theory of securitization.

The primary security concern that world leaders had was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which nonetheless has brought us great misery twice in our recent history, and with a third at the brink. Is that what we want? Surely not. We no doubt are diplomats, but we must remember that we are first men and women of peace. Is that not true? We need one another, but by virtue of our inherent nature, we therefore owe it to ourselves and to those who trust in us to ensure that the world is at peace.

My plea to all representatives is that we reignite the torch of peace and renew the spark of life by pledging today that when we return to the First Committee, we can proudly say that the discourse of the last few weeks

was well worth the effort, as the world is now a safer place for all of us.

I thank my predecessor, Ambassador Magzhan Ilyassov of Kazakhstan, and his adviser, Zhangeldy Syrymbet, for their excellent preparatory work. Before I was elected Chair of the Committee, they had already laid down a solid foundation for this year's session. I am gratified that the Committee did not have to waste time on procedural issues when we launched our substantive work.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that the members of the Bureau provided crucial support and excellent advice to me in guiding the work of the Committee and fulfilling my responsibilities as Chair. I therefore wish to express my appreciation for their contribution to the three Vice-Chairs, Szilvia Balazs of Hungary, Daniel Röethlin of Austria and Marcelo Zambrana Torrelío of Bolivia, as well as the Rapporteur, Nazim Khaldi of Algeria.

On behalf of the Committee, I also would like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Ade Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative and her team, who is with us here; and in particular Tom Kono and Katherine Prizeman for their support for the work of the Committee.

I wish to express my deep appreciation for the exceptional work of the Secretary of the Committee, Sonia Elliott. She and her team in the secretariat of the First Committee — Alexander, Katya, Dino, Gerard, Victor and Jeffery — provided superlative support for the Committee's work. I thank them all for such a great contribution and for the reassurance given me in the last five weeks.

My gratitude also goes to all those who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to facilitate the Committee's work. Let me express my profound gratitude to the conference officers, the interpreters, the record-keepers, the press officers, the document officers and the sound technicians.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all members of the Committee for their serious participation, cooperation, understanding and flexibility. I would not have been able to perform my duties as Chair without their support and cooperation, for which I am truly grateful. I am deeply indebted to them for their efforts and hard work, which have

enabled the Committee to not only fulfil its mandate but also make this year's session a truly productive one. It was a great honour for me to preside over the work of the First Committee. I will leave members with the words of a one-time Secretary-General:

“[d]isarmament cannot await a world free of war, nuclear proliferation or terrorism. Progress on non-proliferation cannot await the elimination of the last nuclear weapon. Advancing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy cannot be held hostage to either disarmament or non-proliferation.”

That is the urgency of the problem that is in our hands, and I am confident that the Committee will

address this issue in the coming year effectively and will return to tell us that the world is now a safer place to live in. I thank members for their patience.

The main part of the seventy-seventh session of the First Committee is thus concluded. The Committee will reconvene sometime next year to, among other things, elect its Chair and other members of the Bureau for the seventy-eighth session.

Let me conclude my remarks by wishing all those who are leaving New York a safe trip back home.

*The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.*