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First Committee

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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Gonzalez (Chile)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 (continued)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As representatives were informed at the meeting on Friday morning, this morning the Committee will take decisions on the draft resolutions listed in Secretariat Informal Paper No. 7. I should mention that draft resolutions A/C.1/54/L.9 and L.18 have been withdrawn. That means that the Committee will be considering L.7/Rev.1, L.8/Rev.1, L.12/Rev.1, L.23 and L.41 in cluster 1; from cluster 2, draft resolutions L.2 and L.42/Rev.1; and from cluster 6, draft resolution L.21.

I now call on those delegations wishing to introduce revised draft resolutions, if any.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the pleasure of introducing draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.12/Rev.1, entitled "Missiles". This revised text of the draft resolution reflects the results of consultations we had the privilege of carrying out with different delegations in recent days.

The main change is concentrated on the earlier suggestion regarding the creation of a panel of governmental experts to study the issue of missiles in all its aspects. Some delegations from different groupings, while acknowledging the merit of such a suggestion which would allow a comprehensive study on missiles within the United Nations, were of the view that it would be more appropriate for the United Nations to initiate such a study next year. It was, moreover, indicated that for the first-year decision of

the General Assembly on this particular item it would be advisable for the Secretary-General first to seek the views of Member States.

Accordingly, in order to facilitate a smooth decision on this draft, my delegation tried to accommodate those views in the revised draft resolution. With those changes, our findings in the consultations demonstrate very good support for this draft, and we did not hear any objection. We hope, therefore, that this revised draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The Committee will now turn to the draft resolutions in cluster 1. I call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements on draft resolutions contained in the cluster.

Mr. Al-Anbaki (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes to comment on draft resolutions A/C.1/54/L.7/Rev.1 and L.8/Rev.1.

My delegation wishes to stress the importance of the two draft resolutions under consideration in the context of the maintenance of international and regional peace and security and that of nuclear disarmament. Numerous resolutions adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States on these subjects have reaffirmed the primary importance accorded to the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in our region. Various resolutions have reaffirmed the following principles.

First, ensuring security and stability in the Middle East necessitates the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction by turning the Middle East region into a zone

free from nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and biological weapons, in accordance with paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Secondly, the fact that the Israeli nuclear programme remains outside the non-proliferation regime, and the fact that Israel continues to refuse to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or to place its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency constitute a threat to Arab national security. They detract from the credibility and universality of the NPT. The consolidation of the fait accompli by compelling all the States of the region, with the sole exception of Israel, to adhere to the non-proliferation regime constitutes a grave and unacceptable imbalance that threatens the security and stability of the region and cannot be accepted.

Thirdly, the Security Council, in view of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, is called upon to ensure the universal implementation of all the provisions pertaining to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons without any double standards. It must take the necessary steps to achieve that objective in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The Council is called upon also to provide effective and comprehensive security assurances for the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

My delegation would also like to point out in particular the call in the fifth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, which calls for the prohibition of military attacks on nuclear facilities. Both the precedent established by Israel in 1981 by attacking fully safeguarded Iraqi nuclear facilities, and the fact that this precedent has gone unpunished, must compel the international community to seriously consider the elaboration of a binding international convention prohibiting such attacks.

Lastly, my delegation expresses its reservations on the paragraphs which refer to the political settlement process in the Middle East. We deem these paragraphs to be serving the objectives of the occupiers.

Mr. Al-Ahmed (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The possession of nuclear weapons and the existence of such weapons is a cause of deep concern for peoples and nations

because they constitute a hurtful threat to people and to the whole of mankind, and to the survival of civilization.

Aware of the gravity and of the dangers posed by these weapons, the international community has accorded them top priority in its disarmament efforts, towards their control, limitation and elimination. This is done through the adoption by the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the disarmament machinery, of a number of resolutions relevant to this subject. They all call for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world. This is a step in the right direction, towards the ultimate elimination of all these weapons.

In this context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has firmly and consistently held to its principled position which supports all efforts aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons in various parts of the world, and in particular in the Middle East region. My country yearns to see that region as a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, without exception, and foremost among which of course are nuclear weapons.

Proceeding from this premise, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls upon the only State in the region, namely Israel, which has not yet acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to take the necessary practical and urgent steps to adhere to that Treaty in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. All its nuclear activities and facilities must be placed under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency in order for the Middle East region to be turned into a zone free from nuclear weapons, and also for the establishment of an international community where security and stability prevail and where all peoples peacefully coexist for the good of all humanity.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): There being no other speakers wishing to make general statements, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.7/Rev.1. I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Ogunbanwo (Nigeria): My delegation is aware of the global guidelines laid down by the General Assembly on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Those guidelines have been emphasized again through the 1999 session of the Disarmament Commission. We would especially like to cite aspects of the guidelines which state that the extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis

of arrangements freely arrived at, especially in regions of tension such as the Middle East, represents a significant contribution to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Bearing in mind those guidelines, the General Assembly has been actively engaged in finding ways of establishing a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone. We have noted that all General Assembly resolutions on this subject have been adopted by consensus, and what remains now is how to implement them. My delegation has high hopes that the revived Middle East peace process will have a positive and catalytic political impact on the efforts to implement Assembly resolutions on the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone.

When the States of the Middle East are ready to implement the General Assembly resolution on the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone, they will find that there are lessons to be learned from the way their brothers and sisters from Africa successfully concluded the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba, whose members include certain States in the Middle East.

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in [Spanish?]*): As in past years my delegation is associating itself with the consensus on the draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, L.7/Rev. 1. Ecuador completely supports and encourages this process.

Nonetheless, on this occasion my delegation wishes to express its surprise, to say the least, at the elimination of the twelfth preambular paragraph from the text originally submitted by the delegation of Egypt on 25 October in document A/C.1/54/L.7, which reads:

"Taking note of the report of the Disarmament Commission at its 1999 substantive session, and welcoming the Principles and Guidelines contained therein on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned".

This reference constitutes a fact. It reflects a reality. It represents a consensus achieved with political will and effort by the international community. We believe that it is relevant to the text and therefore needed to be an essential part of this draft resolution. We do not understand how a matter of consensus, arrived at so recently, is being withdrawn from this fundamental resolution simply because a delegation that negotiated and agreed to that consensus no longer agrees to it.

The importance of having the text of a draft resolution submitted again year after year is based on the need to update its contents to new circumstances and to strengthen its substance with the achievements made by the international community, precisely in order to facilitate the attainment of the priority objectives of universal disarmament. A resolution that does not in this way reflect the commitments undertaken regarding future action in relevant fields inevitably begins a period of weakening and jeopardizes credibility at a time when consensus is arrived at.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call now on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.7/Rev.1, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Egypt at the Committee's 24th meeting, on 5 November.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The sponsors of draft resolution L.7/Rev.1 have expressed the wish that it be adopted without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.7/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call upon those representatives who wish to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Soufan (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Lebanon is happy to join the consensus of States in supporting the proposal calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Today, more than two decades after the first General Assembly resolution on this subject, we would like to reaffirm our support for it, hoping that the resolution will constitute a qualitative step towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East on the basis of United Nations resolutions and the principles on which they are based, including placing nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime.

Our support today for draft resolution L.7/Rev.1 emanates from two considerations. First, Lebanon is a Member that abides by the Non-Proliferation Treaty and this resolution today is an extension of that Treaty. Secondly, Lebanon knew years of war which ravaged its land and hurt its people, and was an arena for the testing of various conventional destructive weapons. Today Lebanon enjoys

internal peace and reaps its rewards and is keen to save the region and its peoples from the scourge of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear destruction which spare neither the aggressor nor the victim. We say that fully convinced of the need to activate the peace negotiations in the Middle East in order to reach a comprehensive and just peace in the region based on Security Council resolutions and the Madrid process framework and the principle of land for peace, because a real, credible peace is the main bastion of security, and not qualitative and quantitative nuclear armament and military supremacy.

Mr. Becher (Israel): Israel joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.7/Rev.1, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", as it has done for the past 19 years, notwithstanding some substantive reservations regarding the modalities of the draft resolution.

Israel believes in the eventual establishment of a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Such a zone should also be free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as ballistic missiles. As has been recognized by the international community, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone should be based on arrangements freely arrived at by all the States of the region concerned. Israel believes that such a zone can be established only through direct negotiation between States of the region after they recognize each other and have established full, peaceful relations between them. It cannot be established other than by the parties themselves, nor can it be established in a situation where some of the States maintain that they are in a state of war with each other and refuse in principle to maintain peaceful relations.

In this context it should be recalled that in the Middle East, unlike other regions in the world where a nuclear-weapon-free zone has been established, there is a continuing threat against the very existence of one State in the region, Israel. This has a critical impact on the region's ability to establish such a zone.

A consensus is defined as a process of making a decision by general and comprehensive agreement, assuming that this process has achieved general and comprehensive agreement through prior contacts, talks and negotiations. Any attempts to make changes unilaterally undermine this principle. Egypt's attempt this year to propose an amendment to the draft resolution without Israel's prior consent clearly contradicts the basic spirit of consensus. It is not a matter of intransigence, but rather a question of being taken for granted on such an issue known

to be sensitive to both sides. The consensus we have maintained over the years symbolizes the delicate compromise that all sides have managed to live with. Israel itself has considered possible changes to the resolution but on reflection has preferred to keep the present consensus text despite its shortcomings, rather than open a Pandora's box that might not be so easily closed.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.8/Rev.1. I now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Grey (United States): Since the inception of this draft resolution the United States has opposed the text now entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". We continue to consider it inappropriate to single out for criticism one State for its failure to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty at a time when the international community should be encouraging all the parties to the reinvigorated peace process to keep up the good work. It is particularly disturbing that one of the parties is instead, once again, singled out for criticism. My delegation will oppose this draft resolution and encourages other Members of the United Nations to consider these arguments carefully and not support it either.

Mr. Al-Hariri (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like only to draw the attention of the Secretariat to a mistake at the bottom of the page in the Arabic version. Where it states that it is "On behalf of States Members", in Arabic there should be no definite article.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The necessary corrections will be made.

Mr. Becher (Israel): We are again facing a vote on the draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" which is discriminatory, unjustified and a politically motivated draft resolution.

No other United Nations Member State, including those who for their sovereign national security reasons found it impossible to become parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has ever been subject to so much repeated invective and to so many condemnatory resolutions. Singling out the Middle East region and Israel is politically counter-productive in any process of confidence-building measures in the region and in the peace process.

The presentation of the draft resolution this year ignores many relevant facts, factors and ongoing processes that should have brought about the decision to drop this draft resolution once and for all.

We are all aware of the existing risks of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet the sponsors of this draft resolution have not only preferred to ignore those countries that pose a real threat to regional and global security but have also embraced some of those proliferators in the Middle East as co-sponsors of this draft resolution. While the real proliferators in the Middle East are well known to the Committee, this draft resolution focuses entirely on one single country that has never threatened its neighbours or abrogated its obligations under any disarmament treaty or convention to which it is a signatory or a party.

The draft resolution neglects the fact that the real risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East emanates from countries which, despite being parties to the NPT, are engaged in ongoing efforts to acquire nuclear military capabilities. For example the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and IAEA Action Team reports have proven time and time again that the obligations under the NPT undertaken by Iraq were intentionally and maliciously trampled on. Furthermore, some sponsoring States from the region have used weapons of mass destruction against their neighbours and even against their own people. It is almost surrealistic to see those States voting in favour of this draft resolution.

The peace process in the Middle East has gained momentum in the past few months. Still, it is a fragile process at present and requires a lot of nurturing and support from the world community. The present draft resolution does exactly the opposite. Supporting it helps to maintain the atmosphere of hostility and animosity and to hinder the peace process. I call upon all delegations which support the peace process to reconsider their traditional stance on this matter and to vote against this draft resolution.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call now on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.8/Rev.1, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Egypt on behalf of States Members of

the United Nations that are members of the League of Arab States, at the Committee's 23rd meeting, on 4 November.

The Committee will now proceed to vote on draft resolution L.8/Rev.1.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Barbados, Canada, Iceland, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.8/Rev.1 was adopted by 125 votes to 3, with 11 abstentions.

[Subsequently the delegations of Benin, Guyana and Suriname informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Al-Hariri (Syrian Arab Republic): Syria was one of the first countries in the Middle East to support turning the Middle East into a zone free of nuclear weapons, and it continues that support. It works seriously to eliminate nuclear weapons because of their destructive effects which threaten international peace and security in the region and in all parts of the world.

On more than one occasion we have referred to the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East which is supported by Israel, which tries to impose its expansionist policies on the region based on this. My country is concerned with this problem because of its effects on the Middle East, and therefore we strongly support the draft resolution. However, my country would have liked the tenth preambular paragraph not to have included a reference to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Therefore my country considers itself not to be a party to that paragraph because we are not a party to that Treaty.

Ms. Kunadi (India): The Indian delegation abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. We wish to clarify our position on the sixth preambular paragraph, which makes a reference to universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, on which our position is well known and remains unchanged. Besides, we believe that the focus of this resolution should necessarily be limited to the region it purports to address.

India considers that the multifarious issues in this draft resolution have received widespread consideration in the international community and hopes that progress will be enabled on the issues involved in the coming years through positive contributions by the concerned States of the region.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Does any other delegation wish to explain its vote or position? I see none.

I have an announcement to make. At the request of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.12/Rev.1 will be the last to be considered of those draft resolutions on which action must be taken today.

The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.23. Does any delegation wish to explain its position or vote before a decision is taken?

Mr. Al-Hariri (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes to explain its vote on draft resolution L.23. My country has noted, since the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, with its future obligations on all Member States, that the legitimate concern of non-nuclear-weapon States cannot be ignored. They are the majority of countries of the world, and they have no guarantees against the threat or use of nuclear weapons. They are not allowed to have advanced technology in all the forms that are indispensable to their advanced development.

What happened at the Review and Extension Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is still evidence that the nuclear-weapon States are not willing to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. The important and just observations made on the text agree on the fact that it does not include any obligation on the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their arsenals in a reasonable period of time. Nor does the text refer to the illegitimacy of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It does not emphasize the need to achieve a universal ban on nuclear proliferation in all its forms and aspects. These observations also agree that the text is limited to banning nuclear explosions, without including laboratory tests and tests for the production of new types of such weapons. They also agree that the system of on-site verification and inspection may open the door to arbitrary misuse for political purposes of data collected by national monitoring systems.

What is more surprising in the text is that it allows signatory States to take actions against non-signatory States, which might include measures to be taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII and the violation of the sovereign right of States to accede to the Treaty.

Syria is still considering these obvious loopholes with great concern, especially as the inclusion of the name of Israel in the list of the Middle East and South Asia has not happened before and establishes a precedent. The situation in the Middle East resulting from Israel having nuclear weapons, its attempt to develop these armaments and its refusal to join the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards systems is impeding attempts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and is subjecting the region to the threats of nuclear weapons from Israel — without any international reaction.

For all these reasons, Syria cannot support the draft resolution and will abstain in the voting on it.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As there are no other speakers wishing to speak before the vote, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.23, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty", was introduced by the representative of Mexico at the Committee's 16th meeting, on 26 October. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution itself and in document A/C.1/54/INF/2. In addition, the following countries have become sponsors: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Haiti, Malaysia, Myanmar, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the United States of America.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and

Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:
none

Abstaining:

Bhutan, India, Mauritius, Syrian Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.23 was adopted by 137 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

[Subsequently the delegations of Benin and Suriname informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation is happy to see that draft resolution L.23, on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, has been passed by an overwhelming majority. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as an active advocate of the CTBT, firmly believes that any efforts to promote this Treaty should enjoy the consensus of the overwhelming majority of the international community.

In the interval between the last session of the General Assembly and the current session, there occurred a negative development with regard to the CTBT, namely its rejection by the United States Senate. Alarmed by the possible negative consequences of this decision on the process of ratifying the CTBT, the international community has considered this event a setback for the process of nuclear non-proliferation in general and this Treaty in particular.

In an attempt to address concern about the ramifications of this event for the process of ratification by other countries, particularly those whose ratification is required for the CTBT to enter into force, my delegation, through consultation with the sponsors of draft resolution L.23, expressed its preference that this concern be reflected in the present draft. At the same time we expected that the international community's desire for the earliest possible reconsideration of that decision against ratifying the CTBT would be embraced in the draft resolution. By proposing those amendments, the Islamic Republic of Iran intended to prevent any misinterpretation to the effect that the international community is not sensitive towards the Treaty.

However, through our consultations we found that the sponsors were giving some consideration to amending draft

resolution L.23. Realizing the need for the broadest possible support for this draft resolution, which deals with the important issue of a comprehensive test ban, my delegation decided not to introduce any amendment. Despite the recent negative development with regard to the CTBT the Islamic Republic of Iran still believes that the international community should spare no efforts to overcome this challenge, make every possible effort to uphold the integrity of the CTBT and work to prepare the ground for the CTBT to enter into force.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): My delegation is taking this opportunity to explain its vote on the draft resolution on the CTBT after the vote.

Pakistan has been an ardent supporter of the CTBT in the Conference on Disarmament and at the United Nations. In spite of its support, Pakistan could not sign the Treaty for reasons that are well known. The fears which prevented us from signing the Treaty came true last May following the Indian nuclear tests. In the post-nuclear-test situation in South Asia, Pakistan has already declared a unilateral moratorium on further nuclear tests. However, we have made it abundantly clear that our signature of the CTBT will take place in conditions free from coercion and the removal of all unjustified sanctions imposed against my country.

My delegation's interpretation of the words "as soon as possible" in operative paragraph 1 is that they mean the removal of all sanctions against my country. Based on this interpretation my delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41.

I now call on those delegations wishing to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Coutts (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Chilean delegation wishes to make an explanation of vote before the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41, on nuclear disarmament.

In connection with the subject of nuclear disarmament, which is the central issue in the draft resolution before us now, Chile wants to express its strongest rejection of any policy that would try to keep us under a nuclear threat. There is a permanent double standard here, especially on the part of States that rhetorically advocate the reduction of nuclear weapons while they do not even apply the

recommendations of the International Court of Justice regarding the need to undertake, in good faith, negotiations on this subject. Likewise, the clear failure of discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on this subject, strategic doctrines that maintain the nuclear option, and States that want to join the arms race in this respect, are all factors that paint a picture of growing instability and deepen distrust.

Chile, like the rest of the Latin American countries, is part of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and is a signatory of the MERCOSUR zone of peace. Our calling is for peace and not preparation for possible nuclear confrontation. Quite the contrary, what we want to do is to further structure a climate characterized by confidence, disarmament and arms limitation, and hence it is incomprehensible to us that in respect of nuclear disarmament, which is something that affects all humankind, it has been impossible to achieve substantive agreement, especially bearing in mind the fact that the majority of countries the world over are virtually unarmed.

In spite of our frustration in this respect we are, nonetheless, prepared to give a new opportunity to the Conference on Disarmament so that in the coming year it may undertake substantive negotiations on this subject. We believe that there is still time, although we do want to make it clear that this may be the last time that we will abstain in the voting on the draft resolution, much of which is not convincing to us. In this context, our loyalty to the position maintained by some countries of the Non-Aligned Movement is also a factor which influences us to maintain that decision for now. We wish to point out that any diplomatic steps that take place next year to strengthen mechanisms on possible nuclear disarmament will be given our firmest, most active and most united participation.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have taken the floor just to register that my delegation wishes to join the sponsors of draft resolution L.41, on "nuclear disarmament".

Mr. Al-Ahmed (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to join the list of sponsors of this draft resolution.

Mr. Al-Ghanim (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would also like to join the list of sponsors.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", was introduced by the representative of Myanmar at the Committee's 19th meeting, on 29 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are contained in the draft resolution itself and in document A/C.1/54/INF/2.

In this connection, according to a clarification by the representative of Myanmar to the Secretariat dated 29 October 1999, Malta is not a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41. In addition, the following countries have become sponsors: Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The Committee will now proceed to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey,

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chile, Georgia, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41 was adopted by 90 votes to 40, with 17 abstentions.

[Subsequently the delegation of Benin informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41, on nuclear disarmament. We support the main thrust and objectives of this draft resolution. China shares with the vast number of countries of the Non-Aligned Movement many identical views on the issue of nuclear disarmament. We all maintain that, like chemical and biological weapons, nuclear weapons should be completely prohibited so that the world would soon be free of nuclear weapons. We all oppose the policy of nuclear deterrence based on first use of nuclear weapons. We all favour an early conclusion of a legally binding international instrument to provide assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

China is of the view that specific steps and timetables for nuclear disarmament should be laid down by the international community within the framework of the negotiations on a convention on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. States possessing the largest and most advanced nuclear arsenals still have a long way to go on the road towards nuclear disarmament. They should continue to carry out their special obligations on nuclear disarmament.

I wish to point out here that under current international circumstances the conditions necessary for implementation of some of the specific nuclear disarmament measures as proposed by the draft resolution do not yet exist. At the present stage, what is essential for promoting nuclear disarmament and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is to ensure that the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty is not weakened or repudiated and that development and deployment of anti-missile systems which are detrimental to strategic stability are checked.

The nuclear deterrence policy of first use of nuclear weapons must be discarded and concrete steps must be taken to ensure adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to ensure the maintenance of international peace and common security. Any attempts to gain one's own absolute security at the cost of the security of other countries must meet strong opposition from the international community.

Since the above priority tasks have not been fully reflected in draft resolution L.41, we hope these deficiencies can be addressed in the future.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I have already referred in my explanation of vote on previous occasions to Japan's fervent desire that the use of nuclear weapons should not be repeated and its firm belief that continuous efforts should be made towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

My delegation is aware of important changes in this year's draft resolution, and it is ready to appreciate the efforts on the part of the sponsors. One important change is that the element of a specific framework of time for the elimination of nuclear weapons, which my delegation thought not very realistic, has disappeared from operative paragraph 1.

Another feature is that this draft resolution does refer to the importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its review process, expressing that the Treaty is the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. However, we still see some elements that make it impossible for my delegation to vote in favour of the draft resolution as a whole. For example, concerning operative paragraph 5, on

"a legally binding multilateral agreement committing States to the process of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons",

we consider it unrealistic to ask the nuclear-weapon States to make such a legally binding commitment as a first step in the process of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation has reservations about operative paragraph 12, which concerns an international conference on nuclear disarmament because we think it not very appropriate, as it might cause duplication with the ongoing and prospective process.

Japan has been advocating that a steady step-by-step approach towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear

weapons is the most effective way to make progress in nuclear disarmament, and therefore we will continue our endeavour to bridge the gap between the different views on how to proceed with nuclear disarmament and nurture common understanding among States for the shared course of realizing a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): That concludes the adoption of the draft resolutions for consideration this morning under cluster 1.

The Committee will now turn to draft resolutions in cluster 4. I now call on those delegations wishing to make general statements on draft resolutions in cluster 4.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): It is my honour, on behalf of the European Union (EU), to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1, on small arms. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country member of the European Economic Area (EEA), Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

The EU member States support draft resolution L.42/Rev.1 on small arms, introduced by Japan. The European Union attaches great importance to the fight against the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. Indeed, in December 1998 the EU adopted a Joint Action for a comprehensive approach on the small arms issue, covering both preventive as well as reactive measures to tackle the small arms problem. The EU is also undertaking specific actions through financial and technical assistance to programmes and projects related to small arms problems, notably in Albania, and we are preparing specific action also in Cambodia. The EU is committed to considering small arms as part of its development policy. Responsibility in arms transfer policies is essential in addressing the small arms problem. In this regard, the EU adopted a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports in June 1998.

This year the small arms draft resolution is of particular importance as it will launch the preparatory work for the 2001 conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. This conference is a major focus in the EU approach to small arms. The preparations for the draft resolution were marked by the shared wish that the General Assembly would achieve a consensus on this draft resolution. Against this background

it was our hope that the seventh and eighth preambular paragraphs would be introduced in a form that enjoyed consensus. That would have enabled many countries committed to the 2001 process to co-sponsor the draft resolution. We regret that this did not happen. The EU is of the view that the draft resolution lays a good basis for the preparatory work, building upon the relevant recommendations contained in the report of the United Nations Group of Experts.

The EU outlined an ambitious plan for the Conference in its reply, submitted by Germany on 27 April 1999, to the United Nations Secretary-General with regard to resolution 52/38 J. A mere "talking house" would not suffice. The conference must respond to the urgent need to find effective responses to problems caused by the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. The 2001 conference should bring about effective guidelines or instruments and a programme of action encompassing all areas of possible international cooperation in small arms.

The EU has underlined its strong support for a wide and comprehensive scope for the conference. It should address both supply-side and demand-side considerations, and attention should be given both to illicit and licit aspects of the issue. The conference should not duplicate work currently undertaken in Vienna in the context of negotiations on the Firearms Protocol.

The EU hopes that the preparatory process will focus on substantive preparations for the conference. Besides the preparatory committee sessions, a whole range of related events — meetings, seminars and workshops — hosted by individual countries will make a valuable contribution to the process. Also, several EU member States will host events to support the 2001 process. These events will facilitate detailed consideration of specific subject matters, as well as the integration of regional approaches in the process.

The European Union hopes that the preparatory committee will organize itself swiftly during the one-week session in February-March next year. While we regret that it was not possible to agree that the 2001 conference would be held in Geneva, we hope that all States will find this acceptable and that agreement on the venue can be confirmed at the first preparatory committee session. The EU hopes that agreement can also be reached on organizing three preparatory committee sessions, and that one of them will be held in Geneva.

As many non-governmental organizations participate closely in seeking solutions to small arms problems, the EU

finds it of particular importance that they be involved in the preparatory process from the beginning. In international efforts to deal with small arms problems, Governments and non-governmental organizations should work hand in hand in a transparent manner. The United Nations plays a key role in international efforts to address small arms problems. We are looking forward to working closely with other delegations to ensure that the process leading to the 2001 conference proves successful.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to make a clarification. That statement should have been made before the vote, since it did refer to a specific item. I urge all delegations to follow the established procedures, which are for the benefit of us all. I am not saying anything about the substance of the statement, but I do believe that we need to be as clear as possible regarding the procedures.

I have other requests for general statements, but so that I do not have to interrupt statements I should like here to remind other delegations that have asked to make general statements that they really should make general statements. If delegations want to refer to a single draft resolution, please do that before the vote, when there will be an opportunity to speak. No one will be denied an opportunity to make a statement.

Mr. Zahran (Egypt): For the benefit of representatives around the room, this is a general statement on landmines and not a statement on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.2. The problem of landmines in Egypt dates back to the 1940s, when the warring Allied and Axis forces of the Second World War left behind 17.5 million landmines and unexploded ordnances in the area of El Alamein. That number has subsequently risen to 22.7 million, as a result of the wars with Israel.

Obstacles impeding our efforts to clear these mine areas include the enormous size of the area in which the mines are planted, the metal oxidization of the trigger mechanisms of the mines, rendering them more dangerous, and the movement of sands which has increased the depth at which these mines are buried, thus hampering normal detection and removal procedures. These factors have in turn caused a great number of casualties in the period from 1945 to 1998.

Although Egypt did not take part in planting these mines, the Egyptian armed forces successfully removed 11 million landmines between 1981 and 1991 without any foreign assistance. This pioneering operation took a heavy toll on our limited capabilities and thus diverted much-

needed resources from other sectors. There is therefore a dire need for extensive assistance, including special demining equipment.

Although the Egyptian Government supports the humanitarian objectives which inspired the conception and led to the conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Egypt continues to see this Convention as failing to address some of its pressing concerns. These concerns can be summarized in the following: the Convention did not lay down a binding legal framework recognizing the responsibility of States that deployed landmines in the territory of other States and hence did not provide commitments by those States to remove those mines. As a result the Convention did not adequately deal with, or provide for assurances in, the field of assistance in landmine clearance.

The Convention did not take into consideration the legitimate right of States for self-defence as provided for by Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and the legitimate right to protect national security by all means, including the use of anti-personnel landmines under certain conditions and demarcations, especially in the absence of other financially feasible alternatives. This matter is of cardinal importance for countries with extended and otherwise difficult-to-protect borders prone to terrorist infiltration, arms and explosives smuggling, banditry, drug trafficking, etc.

Although some addressed the issue of a so-called viable alternative to anti-personnel landmines, no operational measures or conceivable solution was presented to help address the concern of States which exhibited readiness to make progress towards a total prohibition but needed at the same time a substitute method to protect their own national security. As time went by these demands went unheeded. It also became evident that the means to produce and use such a viable alternative were restricted to only a few States, thereby creating an asymmetry in the security requirements among regional States. Those who needed this new and advanced form of high technology necessary for self-defence had to fall victim to a new form of dependency by relying heavily on expensive imports from limited producers. National security imperatives were left behind, ignored and left dangling.

Despite all this, Egypt chose never to boycott but actively to participate and attended as an observer all meetings associated with the Ottawa process. Egyptian delegations comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence participated

in all preparatory meetings, such as those held in Budapest, Geneva, Vienna and Oslo. In Brussels Egypt introduced a non-paper which underscored concerns previously highlighted. In all such meetings the Egyptian delegation spoke, distributed pamphlets and special written and photographic material explaining the magnitude of the problem and our earnest requests for international recognition and support. We spoke very vehemently of our efforts and contacts with the Office of the former Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, with the Department for Peacekeeping Operations and with those directly concerned, and of our earnest requests addressed to parties to shoulder their responsibilities.

As mentioned earlier, the enormous number of landmines planted in such vast areas of my country has altered the demographic structure by hindering economic development. The problem is more acute than ever today, as the population of Egypt grows and the need for expansion outside the narrow Nile Valley and the surrounding affected areas becomes a vital necessity. Almost 95 per cent of the population of Egypt lives in the Nile Valley, which constitutes less than 6 per cent of the total land area of Egypt. Egypt historically is the gift of the Nile and cannot continue to harbour more than 60 million individuals around the thin Nile Valley. At present the Government of Egypt is following a reach-out policy to new, uncharted areas, implementing land reclamations, socio-economic development and agricultural projects.

I will have an explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.2 after the vote.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The Committee will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.2. I call on those representatives who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Ahipeaud-Guebo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire has asked for the floor simply to become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.2.

Mr. Amar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like to give the position of my country on draft resolution L.2. Morocco would like to reiterate its position on the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines.

While it fully joins in the humanitarian principle of that Convention, as the presence of Morocco as an observer at all the meetings linked to that Convention proves, Morocco cannot for the time being sign the Convention for

reasons linked to security in the southern provinces of the Kingdom and its territorial integrity. Consequently, Morocco will abstain in the vote on draft resolution L.2.

Mr. Chang Man-soon (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to explain its vote on draft resolution L.2 before the vote. The Republic of Korea fully shares the humanitarian concerns of the international community about human suffering and tragic casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. In this vein we have participated in several United Nations-led mine-action programmes. However, this draft resolution, in particular operative paragraph 1, fails to address the security aspects of the landmine issue. Anti-personnel landmines still remain a legitimate minimum national security requirement for some countries throughout the world. The Republic of Korea cannot adhere to the Ottawa Convention at this moment due to the unique security situation we currently face, while we have acceded to and implemented all treaties and conventions related to weapons of mass destruction.

We also wish to stress the fact that the Republic of Korea uses anti-personnel landmines in a specifically limited area of the demilitarized zone. For this reason anti-personnel landmines pose few safety concerns for civilians in our country, unlike the situation in other areas.

In this vein my Government declared an indefinite extension of its moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines in 1997 and since then has implemented it faithfully. Furthermore, we plan to accede to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its amended Protocol II in the very near future. We support the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the treaty banning the transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Therefore my delegation will abstain in the vote on this draft resolution.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country has always attached importance and given due attention to legitimate humanitarian concerns associated with the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines. Cuba strongly supports the prohibition of any irresponsible, indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines. We are against the use of mines in internal conflicts, the use of undetectable mines and, in general terms, any use of mines that can affect the civilian population. That is why we are a party to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and participated very actively in the development of amended Protocol II on mines, booby traps and other devices.

Nonetheless, we believe that the final objective of the negotiations on anti-personnel mines has always been to ensure maximum protection of the civilian population and not to limit the military capacity of States to preserve their own sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with the right of self-defence recognized in the Charter of the United Nations.

The lack of recognition of legitimate security interests in draft resolution L.2 is precisely the basic reason why Cuba will abstain in the vote. For Cuba, which for four decades has been completely subject to a policy of hostility and aggression by the country with the greatest military, economic and political might in the world, to renounce this type of weapon for the defence of its own sovereignty and territorial integrity constitutes a challenge which we cannot afford to share. At the same time, though, we will continue completely to support every effort to maintain a necessary balance between humanitarian and national security issues, to eliminate the terrible effects on the civilian populations in many countries caused by the irresponsible, indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call now on the Secretary of the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.2.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.2, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", was introduced by the representative of Mozambique at the Committee's 15th meeting, on 25 October. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in the draft resolution itself and in document A/C.1/54/INF/2. In addition, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Bulgaria, Saint Lucia and Turkmenistan.

In connection with this draft resolution, the programme budget implications are contained in a note by the Secretariat in document A/C.1/54/L.55.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia,

Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

none

Abstaining:

Azerbaijan, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Latvia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Myanmar, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, United States of America, Viet Nam

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.2 was adopted by 122 votes to none, with 19 abstentions.

[Subsequently the delegation of Jordan informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour, and the delegation of Kazakhstan had intended to abstain.]

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call now on those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Palihakkara (Sri Lanka): My Government is not yet in a position to accede to the Ottawa Convention for reasons we explained in our statement at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. My delegation would like to reiterate that statement. With that explanation of vote, Sri Lanka was able to vote in favour of the draft resolution on account of its humanitarian objectives.

Mr. Zahran (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since 1981 Egypt has participated in all conferences, including conferences on certain conventional weapons and the Ottawa process, which aim at dealing with the problem of landmines. Therefore Egypt has joined a number of States in order to mitigate and reduce the humanitarian suffering resulting from the use of anti-personnel landmines.

Egypt recognizes the importance of the urgent prevention of any further humanitarian tragedies caused by these mines, and at another level, the Government of Egypt is also aware that every State has the right to protect its territorial integrity and national security. Every State has a legitimate right to receive the necessary technical and financial support to remove the mines used on its territory, especially if that State was not responsible for the use and planting of these mines in the first place.

In addition, up to the present time there is no technically, financially or economically viable alternative to the conventional anti-personnel landmines available to States of the third world. Therefore, Egypt has expressed its dissatisfaction at the results of the Ottawa process, which has concentrated first and foremost on dealing with the humanitarian tragedies from a purely humanitarian perspective without dealing with other aspects of extreme importance, such as those pertaining to territorial integrity and protection of national security. Only in an ideal world will such a comprehensive prohibition be adequate, a world in which there are no acts of aggression or threats of aggression. Our vote on the draft resolution, therefore, was based on the aforementioned considerations.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to record the reasons that led it to abstain in the vote on draft resolution L.2, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction". We are opposed to landmines. We are opposed to the use, stockpiling, production or transfer of such landmines. Nevertheless, we consider the Ottawa Convention to be no more than a first step in the right direction towards the elimination of the problem of landmines. The Convention lacks a very important element, namely, it has never pinned the responsibility on the warring countries for planting mines in the territories of other countries. It contains no mention of assistance to countries which are affected by landmines planted in their territories since the Second World War.

My delegation outlined in detail in its statement during the general debate the harm done to Libya as a result of the

fact that warring countries in the Second World War planted millions of mines in Libyan territory. We deem it important that the countries responsible for the planting of these mines should be compelled to remove them and to provide the affected countries with the necessary maps and equipment. In view of the fact that the Convention contains no provision to that effect we have decided to abstain.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese Government has always attached importance to humanitarian concerns caused by landmines. At the same time we believe that the correct way to address the question of landmines should take into consideration both humanitarian and security concerns. We believe that under the principle of maintaining countries' legitimate rights of self-defence and security, the use of landmines should be subjected to appropriate and reasonable restriction. At the same time it is necessary to strengthen international demining efforts so as to put an end once and for all to the worldwide phenomenon of indiscriminate harm of innocent civilians caused by landmines.

For this reason we hold a different view with regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. On the basis of this position the Chinese delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution L.2.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation would like to set forth its position on the issue of anti-personnel landmines and the reasons which have led it to abstain on this draft resolution.

India remains committed to the objective of a non-discriminatory and universal ban on anti-personnel mines through a phased process that addresses legitimate defence requirements of States while ameliorating the critical humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the indiscriminate transfer and use of landmines. We believe that the phased approach commends itself as a confidence-building process enabling States, especially those with long borders, to safeguard their legitimate security needs.

The process of complete elimination of anti-personnel mines will be facilitated by the availability of non-lethal alternative technologies that can perform cost effectively the legitimate defensive role of anti-personnel landmines.

We would support negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a ban on transfers of anti-personnel landmines on the basis of a mandate that reflects the interests of all delegations. India has been an active

participant in the certain conventional weapons process, and this year it ratified amended Protocol II and Protocol IV.

Mr. Sungar (Turkey): As we did last year, once again we would like to share with the members of the Committee the considerations that led my delegation to cast a "yes" vote on draft resolution L.2, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

Turkey is fully conscious of the human sufferings and casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. We welcomed the Ottawa Convention's entry into force on 1 March 1999 as a major achievement of the international community towards the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines.

Turkey has unique security concerns which have been crafted into our principal policy on anti-personnel landmines. Our long borders need to be protected not only against trespassing but also to combat terrorism, drug trafficking and illicit arms trafficking. This unique security situation around Turkey has so far precluded us from signing the Ottawa Convention. However, keeping the humanitarian aspects of the anti-personnel landmines problem in mind, we put into effect a national moratorium in January 1996 banning the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

As a renewed expression of our determination to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the international community, we announced on 15 October 1998 our decision to extend that moratorium for another three years commencing from its expiry. Furthermore, we initiated a number of contacts with some of our neighbours with a view to seeking the establishment of regimes to keep our common borders free of anti-personnel landmines. Our talks with Bulgaria yielded positive results, and we signed a bilateral agreement on 22 March 1999 entitled "Non-use of anti-personnel landmines and their removal from or destruction in the areas adjacent to our common border".

Turkey's participation as an observer in the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in Maputo in May 1999 constituted yet another important manifestation of our anti-personnel landmines policy and showed its evolutionary character. At that Meeting we announced for the first time our readiness to sign the Convention at the beginning of the next decade, provided that the present conditions do not change adversely.

In this context I should like once again to underline that we believe an eventual ban on anti-personnel landmines can only be achieved in stages. Therefore, additional efforts need to be deployed to achieve the total elimination of this inhuman weapon. My country continues to maintain the view that the Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum for negotiations that would address the security concerns of those States that are not yet parties to the Ottawa Convention and enable them to join an eventual ban to be achieved in stages.

Mr. Itzhaki (Israel): Israel supports the ultimate goal of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction as referred to in draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.2. Israel stands opposed to the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines and aspires to eradicate the need for such devices along with the inevitable devastation they cause. In this light Israel acts in accordance with the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons by working towards the ratification of amended Protocol II of that Convention and observing the restrictions placed on the use of anti-personnel mines and booby traps.

As a result of Israel's unique security situation in the Middle East, facing the ongoing threat of hostility from some neighbouring States and the prevailing danger of terrorist attack along its borders, Israel is obliged to maintain its right to use anti-personnel landmines as a necessity to protect its civilian population and military troops.

Due to these factors Israel cannot commit itself at this juncture to a total ban on landmines. However, Israel is actively working to reduce as much as possible the proliferation and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines. In fact, Israel once again renewed the moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines. Moreover, Israel has expressed its willingness to take part in the deliberations to ban the transfer of anti-personnel landmines within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Israel has also ceased production of all anti-personnel mines. In addition, Israel readily takes part in all international efforts to reduce and eventually make obsolete any need for landmines.

For all the aforementioned reasons Israel cannot vote in favour of this draft resolution and has therefore abstained.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I have sought the floor to place on record the position of my delegation on draft resolution L.2 relating to the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines. Myanmar respects the decisions of the countries which have signed and ratified the Ottawa Convention. Myanmar is in favour of banning exports, transfers and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines. However, it did not participate in the Ottawa process, nor is it a signatory to the Ottawa Convention. In our view what is actually causing deaths and injuries to innocent children, women and men, is the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines. Transfers and exports of anti-personnel mines also contribute to the proliferation of anti-personnel mines, thereby increasing the chances of the indiscriminate use of these weapons. These issues, namely, the issue of transfers and that of the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines, are the real issues that need to be urgently addressed and should be banned in an international legal instrument. A sweeping total ban on anti-personnel mines is still unnecessary and unjustified. It is obvious that consensus does not yet exist among the Member States of the United Nations at present to place a total ban on anti-personnel mines. Many countries, including my own, have reservations on the issue of anti-personnel mines.

We should like to stress here that every State has the right to self-defence. It is essential that this legitimate right of every State to self-defence in matters of its national security be recognized and respected in dealing with this issue. In fact, we are in favour of pursuing the issue of banning transfers and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines in the Conference on Disarmament, which we believe is the appropriate forum to negotiate the agreement or agreements on this issue.

For these reasons my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution L.2 relating to the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines.

Mr. Lim (Singapore): Singapore's position on anti-personnel landmines is clear and open. My country supports and will continue to support all initiatives against the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, especially when they are directed at, or could harm, innocent civilians. To this end, in May 1996 Singapore declared a two-year moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines without self-neutralizing mechanisms. In February last year Singapore expanded this moratorium to include all manner of anti-personnel landmines, not just those without self-neutralizing mechanisms, and extended it for an indefinite period.

At the same time, like several other countries, Singapore firmly believes that the legitimate security concerns and the right of self-defence of any State cannot be disregarded. Therefore, a blanket ban on all types of anti-personnel landmines might be counter-productive since some countries need to use anti-personnel landmines for their defence and security.

Singapore supports the international efforts to resolve the humanitarian concerns over anti-personnel landmines. We will continue to work with members of the international community towards finding a durable and truly global solution.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We will turn now to draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1. I will now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Forquenot de la Fortelle (France) (*spoke in French*): In asking for a separate vote on the eighth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution under consideration, I should like to give briefly the reasons which have compelled France, as in the past, and like some of its partners, to make this request and subsequently to abstain in this separate vote.

France considers that this paragraph does not belong in the context of a draft resolution which is intended to deal with the issue of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons. Such a reference is even less timely this year because the sponsors — and this is also the desire of France — wish to provide a consensual basis to the organization of the international conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. That conference, which everyone is hoping for, should, we hope, be held in June or July 2001 and lead to a genuine, effective programme of action, one which might help to combat the destabilizing accumulation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

This eighth preambular paragraph, we think, is likely to give rise to some confusion. It would seem to introduce the idea that recourse to armed force, which might be based on illicit channels of trafficking, might be a way to settle any disputes. That is why we ask for a separate vote on the paragraph in question, thus, we hope, taking this out of the context of the resolution on small arms and light weapons. The draft resolution of course is something of which we approve. Since we have no objection to the very principle referred to in this paragraph, we will abstain in the separate vote.

Mr. Albuquerque (Portugal): I should like to state that Portugal has decided to add its name to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1.

Mr. Estévez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I also want to ask that Guatemala be included among the sponsors of this draft resolution.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1, entitled "Small arms", was introduced by the representative of Japan at the Committee's 19th meeting, on 29 October. The sponsors are listed in draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1. In this connection the representative of Iceland informed the Secretariat that it had withdrawn its sponsorship of this draft resolution. In addition, the following countries have become sponsors: Austria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Sweden and Venezuela.

This draft resolution has programme budget implications which are set out in document A/C.1/54/L.57.

A request has been made for a separate vote on the eighth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, which reads as follows:

"Reaffirming also the right of self-determination of all peoples, in particular peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, and the importance of the effective realization of this right, as enunciated, inter alia, in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993".

The Committee will now proceed to vote on the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1*.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape

Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Russian Federation

Abstaining:

Azerbaijan, France, Georgia, India, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Myanmar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1 was retained by 127 votes to 1, with 14 abstentions.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now vote on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin,

Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

none

Abstaining:

Kuwait, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1, as a whole, was adopted by 143 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions.

Mr. du Preez (South Africa): South Africa again supported the draft resolution entitled "Small arms", L.42/Rev.1, given the high priority that my Government attaches to addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, both regionally and globally. We are particularly pleased with those paragraphs that address the United Nations conference on the illicit trade in small arms

and light weapons in all its aspects and the important open-ended preparatory process that will commence early next year, but we would have liked to have seen the important role of civil society in contributing to the successful outcome of the United Nations conference properly addressed.

My Government fully supports the participation of non-governmental organizations, pending agreement at the preparatory committee on the modalities of such participation. However, we do not support the notion contained in operative paragraph 4 that the mere attendance of non-governmental organizations is still to be decided.

Another concern is the establishment of the study group in operative paragraph 14. Although my Government fully shares the need to restrict the manufacture and trade of small arms and light weapons to manufacturers and dealers authorized by States, and agrees that reliable and cost-effective ways should be established for marking such weapons, we believe that these matters should be considered by the preparatory committee and ultimately the conference.

With the study group envisaged in operative paragraph 14, the Secretary-General is requested to establish a parallel mechanism to the preparatory process for the conference. Not only would this be a costly exercise, but the outcome of the study would not be representative of the views of all Member States, given their limited budgetary provisions. My delegation is of the view that since no budgetary provision has been made for the conference, the funds earmarked for this study should rather be applied towards the cost of that conference. Furthermore, we do not see the value of this exercise if the results of the study would be ready for consideration only at the time of the conference as one of its background documents. We would have preferred an approach that would include this study in the mandate given to the preparatory committee in its preparations for the outcome of the conference.

Mr. Lint (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Since we did not hear the name of Belgium on the list read out by the Secretary, I should like to point out that Belgium is also a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1.

Mr. Abdullayev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation fully, unconditionally and without any hesitation supports the efforts of the international community to suppress the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We support the basic provisions of draft resolution L.42/Rev.1, including that pertaining to the

convening of a United Nations conference on the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. I am certain that the Russian Federation will make a substantial contribution to the successful work of that conference.

However, we cannot agree to the introduction in the draft resolution of a provision — and I have in mind the eighth preambular paragraph — which waters down and distorts its contents. Moreover, we are convinced that this provision could be used as a cover for those forces which are dealing in the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

Based on these considerations, we voted against the eighth preambular paragraph and were compelled to abstain in the vote on the draft resolution as a whole, although once again I wish to emphasize that we are in agreement with the majority of the provisions in the draft resolution.

Mr. Zahran (Egypt): Following an abstention in 1995, since the fifty-second session Egypt has voted in favour of the draft resolution on small arms, as it did this year. This testifies to Egypt's steadfast commitment to the pursuit of all efforts which could lead to a safer world. While Egypt is encouraged by the work undertaken by the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms — in which Egypt participated — and by the recommendations in the Group's report in document A/54/258, it will nevertheless continue to closely monitor the issue of small arms in order to ensure that it is dealt with in a just, balanced, non-discriminatory and comprehensive manner. It is Egypt's ardent hope that the issue of small arms will not go down the dead-end road of the transparency and armaments issue, which is being addressed in a highly selective manner.

The priorities in the field of disarmament remain the same. Nuclear weapons must be eliminated on a priority basis. Efforts at non-proliferation, while necessary, do not replace concrete and irreversible disarmament measures. Other weapons of mass destruction must also be eliminated comprehensively. Conventional weapons must indeed be dealt with, but not in a selective manner. Micro-disarmament should never overshadow or undercut the cardinal importance allocated to macro-disarmament. Controlling the transfer of small arms should not be viewed as an opportunity to curb the Charter-based right of all countries, including developing countries, to acquire the means of their legitimate self-defence.

Furthermore, small arms do not necessarily mean primitive arms or simple arms. There exist today small arms which are highly advanced and lethal and which must also

be seen as falling within the purview of the small arms issue. New and advanced technologies have reduced size. Should not the destruction of these new types be included and accorded the necessary attention? While the draft resolution decided that the international conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects will be convened in 2001, many questions still exist and need to be answered. In attempting to address this question a number of salient facts arise, as follows.

First, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons cannot be portrayed as being the cause of conflict but rather may be seen as a possible catalyst that exacerbates already uncertain confidence, which arises from a number of accumulated and complex political and socio-economic practices that give rise to political upheaval and consequently military struggle.

Secondly, small arms and light weapons, despite their use in various conflicts, cannot result in aggression or occupation of territories or be used to initiate sudden and surprising military action. Small arms are not weapons of large-scale offensive capability.

Thirdly, in certain regions threats emanate not from small arms and light weapons but from weapons of mass destruction with destabilizing consequences.

Fourthly, all States enjoy an inherent right to self-defence, the right to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity and protect national security.

Fifthly, there is the need to bear in mind the right of people under colonial or foreign occupation to realize their right to self-determination.

Sixthly, it is important to underscore the need to uphold a State's authority to control and to adopt legislation to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons through illicit transfers, especially when criminal acts lead to terrorism or drug trafficking.

These facts notwithstanding, the need to clearly restate our authorities in the field of disarmament should be properly addressed for their pertinence to the whole issue of small arms to keep their potential within the right proportions and well-defined parameters.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): My delegation is taking this opportunity to explain its vote on the draft resolution on small arms. My delegation voted in favour, as in the past. We are deeply appreciative of the role played by the

Government of Japan, and especially Ambassador Donowaki, in promoting awareness of this crucial issue. We are also satisfied that the sponsors negotiated constructively with other interested delegations in making this draft resolution a balanced one.

My delegation, nevertheless, has problems with operative paragraph 14. It is not that we are against the proposed subject of the study, but we are opposed to the concept of the panel of governmental experts per se, for the following reasons.

First, the need for a panel of governmental experts was understandable when the issue of small arms was totally new to the disarmament forums. We feel that over the past few years significant instruments, guidelines and conventions have been negotiated in this area.

Secondly, the process and working of the panel of governmental experts is patently non-transparent. A few hand-picked experts deliberate exclusively for some time, and then their recommendations are imposed on the rest of the membership.

Thirdly, the past panels of experts on small arms have not been representative in the sense that they do not adequately represent the countries worst affected by the problems of small arms, although theoretically the panels are based on equitable geographical representation. But the problem is not affecting the world on the basis of equitable geographical distribution.

Fourthly, there are financial implications. Given the deep financial problems confronting the United Nations, we should avoid these panels, which obviously cost a lot of money.

Finally, discussions on issues such as small arms need to be as broad based as possible. The panel of experts, to the contrary, the panel of experts gives a strong message of exclusivity and a few countries arrogating to themselves all the wisdom.

However, my delegation chose not to oppose this paragraph in the spirit of compromise and also in deference to the overall positive contribution of the Government of Japan to this issue. My delegation nevertheless reserves the right to raise this issue in other appropriate forums, including those dealing with the financial matters of the United Nations.

Mr. Itzhaki (Israel): Israel views with grave concern the illicit transfer and proliferation of small arms. This proliferation threatens the international security of States and has exacerbated casualties among civilians in internal conflicts. Israel supports cooperative international efforts aimed at curbing the illicit circulation of and trafficking in small arms throughout the world. Hence, Israel would welcome international dialogue on these issues and would take part in and contribute to any such discussions.

In this spirit Israel voted in favour of this draft resolution as a whole. Yet Israel abstained in the separate vote on the preambular paragraph because the introduction of the issue of self-determination in the context of small arms is not appropriate and can be misinterpreted. As is well known, the issue of self-determination should be discussed in the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation has the pleasure of explaining its vote on draft resolution L.42/Rev.1, entitled "Small arms". Considering the urgency of the threat posed by the proliferation of these small weapons — so rightly referred to as weapons of personal destruction — my delegation decided to support the draft resolution. Moreover, my delegation strongly felt that small arms have become a feature of domestic warfare and have thus impeded the social and economic development of the affected States. Therefore, we are convinced that concerted endeavours from the international community should be undertaken to stem the proliferation of small arms without any delay.

Mr. Kongstad (Norway): The uncontrolled proliferation, misuse and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons is an area of great humanitarian concern. Strong efforts should be made at different levels and in different contexts to address the small arms issue in a practical and focused way. That is why Norway co-sponsored draft resolutions A/C.1/54/L.25 and L.44. For the same reasons Norway has supported draft resolution L.42/Rev.1 on small arms. In particular we welcome the operative paragraphs ensuring an inclusive and transparent preparatory process and conference. That is essential for the process to achieve the legitimacy necessary for a successful outcome.

However, Norway finds operative paragraph 14 of the draft resolution to be inconsistent with this objective. Undoubtedly different background documentation will be required for the conference. We consider, *inter alia*, that the question of the feasibility of restricting the manufacture and trade of such weapons to the manufacturers and dealers authorized by States, including brokering activities, should

be an important element of the background information to the conference. But we also believe that the preparatory committee as described in operative paragraph 7 should decide on all matters relevant to the conference. This means also that decisions on background information should be made and carried out within the framework of the preparatory process established by the resolution and not in a parallel process. Any work related to the preparatory process should be mandated by the preparatory committee itself. Thus it appears that it would be more natural to consider the appointment of a new group of experts at a later stage. Resources might be better spent if the benefit of such a group is to be considered after the preparatory process and international conference. The conference will provide an opportunity to review and discuss a wide range of issues related to the small arms problem. At that point in time one will be in a better position to decide on purpose, objectives and modalities for a possible new group of governmental experts.

The small arms issue is complex and needs to be approached in a comprehensive and multidisciplinary way. Disarmament, human rights, humanitarian and developmental expertise should therefore be involved in the preparatory process and the conference itself. That would also include the participation of civil society. Non-governmental organizations possess knowledge and useful expertise that an international conference on small arms should be able to benefit from. We are concerned that operative paragraph 4 does not sufficiently secure the participation of non-governmental organizations.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman): Allow me to explain my vote after the vote. This is the second year that my country has voted in favour of the draft resolution and the retention of the eighth preambular paragraph.

Oman supports the endeavours in this regard in terms of the question of small arms and has taken the necessary measures to adhere in their entirety to the noble guidelines and objectives in this direction. However, with regard to operative paragraph 14 (a), although there is wisdom in the establishment of a governmental group of experts on this question, we do not believe it is the right and appropriate venue to sense the views of all Member States.

Mr. Jakubowski (Poland): My delegation has requested the floor to ask that the name of Poland be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1.

Mr. Benítez-Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba regrets that it has not been possible to achieve consensus among all delegations on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1, even as we express our thanks to the delegation of Japan for the intensive consultations conducted in the process of coordinating this text. On operative paragraphs 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the draft resolution, regarding the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, in the opinion of my delegation these cannot be interpreted as meaning unconditional support for the recommendations contained in that report. In any event, in the process of implementing the recommendations, it will be necessary to take due account of the opinions of Member States, as is explicitly indicated in operative paragraphs 10 and 11 of the text.

We completely support the contents of the eighth preambular paragraph, and that is why we voted in favour of it, just as we voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): That completes our consideration of the draft resolutions before us in cluster 4.

On cluster 6, I now call on the representative of Egypt to introduce an amendment to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.21.

Mr. Zahran (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt, on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution on transparency in armaments listed in A/C.1/54/L.21, would like to state that following intensive consultations on L.21 with numerous interested delegations, an agreement was reached to amend operative paragraph 4(a), which will read as follows:

(*spoke in English*)

"The early expansion of the scope of the Register".

(*spoke in Arabic*)

In the light of this amendment we hope that the Secretariat will provide a revised copy of draft resolution L.21 so that we will be able to vote on it tomorrow.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The Chair completely agrees with your intention to have this put to the vote tomorrow. That means we will continue to work on the basis of the philosophy governing the work of the Committee, in other words to allow all delegations due time and opportunity to consider amendments. There are very few draft resolutions left, and the Committee will be able to consider this tomorrow morning.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to make some announcements on draft resolutions.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee has completed action on 47 draft resolutions or decisions up to this moment. Therefore, there are five draft resolutions or decisions left for tomorrow, which is the last day for action. They are the following: cluster 1, A/C.1/54/L.9/Rev.1, the revision that has just been distributed to all, L.12/Rev.1, L.18 and L.30; in cluster 6, L.21/Rev.1.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The next meeting will be held tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. in this same room.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.