



Chairman: Mr. Adam MALIK (Indonesia).

Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the twenty-sixth session: item proposed by Ceylon and the United Republic of Tanzania (A/8492 and Add.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure, the representatives of Ceylon and the United Republic of Tanzania had requested permission to take part in the discussion of the item.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Amerasinghe (Ceylon) and Mr. Seaton (United Republic of Tanzania) took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Ceylon) said that the main features of the proposed declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace were contained in document A/8492. There might be omissions, but the sponsors had not thought it advisable to deal with the item more comprehensively since it introduced new concepts and dimensions in the questions of disarmament and the maintenance of peace and security. When adopted, it would require close consideration by sympathetic delegations.

3. The importance of an item which would enhance the prospects for peace and security was obvious, for the primary function of the Organization was the maintenance of peace and security. A discernible trend towards intensified military activity and competition in the Indian Ocean made the need to formulate new concepts in disarmament and the maintenance of peace urgent. In the past, the efforts of the international community in those fields had been confined to reducing the lethal capacity of modern weaponry and removing the threat of nuclear war from certain areas. The sponsors considered, however, that there could be a more positive approach: the prohibition in certain areas of the instruments and establishments of war.

4. The Indian Ocean was a most suitable area for such action. None of the great Powers were seriously involved, and the proposal would not prejudice their security interests. Furthermore, at their present level of economic and social development the littoral States had to concentrate all their efforts on modernizing their economic structures in a climate of absolute peace and tranquillity. It was therefore essential that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace.

5. He suggested that the proposed item should be allocated to the First Committee.

6. Mr. SEATON (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, following its independence, the United Republic of Tanzania had joined other African States in proposing that Africa should be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The declaration to that effect of the Organization of African Unity had been endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 2033 (XX) of 3 December 1965, which considered that the establishment of Africa as a nuclear-free zone represented a useful contribution to peace and security. More recently, the participants in the Ministerial Consultative Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries held in New York in September 1971 had recognized that, in keeping with the Lusaka Declaration,¹ the creation of zones of peace would contribute to international peace and security and the stability of all States and peoples. They had agreed that concrete steps should be taken at the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly to implement the decision relating to the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace contained in paragraph 8 (6) of resolution 12 of the Lusaka Declaration. The non-aligned countries had further urged the neutralization of South-East Asia with a view to the preservation of peace, stability and security in the area. With the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Latin American countries had already institutionalized the concept of reserving certain regions for peace, and the General Assembly had expressed the view that other regions should follow the Latin American example. When the proposed item was placed on the agenda, it was to be hoped that all delegations would help to ensure free access to the Indian Ocean as an unimpeded highway for trade while precluding the escalation of military activities in the area.

7. The Indian Ocean had been an area of peace, but recently the readiness of certain States to establish military bases on a number of islands had created a feeling of uncertainty in the small littoral States. The presence of warships in the Ocean had created tensions and had been considered a threat to the traditional trade routes. In order to preserve the rights of merchant vessels, the littoral States had felt compelled to purchase greater quantities of arms. It was thus to be hoped that those countries which had endorsed the Lusaka Declaration would support the addition of the Indian Ocean to Antarctica, Africa and Latin America as zones of peace, thus widening the area of the world where the rule of law prevailed rather than the "balance of terror".

The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item entitled "Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace" should be included in the agenda and that it should be allocated to the First Committee.

¹ Adopted by the Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Lusaka from 8 to 10 September 1970.

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8. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a letter dated 4 October 1971 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairmen of the Main Committees (A/8455),

transmitting a letter from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee concerning rule 154 of the rules of procedure. All Committees should pay due heed thereto when decisions that had financial implications were taken.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.