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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTY-FIRST MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil)

later: Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia) (Vice-Chairman)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 62 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION UPON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/39/134, 560 and 29)

The CHAIRMAN: This afternoon the Committee will continue the third phase of its work devoted to consideration of and action upon draft resolutions on disarmament agenda items.

The Committee will proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace (A/39/29).

Mr. WIJewardane (Sri Lanka): Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank you for consenting to take up this item much later than the date assigned to it by the First Committee. This delay, though less desirable, was nevertheless unavoidable owing to protracted negotiations on the draft resolution contained in document A/AC.159/L.63 submitted by my delegation on behalf of the non-aligned members of the Ad Hoc Committee during its third session held in August this year.

It will not be an understatement to say that the negotiations were arduous. The final text that emerged after these laborious negotiations was something no member was very happy about. If the members representing other groups found the final text less than acceptable from their point of view, that in itself is an indication of the extent to which the members of the non-aligned group had to make concessions. A comparison of the operative section of the draft resolution contained in the report with the original draft submitted by the non-aligned members of the Ad Hoc Committee would reveal the concessions made by the non-aligned members with the objective of achieving consensus.

During the three sessions in 1984, the Committee was able to achieve progress in many areas. First, the non-aligned members of the Committee were able to present to the Committee the draft framework of the provisional agenda for the United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean (A/AC.159/L.60). This was done towards the end of the first session and that enabled the Committee to have a substantial discussion on the draft agenda during its second session. With the exception of some items on which further consideration was required, there was broad agreement on the draft agenda. Secondly, the Committee was also able to discuss the draft provisional rules of procedure of the United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean (document A/AC.159/L.61). It is true that the Committee was not able to reach a conclusion on both these documents. However, one cannot deny the fact that progress in these areas was indeed an important achievement.

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

It was our hope, considering the progress achieved on the draft agenda and the draft provisional rules of procedure, that the Committee would be able to complete preparatory work in early 1985. That was the reason why members of the non-aligned group proposed holding 10 weeks of preparatory work in early 1985, so that the Conference could be convened in the first half of 1985. It is a matter of deep regret to my delegation that the Conference could not be scheduled as anticipated for the first half of 1985. Consequently, with a view to achieving consensus, we have reluctantly agreed to the Colombo Conference being held at the earliest date possible in the first half of 1986.

Our disappointment that the Conference cannot be held as we expected in 1985 is no doubt shared by the other members of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean which have for the past decade or more been associated in finding a solution to the extremely difficult task of assuring a peaceful climate in the region which would promote national and regional security and economic development. Sri Lanka calls upon all members of the Ad Hoc Committee to make in 1985 a determined and concerted effort, exerting extra political will, so that the littoral and hinterland States struggling to develop and constituting more than one fourth of the human population of this planet, could assure for themselves an environment in which they could have peaceful development without being disturbed by the tensions that have threatened to engulf the region.

On more than one occasion in the past, Sri Lanka has pointed out that the opening of the Conference itself will not establish the zone of peace overnight. On the contrary, it will be the first but bold step taken in the right direction which will set out the essential principles and the appropriate modalities, mechanisms and machinery for the eventual establishment of the zone of peace.

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

We hold the view that the establishment of the peace zone will not only be helpful in bringing peace and security to the littoral and hinterland States but that it will also, as a regional disarmament measure, contribute towards the achievement of global security.

Turning to the draft resolution, my delegation attaches significant importance to operative paragraph 5 as it helps in directing the work of the Ad Hoc Committee in 1985. There are a number of important organizational matters and substantive issues listed in that operative paragraph, and we hope that the Ad Hoc Committee will be able to complete this and other relevant preparatory work in 1985. We sincerely hope that all Member States will demonstrate their political will, which is an essential ingredient if the work of the Ad Hoc Committee is to succeed.

My delegation hopes that during 1985 the Ad Hoc Committee will be able to discuss elements that could eventually constitute the main document of the Colombo Conference. Sri Lanka will be conducting consultations on this next year.

Finally, it is the hope of my delegation that the draft resolution will be adopted by the First Committee by consensus. Such a step will greatly facilitate the work of the Ad Hoc Committee next year.

Mr. VERMA (India): My delegation would like first of all to thank Ambassador Wijewardane of Sri Lanka, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, for presenting document A/39/29, which contains the Ad Hoc Committee's report as well as a consensus draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee for adoption by the General Assembly. The successful outcome of our Ad Hoc Committee's work this year has been largely due to the patience and the persuasive and diplomatic skills of Ambassador Wijewardane.

While India joins the consensus in favour of the draft resolution recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, we do feel a sense of disappointment at the decision being taken to postpone yet again the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean from 1985 to 1986. It is no secret that during the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee this year the non-aligned countries laboured hard to carry forward the preparatory work for the Conference and to submit a draft resolution that was pragmatic and innovative and that could have marked a step forward in the implementation of the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. In our approach we were naturally guided by the directives given to us by our Heads of State or Government at the seventh summit conference of non-aligned countries held at New Delhi in March 1983 and recently reaffirmed at the Meeting of Ministers and

(Mr. Verma, India)

Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries to the thirty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Recent years have witnessed a sharp deterioration of the situation in the Indian Ocean as a result of the escalation of extraregional military activity in the context of bloc confrontation. External Powers have sought to entrench themselves in the Indian Ocean area on the basis of strategic theories of maritime access and maritime power. The Indian Ocean has become another arena for global strategic confrontation with the introduction of nuclear-missile submarines, intercontinental ballistic missiles and long-range bombers. Existing military bases like Diego Garcia are continually being expanded and new base facilities are being sought, indicating clearly that the military presence is meant to be a permanent one. These developments have added a new dimension to the insecurity of the littoral and hinterland States, making external intervention and occupation a constant and real nightmare.

The tense situation in the Indian Ocean makes it imperative for the non-aligned countries of the Indian Ocean area to pursue the concept of the zone of peace more vigorously than ever before. We regret that efforts are being made to delay the implementation of the 1971 Declaration and, indeed, to change the very concept of the zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. My delegation was struck by the ambiguity that appears to exist in certain well-known quarters regarding the scope of the 1971 Declaration and the nature of the proposed Conference, as was revealed in the frank and open discussions which took place during the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee, both formal and informal, in 1984. The 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI) clearly spells out the nature and scope of the Conference.

The Declaration envisages a two-stage implementation process. The first stage envisages consultations between the littoral and hinterland States and the great Powers with a view to halting the further escalation and expansion of great-Power military presence in the Indian Ocean and the elimination from it of all bases, military installations and logistic supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and any manifestation of great-Power military presence conceived in the context of great-Power rivalry. The Indian Ocean Conference would be an integral part of these consultations. It is only subsequent to and as a consequence of progress in this field that, in the second stage, the Ad Hoc Committee would be in a position collectively to consider appropriate arrangements to give effect to any

(Mr. Verma, India)

international agreement that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

The overall perspective of the 1971 Declaration should therefore guide our work. While recognizing the right to free and unimpeded use of the Ocean by vessels of all nations, subject to the norms and principles of international law, it is equally important to ensure that warships and military aircraft do not use the Indian Ocean to threaten or infringe upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any littoral and hinterland State in contravention of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Our draft resolution this year clearly spells out the nature of the preparatory work - on both organizational matters and substantive issues - that lies before the Committee. It also requests the Ad Hoc Committee to complete preparatory work in 1985 in order to enable the opening of the Conference in Colombo thereafter at the earliest date in the first half of 1986. While substantial work has already been done, we hope that the Ad Hoc Committee will be able to complete its remaining preparatory work on such matters as the provisional agenda, the rules of procedure, participation, the stages of the Conference, documentation and consideration of appropriate arrangements for any international agreement that may ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. It is important that a proper sense of direction be restored in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. Efforts to introduce extraneous issues into our work and to lay down pre-conditions, either with regard to harmonization of views or with regard to the political and security climate in the area, are not conducive, in the view of my delegation, to the early realization of the objectives of the 1971 Declaration.

(Mr. Verma, India)

There have been attempts to portray the question of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace as a purely regional disarmament measure, rather than in global terms. This approach is contrary to facts, since the peace of the Indian Ocean is being threatened by the escalating military presence of the great Powers. Indeed, the idea of a zone of peace is all too often confused with that of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a device to further purely horizontal non-proliferation objectives. Essentially, the idea of a zone of peace corresponds to a desire among the States of a region to secure the absence or exclusion of great-Power rivalry, tension, confrontation or conflict from a particular area. The 1971 Declaration embodies the proposal for converting the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace that has emanated from the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. Over the years it has also represented their continued hope and aspiration that this is the principal way to ensure the return of peace and tranquillity to the area.

India attaches great importance to the early convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean as a necessary step for the implementation of the Declaration adopted in 1971. We hope that the Committee will concentrate during the coming months on the remaining preparatory work of a substantive nature, so that the Conference is held in 1986 as now envisaged. We seek the co-operation of all members of the Ad Hoc Committee in this regard. Their co-operation, together with the necessary political will, is essential for the early implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. We trust that we can continue to work together and concentrate on the remaining preparatory work so that the Conference is held in 1986.

Mr. GRUNDMANN (German Democratic Republic): My delegation would like to explain its position on the recommendation in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, contained in part III, paragraph 20, of document A/39/29.

Again this year, the Ad Hoc Committee was able to complete its report, with its recommendation and the draft resolution, only during the course of the current session of the General Assembly.

A draft resolution, introduced by the representative of Sri Lanka at the 259th meeting of the Committee, on 28 August 1984, had been submitted in good time. It called for the opening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean in Colombo in the first half of 1985. The German Democratic Republic welcomed that draft resolution submitted to the Committee and once again stressed its firm commitment to the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace at the earliest

(Mr. Grundmann, German)
Democratic Republic)

date possible. Much to our regret we have to state, however, that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean was induced to agree to another postponement of the Conference. The tactics of delaying the Conference imposed upon the Committee have been practised once again.

The draft resolution now before us contains, in the opinion of my delegation, elements which are encouraging for the future work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

It calls for completing preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean in 1985, in order to enable the opening of the Conference in Colombo thereafter at the earliest possible date in the first half of 1986.

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

At the same time, the draft resolution unfortunately contains some elements which practically set pre-conditions and do not promote the completion of the preparation of the Conference and the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

The German Democratic Republic will continue to support resolutely and consistently the proposal of the non-aligned countries to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

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

Mr. R. M. KHAN (Pakistan): My delegation has taken note with satisfaction of the consensus arrived at in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean on the draft resolution contained in document A/39/29, dated 21 November 1984, which has been recommended for adoption by the General Assembly. We should like particularly to express our deep appreciation of the strenuous efforts made by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, which made it possible to secure consensus on the recommended draft resolution. It is our hope that the First Committee and the General Assembly will be able to adopt this draft

(Mr. R. M. Khan, Pakistan)

resolution by consensus, thus enabling the Ad Hoc Committee to continue its deliberations next year for the completion of the preparatory work for the Conference on the Indian Ocean.

We are also gratified to note from the report contained in document A/39/29 that the Ad Hoc Committee was able to make some progress, however limited, towards the completion of the preparatory work assigned to it. Similarly, the draft resolution now before the Committee shows some progress compared with the corresponding resolution of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. In operative paragraph 4, it requests the Ad Hoc Committee to complete preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean in 1985, instead of asking it to make decisive efforts to complete such preparatory work. Further, operative paragraph 5, which describes the preparatory work to be completed, is more detailed and specific. It particularly requires the Committee to prepare the draft final document of the Conference. Finally, operative paragraph 7 requests the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to consult the Secretary-General, at the appropriate time, on the establishment of a secretariat for the Conference.

The essential objective of the proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean is the preservation and promotion of peace and security in the Indian Ocean region, including its littoral and hinterland States. It is self-evident that the achievement of this noble objective has regional as well as extraregional dimensions. On the one hand, such a zone would require the elimination of the military presence of non-regional States from the Indian Ocean region, including its littoral and hinterland States; on the other, it would be necessary for the regional States to enter into arrangements for the total renunciation of the development, production and acquisition of nuclear weapons, for ensuring military security through, inter alia, the maintenance of reasonable ratios between their armed forces, particularly the naval forces, and for peaceful settlement of disputes.

(Mr. R. M. Khan, Pakistan)

Only a comprehensive approach which takes account of these and other essential elements and gives them concrete shape will succeed in establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region. A partial approach to this important issue which deals with only the question of foreign military presence, important though it is, is, in our view, unlikely to realize the objective.

There is a close and integral link between the political and security climate in the Indian Ocean region and the successful outcome of the Conference on the Indian Ocean. It is therefore imperative that acts of foreign military intervention in the Indian Ocean region, including its littoral and hinterland States, should be terminated forthwith to ease tension in the area and to pave the way for the successful holding of the Conference on the Indian Ocean. In this regard it may be mentioned that the General Assembly has recently again, by an overwhelming majority, pronounced its verdict on the foreign military intervention in Afghanistan. It is our hope that a negotiated settlement of this issue, through the intermediary of the United Nations Secretary-General, will be arrived at soon, leading to the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Afghanistan and the creation of a climate conducive to a positive outcome of the Conference on the Indian Ocean.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean has a difficult task before it during the forthcoming year. We hope that efforts will be made by its entire membership for the expeditious completion of the preparatory work for the Conference on the Indian Ocean. We attach particular importance to the preparation by the Ad Hoc Committee of the draft final document of the Conference as an essential prerequisite for the convening of the Conference. Such a draft final document must lay down the essential elements of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. It should also elaborate provisions for the practical realization of those essential elements in order to give concrete shape to the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. My delegation will extend its full co-operation to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and its other members for the success of the endeavours in that direction so that the Ad Hoc Committee is able to complete expeditiously the preparatory work to be assigned to it by the General Assembly for the year 1985.

Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset to express my delegation's appreciation of the unstinting efforts of Ambassador Wijewardane, the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, in conducting the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean this year. I also

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

cannot fail to pay a tribute to his predecessor, Mr. de Silva, who is also from Sri Lanka.

My delegation wishes to underline the fact that its acceptance of the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean has recommended for adoption and which is contained in part III of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, document A/39/29 of 21 November 1984, does not mean that we fully approve of the total contents of the draft resolution.

In this respect, my delegation wishes to emphasize the following points.

First, despite the fact that operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution emphasizes the importance of convening the Conference on the Indian Ocean as a necessary step for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, adopted by the General Assembly in 1971, it is regrettable that the convening of the Conference, which was scheduled for the first half of 1985, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/185 of 20 December 1983, has again been postponed. This follows other postponements, since the General Assembly decided at its thirty-fourth session in resolution 34/80 B that the Conference on the Indian Ocean should be convened at Colombo.

Secondly, we maintain that unless genuine constructive efforts are exerted through the display of political will in order to achieve the goal of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, the Committee will still face obstacles placed in its path by the Western countries and will not fulfil its task of completing preparatory work relating to the Conference on the Indian Ocean.

Thirdly, we wish to express our concern at certain barriers placed by certain Western countries, particularly the United States of America, in the way of the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, at a time when it is escalating the arms race in the Indian Ocean area by increasing its military presence, widening its bases and implementing its designs aimed at destabilizing security in the area.

Fourthly, we hope that this postponement of the Conference on the Indian Ocean will be the last of its kind and we hope that the matter will not be an annual ritual. We also hope that the Ad Hoc Committee will be able to complete preparatory work relating to the Conference during its session scheduled for 1985.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

We also hope that operative paragraph 6 will not be used as a pretext for certain Western countries to resort to obstruction of the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution on agenda item 62, which was introduced by Ambassador Nissanka Wijewardane of Sri Lanka, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, at the 47th meeting of the First Committee, on 26 November, is embodied in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, document A/39/29.

(The Chairman)

The programme budget implications of the draft resolution are contained in document A/C.1/39/L.81. I have received a request that this draft resolution be adopted by consensus. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

The draft resolution was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes.

Mr. IBRAHIM (Indonesia): My delegation joined in the consensus in the adoption of the draft resolution contained in section III of document A/39/29. The draft resolution is the result of the tireless endeavours of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, Ambassador Wijewardane of Sri Lanka, to whom we are deeply indebted. Having said this, let me place on record that the draft resolution just adopted does not reflect the basic position of my Government, as stated by my Foreign Minister at the plenary Assembly, and by my delegation before this Committee.

Our position has been made unequivocally clear to the effect that the convening of the international Conference on the Indian Ocean is imperative to the efforts to stem the increasingly aggravated situation that has engulfed the region during the past few years. For this reason, we have appealed to the great Powers and major maritime nations to allow the Conference to take place promptly and thereby initiate negotiations for the relaxation of tensions and the promotion of peace and stability in the region.

It is against this background that we are not fully satisfied with the draft resolution, which, needless to say, once again inordinately delays the convening of the Conference. However, without prejudice to its basic position my delegation has chosen not to stand in the way of a consensus decision.

Mr. KISLYAK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation had no objection to the adoption of the draft resolution contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean (A/39/29) without a vote. However, we would like to make the following statement in this connection: the question of the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace has already had a quite lengthy history. As early as 1971, on the initiative of the non-aligned countries, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (2832 (XXVI)) declaring the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Accordingly, the Ad Hoc Committee was set up with the task of preparing for and

(Mr. Kislyak, USSR)

convening a conference on the preparation of an international agreement thereon. However, the implementation of the Declaration has been directly counteracted by the United States and a number of its allies.

The General Assembly has frequently confirmed - including at last year's session - the desirability of convening such a Conference declaring the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and has set up tentative timetables for the convening of such an international forum. These timetables have frequently been changed, and we are forced to note with deep regret at the present session, that there are those who are stubbornly undermining the efforts of States to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace and to convene a Conference for this purpose in Colombo at the beginning of 1985, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/185 adopted at the thirty-eighth session. The Conference has now been postponed to the first half of 1986.

In the mean time, what is happening in the actual region of the Indian Ocean quite clearly indicates that this vast expanse of our planet is increasingly becoming a part of a very expansive arms race where the most sophisticated types of weapons are being accumulated, including nuclear weapons, and where the network of military bases is expanding.

The Soviet Union actively supports the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Together with the non-aligned countries who initiated this idea, we have done everything in our power, and we will continue to do so, in order to bring about the convening of this Conference in Colombo, the successful holding of which would create the necessary conditions to reduce military tension in that part of the world. For our part, we have frequently suggested that the coastal States on the Indian Ocean should declare that they will refrain from any steps which might be likely to complicate or worsen the situation in that area, without awaiting the actual convening of a conference in Colombo. Such steps might relate, in particular, to refraining from sending large naval units into the Indian Ocean, not holding military manoeuvres or practices there and not expanding or modernizing the military bases of the non-coastal States which already have such bases in the Indian Ocean basin.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that we shall make every effort to ensure that next year the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, on the basis of the considerable work it has already done in the past, completes its preparations for the Conference to be held in Colombo, as envisaged in operative paragraph 4 of the

(Mr. Kislyak, USSR)

draft resolution we have just adopted. We would like to assure all delegations that we are genuinely concerned with making progress in the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and we are ready to co-operate closely in the performance of this important task.

Mr. TAHINDRO (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): We have just adopted without a vote the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean contained in document A/39/29. In this connection, permit me to make a few comments, not in my capacity as Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee, but as the representative of my country.

While the consultations and negotiations of the Group of Friends of the Chairman and in the Ad Hoc Committee led to the adoption of the present text, my delegation would like, nevertheless, to express its disillusionment over the fact that in order to respect the consensus, the Ad Hoc Committee was forced once again to defer to 1986 the convening of the Colombo Conference. We should like to draw to the attention of representatives that this is at least the fourth time that we have had to postpone this Conference.

If the importance of harmonizing views on the substantive questions does not escape anyone, at the same time it should not be placed above the security needs of the States of the region, which, as is well known, wish to have the Conference convened. It is their view that only the convening of such a Conference, as a necessary measure for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 1971, is likely to contribute to détente in the region. In that context, we invite all members of the Committee to redouble their efforts with a view to completing the preparatory work in 1985, so that the Conference may finally be held in Colombo in 1986.

(Mr. Tahindro, Madagascar)

Finally, my delegation expresses its gratitude to the representative of Sri Lanka, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, for his diplomatic talents and his tireless efforts to bring very lengthy and difficult negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Mr. NEYCHEV (Bulgaria): Guided by its principled position of support for the efforts to convene a conference for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the Bulgarian delegation joined in the approval by consensus of the draft resolution contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean (A/39/29). However, we should like to express our regret that this year as well the Ad Hoc Committee was unable to reach general agreement on the basic issue, which is the setting of a date for the convening of the conference in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo. The reason for this failure should be sought neither in ineffective work by the Committee nor in unwillingness by the vast majority of its members to reach a decision on the organizational as well as the substantive matters, but, rather, in the lack of readiness and political will to do this on the part of a minority of States members of the Ad Hoc Committee, which have hindered the solution of the concrete questions.

The work of the Committee itself, as well as of the group of friends of the Chairman, in connection with the reaching of agreement on the draft resolution demonstrated the unwillingness of some well-known countries members of the Committee and of the group to work towards surmounting the obstacles impeding the convening of the conference on turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. For the demands for the harmonization of the views on the security problems in the region and on the essence of the term "zone of peace", as well as the demands to await the improvement of the political climate in the region before convening the conference, are nothing but an attempt to procrastinate and delay the convening of the conference.

The work of the Committee, particularly during its second and third sessions this year, on the rules of procedure, participation, stages of the conference, level of representation and other specific issues illustrated the fact that the lack of political will and readiness on the part of some States is the only obstacle to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement on the item, to resolving all contentious issues successfully and to adopting decisions for the convening of the conference itself. And if a certain measure of progress has nevertheless been achieved this year, it is the result above all of the efforts of the non-aligned and the socialist countries, which have worked steadfastly and persistently for a

(Mr. Neychev, Bulgaria)

businesslike discussion and the adoption of concrete decisions on the tasks facing the Committee in its capacity as the preparatory body for the conference on the Indian Ocean.

In this connection, the Bulgarian delegation expresses its gratitude to all non-aligned States that have participated actively in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. We should like to thank in particular the Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Nissanka Wijewardane of Sri Lanka, for his tactful and able guidance of the Committee's work.

In conclusion, the Bulgarian delegation reiterates its firm conviction that next year the work of the Ad Hoc Committee will be concrete, businesslike and fruitful and that the Committee will be able to comply with the decision, set forth in the draft resolution just adopted, concerning the convening of the conference for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace at the earliest date in the first half of 1986.

The CHAIRMAN: We have concluded consideration of and action on the draft resolution contained in document A/39/29.

Because of lack of time at our meeting yesterday afternoon, it was decided that the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran would make a statement today in exercise of his right of reply. I therefore now call on him.

It appears that the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not here, and I therefore propose that we conclude our consideration of agenda item 64.

It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: The list of speakers on agenda item 66, the Question of Antarctica, is becoming rather long. I have therefore decided that we should start the morning meetings tomorrow and Friday at 10 a.m. Otherwise, we may have to have a night meeting tomorrow. I request delegations that have inscribed their names on the list of speakers for tomorrow morning's meeting on the question of Antarctica to be punctual, so that we may start the meeting as early as possible.

Secondly, in accordance with consultations I have held with the Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, there will be an organizational meeting of the Commission on Monday afternoon, 3 December.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.