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Chairman: Mr. Ismail FAHMY
(United Arab Republic).

Organization of work

1. The CHAIRMAN: I should like to inform the Committee that this morning I received an interim report from Geneva which will shortly be distributed to members of the Committee in the working languages. In the light of that interim report I propose that we follow the same procedure which we normally follow in discussing disarmament questions.

2. After disposing of item 92, "Examination of the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind", I propose that the Committee should take simultaneously agenda items 29, 30 and 31—item 29, the question of general and complete disarmament with its two sub-items, item 30 dealing with the urgent need for the suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests, and item 31 dealing with the elimination of foreign military bases, etc.

3. Representatives are urged to make statements—either one statement or more if they wish—on these three items. This does not prevent the Committee from adopting more than one draft resolution on these items. If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Committee agrees with the proposal of the Chair.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 92

**Examination of the question of the reservation exclusively
for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor,**

**and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond
the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of
their resources in the interests of mankind (*continued*)*
(A/6695; A/C.1/952; A/C.1/L.410)**

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION
A/C.1/L.410

4. The CHAIRMAN: Members of the Committee may have noticed that there is a draft resolution co-sponsored by Afghanistan and other countries contained in document A/C.1/L.410. A number of additional countries have joined those original sponsors, and the draft resolution is now co-sponsored by: Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, Colombia, France, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Libya, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Somalia, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, the United Arab Republic, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela, Yugoslavia—34 countries in all.

5. Before I call on the representative of Belgium to submit the draft resolution formally I should like to say that any member of the Committee may make a statement on it, and before we reach the stage of voting I will inform the Committee when exactly I intend to put this draft to a vote.

6. I now call on the representative of Belgium.

7. Mr. DENORME (Belgium) (*translated from French*): The Secretariat has just distributed to the members of this Committee a draft resolution on agenda item 92: "Examination of the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind."

8. The resolution was drafted by a working group set up at the request of the representative of Malta and headed by our Chairman, Mr. Fahmy.

9. At the end of his statement at the 1516th meeting, Mr. Pardo, emphasizing that the question of the sea-bed was of vital importance to all of us, added:

"It is also a matter in which the concurrence of all is essential. . . . We do not wish to divide this Committee."

10. With this aim in mind, some forty delegations held an exchange of views and informal consultations and detailed a

* Resumed from the 1530th meeting.

small committee of six members, made up of Brazil, Bulgaria, the United States, India, Malta and Belgium, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Fahmy, to draft a text that would reflect their views and express their concern.

11. The patient work done in the course of the four meetings of the drafting committee and the six meetings of the informal working group, in addition to innumerable private consultations, culminated in draft resolution A/C.1/L.410, which I have the honour to submit officially to the Committee on behalf of the delegations of Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, Colombia, France, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Libya, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Somalia, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, the United Arab Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

12. From the outset the sponsors were faced with a twofold difficulty.

13. The novelty of the question, on which there was insufficient documentation and in which terms were used that were controversial or inadequately defined, made some delegations extremely cautious. They were anxious to avoid prejudging a position they would only be able to take after a careful study of all of the implications of the problem.

14. Other delegations, however, argued the urgent need for concrete measures and wanted a series of principles to be defined governing all future action in respect of the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

15. The same fundamental divergency of views recurred in another context when the question arose of determining the procedure to be recommended to the General Assembly.

16. The more cautious considered it premature to think of setting up a new body. Others took the opposite view, recommending that a standing committee should be set up without delay; but they were themselves divided as to the scope of the terms of reference that should be given to such a committee.

17. The novelty of the question, the ambiguity of the terms used in the title, and the highly divergent positions taken in the course of the general debate thus constituted a series of obstacles in the way of attaining the objective in view.

18. In the search for a compromise, agreement was reached first on procedure, and the idea of setting up an "*ad hoc* committee" gradually gained the support of a great many delegations. It was to be an organ of the General Assembly. Its terms of reference would be limited, its purpose being "... to study the scope and various aspects of this item"; and its duration in time would be circumscribed, since its instructions would be to prepare a study "for consideration by the General Assembly at its twenty-third session". The quotations are from operative paragraphs 1 and 2.

19. It still remained to assign a purpose and a frame for the work of the *ad hoc* committee. With regard to its

purpose, it was important to insist that the committee delimit the question as worded in the agenda item. The wording itself, of course, gave rise to discussion and controversy. At any rate we did have the wording formulated in agenda item 92, the interpretation of which it was one of the tasks of the committee itself to elucidate completely. Thus reference is made to this wording several times in both the preamble and the operative part of the draft resolution without any intention of prejudging its meaning and scope.

20. In the minds of the sponsors, the expression "the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, as contemplated in the title of the item" which is repeated several times, does not imply either interpretation or acceptance on their part. Its meaning can be specified and delimited only as a result of the study to be undertaken by the *ad hoc* committee itself.

21. With regard to the frame in which the work of the *ad hoc* committee would be carried out, it was to be defined by the general directives laid down in the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh preambular paragraphs.

22. The opening paragraphs of the preamble take note of three facts: the examination of agenda item 92 by the First Committee; the developing technology that is making the sea-bed and ocean floor accessible and exploitable; and the extent of these areas and the common interest of mankind therein. The preamble then goes on to recognize, in the fourth paragraph, that the exploration and use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor as contemplated in the first paragraph "should be conducted in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and for the benefit of all mankind". In the fifth paragraph, the preamble recalls "the provisions and practice of the law of the sea relating to this question". In the sixth, it refers to the importance of preserving the sea-bed and the ocean floor", again as contemplated in the title of the item, "from actions and uses which might be detrimental to the common interests of mankind". Finally, in the seventh paragraph, the preamble expresses the desire "to foster greater international co-operation and co-ordination in the further peaceful exploration and use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof", and once again, so as to specify the precise area to which the paragraph applies, the words "as contemplated in the title of the item" are added.

23. I should like to repeat, so that there can be no misunderstanding, that these references to the title of the item relate to the expression "the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof" simply and solely in order to delimit the geographical area; they do not affect any claims to sovereignty or jurisdiction on the part of particular States; in fact their only purpose is to preserve intact, until further study has been made, a formula on the interpretation and legal status of which the First Committee cannot and must not pass judgement at the present time.

24. The draft resolution just submitted to the Committee also takes into consideration the fact that the *ad hoc* committee would not be isolated in its activity and would not be starting from scratch. The problem is new, of course;

but the opening statement by the representative of Malta [1315th meeting] and the subsequent discussions in the First Committee have at least made it possible to assess the problems that arise and the difficulties likely to be encountered in solving them. Thus the *ad hoc* committee will have before it the records of these debates to help it in the performance of its task.

25. The eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs recall "the past and continuing valuable work . . . carried out by the competent organs of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other intergovernmental organizations", and the surveys which are "being prepared by the Secretary-General in response to General Assembly resolution 2172 (XXI) . . . and Economic and Social Council resolution 1112 (XL)".

26. The operative part implies that the General Assembly will ask the *ad hoc* committee to carry out its work "in co-operation with the Secretary-General" and will request the Secretary-General "to render all appropriate assistance" to the *ad hoc* committee. The specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other intergovernmental bodies are also requested "to co-operate fully" with the *ad hoc* committee, it being understood that the committee may invite these organizations to participate in its work if it sees fit to do so. That decision, which is left to the *ad hoc* committee, might be based on such documentation as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other intergovernmental bodies might be invited to submit to it through the Secretary-General. This is to be found in operative paragraph 3 (3).

27. As I have said, the *ad hoc* committee will not be working in a vacuum, since it will be supported on the one hand by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Secretariat and on the other by the United Nations family. I would add that the basis of its work will obviously be the views of the Governments of all Member States, which the Secretary-General will collect and transmit to the committee in virtue of operative paragraph 3 (1).

28. Once that was done, it remained for the group to determine the membership and terms of reference of the committee. Under operative paragraph 1 it would be decided "to establish an *ad hoc* committee composed of . . .". The number of representatives of Member States is still under discussion. With regard to terms of reference, the prevailing feeling was that it was the General Assembly that should give precise directives to bodies it decided to establish and hence it was important to specify in detail the essential tasks which the *ad hoc* committee would have to perform. In virtue of operative paragraph 2, the General Assembly would request the *ad hoc* committee, in co-operation with the Secretary-General, to prepare, for consideration by the General Assembly at its twenty-third session, a study which would include:

"(a) A survey of the past and present activities of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other intergovernmental

bodies with regard to the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and of existing international agreements concerning these areas;

(b) An account of the scientific, technical, economic, legal and other aspects of this item;

(c) An indication regarding practical means of promoting international co-operation in the exploration, conservation and use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, as contemplated in the title of the item, and of their resources, having regard to the views expressed and the suggestions put forward by Member States during the consideration of this item at the twenty-second session of the General Assembly."

29. Such is the gist of our draft resolution, and such are the motives justifying it in the eyes of its sponsors.

30. I should be remiss in the discharge of an unusually pleasant duty if I did not at this point express to the Chairman, Mr. Ismail Fahmy, the gratitude and admiration of the Belgian delegation for the authority, wisdom and patience he has displayed in guiding the debates of the informal working group and the drafting committee. In so doing, I am sure I also voice the views of all the delegations which have participated in these discussions. I should like to include in this tribute the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Vellodi, and his devoted staff.

31. Finally, I should like to say that it is because of the spirit of understanding shown by all my colleagues that we were able in the end to work out a compromise text on the basis of give and take on all sides. This spirit gives the sponsors the assurance that very broad if not unanimous support may well emerge for their draft; they venture to ask all the members of the First Committee to be good enough to study the text in the light of the presentation I have just made, and they hope that representatives will see their way to recommend their respective Governments to support the text and even to co-sponsor it. That would be the best way for the Committee to demonstrate its solidarity with the spirit lucidly expounded by the representative of Malta himself, who had the signal merit of drawing the attention of the General Assembly to the problems of the ocean floor and the sea-bed when he called for "a draft resolution which, we would hope, may be acceptable to all, or at least to the great majority of Member States" [1516th meeting, para. 16].

32. The CHAIRMAN: Before I call on the next speaker, I should like to thank the representative of Belgium for his detailed and accurate presentation of the draft resolution, and I am sure I will be interpreting the feelings of the working groups, the larger and the smaller, when I say that his delegation and he himself have played a very active and constructive role in helping the members of those groups to achieve this successful end.

33. Mr. HOPE (United Kingdom): When my delegation spoke here a month ago [1524th meeting] to welcome this imaginative initiative on the sea-bed proposed by the representative of Malta, to whom we then paid tribute and have the honour again today once more to pay tribute, my delegation nevertheless drew attention to the immense complexity of the many issues raised by the proposal. We said, however, that we hoped that the permanent commit-

tee which it had been proposed should be established could be set up and could commence its work as soon as possible. But after listening to the speeches of many other delegations and the wide and often conflicting expressions of views, I must confess that at one stage I even wondered whether it would be possible to reach agreement at this session on a resolution which would allow this vital work to go ahead. That this has now become possible is due so very largely to your own skill, Mr. Chairman, and to the tireless efforts of yourself, who presided, and to the members of the small drafting group, Malta, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, India and the United States. My delegation pays tribute to them for their tireless efforts.

34. It goes without saying that we fully support draft resolution A/C.1/L.410 now before us, which the United Kingdom has today co-sponsored. We are, moreover, ready and anxious to support the important work of the proposed *ad hoc* committee.

35. I appreciate that this draft resolution does not go as far as many representatives, and particularly the representative of Malta, would have wished. But my delegation believes that it is right that the first steps in this most important and exceedingly complicated field should be taken with the widest possible co-sponsorship and general support in this Assembly. We hope that the results of our decision today and the work of the *ad hoc* committee will lead to positive proposals which will meet the challenge which has been offered. We wish the committee every success in its important task, and we hope that the resolution now before us will meet with the approbation of all in this Committee.

36. Mr. SUCHARITKUL (Thailand): The delegation of Thailand has taken a keen interest in this item and has followed with attention the general debate on the subject. It has also taken part in the Working Group which, thanks to your patience and skill, Mr. Chairman, has been able to produce one single text of a compromise draft resolution, which is now under examination.

37. Efforts have been made by several coastal States to confine the contents of the draft resolution to the item as envisaged and proposed by the representative of Malta, and to avoid its conversion into a totally different subject. To this extent, the Working Group has achieved a certain measure of success. Coastal States with continental shelves, like Iran over the Persian Gulf and Thailand over the Gulf of Thailand, have been able to safeguard their sovereign rights and interests under existing international law, despite certain attempts to open up submarine areas under national jurisdiction to foreign encroachments and exploitations. My delegation is pleased to be able to note that another tragic episode of the exploitation of natural resources of developing nations by countries with advanced technology has been narrowly averted. The item which, in its original purview and context, was designed to ensure mankind its natural heritage, has almost been turned into another disaster for the smaller and weaker nations, whose sovereign rights over sea-bed and ocean floor within the limits of their national jurisdiction were briefly threatened by the prospect of alien exploration and exploitation.

38. It is to be regretted that big Powers are not prepared to come to the assistance of the smaller and poorer nations.

Thus, notwithstanding an overwhelming weight of opinion in support of the developing nations, the draft resolution is silent on the primary consideration which should be given to the national development of developing countries.

39. The phrase, "for the benefit of all mankind", in preambular paragraph 4 is a compromise formula which may or may not work at all, depending on the willingness of the big Powers to fulfil their obligations in good faith. It is equally regrettable that no agreement was reached on the proposal made by the representative of Sweden [1527th meeting] to suspend or freeze the activities in the field of appropriation of submarine resources for exclusive national interests.

40. My delegation is able to support this draft resolution on condition that no encroachments are contemplated by countries with exploration and exploitation capabilities or appropriations made by them of the natural resources on the sea-bed and subsoil thereof within the national jurisdiction of Thailand.

41. My delegation has been able to endorse the draft resolution on the undertaking by such Powers that international co-operation is encouraged only so long as respect for and protection of the sovereign rights of the coastal or riparian States are ensured.

42. While it is too early yet to forecast any assessment of the work and achievements of the *ad hoc* committee, my delegation is prepared to let such a committee start its work now, however modest, by remaining as close as possible within the confines of the item as proposed by the representative of Malta.

43. Mr. THACHER (United States of America): My delegation is pleased to be one of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution. In taking this action, my delegation recognizes full well that the draft resolution falls short of what we, for our part, would consider to be the most advantageous action this Assembly could have taken at this session. But we place a very high priority on achieving a broad consensus in this Assembly. Such a consensus, in our view, is particularly important for two reasons.

44. First, this draft resolution marks the initial step by the General Assembly in a highly complex field involving important political questions. The desire to achieve common assent, therefore, is understandable and advisable. Second, because the future régime of the ocean floor is a matter of concern to all countries, regardless of wealth, technology or geographic location, it is necessary that the principle of consensus be established from the outset. This Assembly will accomplish nothing lasting in this field if it proceeds over the strongly-held objections of a significant group of its membership. We expect the same approach which has led to such a happy conclusion at this phase will govern the deliberations of the *ad hoc* committee itself.

45. During the discussion of this item many delegations have commented on the complexities of the issues involved here. Indeed, many of these questions were reviewed initially in the working groups which developed the resolution now before us. The *ad hoc* committee to be established by this resolution will undoubtedly wish to

address these and other questions and report on them to the General Assembly.

46. At this time I should like to comment on certain elements in the draft resolution in order to clarify our understanding of its meaning and effect. These points were brought to our attention by the representative of Belgium who was good enough to introduce this draft.

47. In several places there appears the descriptive phrase "as contemplated in the title of the item". This phrase refers to the preceding phrase "the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof" which are mentioned in the title of the item. The phrase thus refers to an area and environment, and not to exploration or use in that area and environment. Moreover, the reference in the title of the item to "the limits of present national jurisdiction" does not, of course, reflect any view on the part of the General Assembly regarding territorial claims which may be espoused by some States and disputed by others. Such claims are and will continue to be subject to international law. We believe this is clear from the text of the resolution itself as well as from the statement we heard earlier in this Committee as to the intentions of the drafters of this resolution.

48. Nor does the resolution express any views of the Assembly with respect to any principles which may eventually be developed to govern the exploration and use of the deep ocean floor. Any such questions regarding the future régime of the deep ocean floor, whether they involve commercial, scientific or military uses, remain to be studied and considered in future.

49. It is well known that my delegation had proposed that the Assembly at this session take a more substantial step. It did not choose to do so at this time. We believe, however, that the appointment of an *ad hoc* committee is consistent with an eventual decision which we hope the Assembly will take to establish a committee on the oceans with a broad mandate.

50. The *ad hoc* committee is basically instructed to study the scope of the problem. It is to consider all aspects of it—economic, legal, scientific and others such as arms-control. It will focus on international co-operation. It will consider the views and suggestions put forward at this session of the General Assembly for future action. It will have before it the reports stemming from General Assembly resolution 2172 (XXI) as well as from resolution 1112 (XL) of the Economic and Social Council, both of which are concerned with a wide range of marine questions. No doubt suggestions will come forward in the committee itself.

51. This is a sizeable workload for the committee. Its results will be, we trust, effectively to inform the General Assembly on this question. On the basis of its work we believe the next session of the General Assembly will wish to consider a committee on the oceans.

52. I should like to pay tribute to the leadership exercised by you in the working groups, Mr. Chairman, and to the harmonious give and take which resulted in the document my delegation is happy to co-sponsor in the hope and expectation that it will enjoy the broadest possible support at this session.

53. Mrs. MYRDAL (Sweden): In order to expedite the work in this Committee I might make a brief statement now although it is rather in the character of an explanation of vote. I have the honour to state that the Swedish delegation, although not a sponsor, is going to vote in the affirmative for this resolution on the question of the uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction. We will so vote without any reservations whatsoever in regard to what the resolution contains. We must, however, express our disappointment that the resolution gives so scant expression to the main principles, which in our opinion should be promoted in the work of the committee, that is, that the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and its resources reserved for exploitation in the interests of mankind as a whole, not least, of course, for the benefit of hitherto less developed countries.

54. As I stated in my intervention on 14 November in this Committee we should need at least a "gentlemen's agreement" that—while the deliberations in the *ad hoc* committee and in the General Assembly are going on—activities undertaken by Member States should not proceed in directions running counter to these principles. I was heartened to find that considerable understanding to that effect was expressed or implied in the positions taken during the debate by many delegations, including representatives of countries which undoubtedly possess the extraordinary technological capabilities which are needed for extending national activities over what has so expressively been called this "last frontier for natural resources on our planet". There have, indeed, been clear statements from such representatives that "the use of ocean resources should be for the benefit of mankind", and that the new environments to which human beings can extend their activities should be exclusively used for peaceful purposes.

55. The *ad hoc* committee to be established under operative paragraph 1 is given a fairly wide mandate, which will enable it to start a comprehensive survey of all the aspects of the subject. We are hopeful that during the coming year the committee will be able to work rapidly and intensively with a view to defining clearly the complex questions raised by the proposal of Malta, so very forward-looking, and that it will at the same time be able to point to the avenues along which solutions to these questions may be found. The valuable work already done or in preparation by the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies will certainly form a useful basis for this work. The General Assembly will then, next year, be in a position to approach the substance of some of the questions of principle, to which my country and many others attribute fundamental importance.

56. Mr. ESCHAUZIER (Netherlands): Mr. Chairman, I too wish to pay my sincere tribute for the excellent result achieved by the Working Group under your able guidance, and to express my gratitude to the representative of Belgium, who has spared no effort to reach an acceptable compromise; and I include also the other members of the Working Group.

57. In its first intervention the Netherlands delegation recommended [1525th meeting] the establishment of a

permanent commission; in our view, such a commission might have begun the first phase of its preliminary work more or less on the line which is now recommended in the draft resolution before us. We are therefore glad to accept this compromise solution since it seems, at the present juncture, the only realistic and possible one.

58. We have realized from the beginning that it would be very difficult at the present stage to insert principles, whether in the form of declarations or a freeze of some kind, but we hope that the paragraphs of the preamble containing a recognition of the existing problems will go some way towards giving satisfaction to those delegations which had hoped to achieve more.

59. I should like it to be placed on record that in the view of the Netherlands delegation the phrase contained in the paragraphs of the preamble and in operative paragraph 2 (3), "as contemplated in the title of the item", refers exclusively to the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, and does not prejudice any legal or other implications in the matter.

60. In conclusion, I should like to say that the Netherlands delegation will be happy to support and contribute actively to the important work that lies ahead for the *ad hoc* committee.

61. Mr. PARDO (Malta): Mr. Chairman, I should like to pay a sincere tribute to you, Sir, for your invaluable assistance in reaching a generally acceptable draft resolution on the item which we are now considering. Your wisdom and experience and your patience in reconciling different points of view eventually enabled the drafting group successfully to conclude its work. I also wish to express my thanks to the unofficial rapporteur of the drafting group, the representative of Belgium, who so ably and competently seconded your efforts.

62. The draft resolution represents a compromise. My delegation, and some other delegations which believed that discussion of the substance of the item before us was urgent, would have wished that it might have been possible for the General Assembly at this session to establish a committee, guided by certain widely accepted principles, to investigate the feasibility of establishing a clear and effective régime with regard to the sea-bed and the ocean floor, a régime which would reserve these areas exclusively for peaceful purposes and utilize their immense resources for the benefit of all countries, regardless of geographical location or of their stage of technological development. Representatives of several countries, however, pointed out that such action by the Assembly would be premature at this stage: the subject was entirely new; the issues raised were complex and grave; the scope of the item was unclear; and above all, documentation was lacking.

63. We have recognized in good faith the validity of many of the observations made and the need for many States carefully to consider the proposals which were made by my delegation before taking a decision thereon. Accordingly, without in any way relinquishing our opinion that an examination of the substance of the proposals which we made is urgent, we believed that it was necessary to defer to

the wishes, and indeed to the needs, of many Member States.

64. We believe that the draft resolution as now formulated will enable the *ad hoc* committee which is envisaged to do very useful work and to collect the essential documentation that is now lacking. We should like to express the hope that the *ad hoc* committee will be able successfully to complete its assigned task and thus enable Member States to reach a decision next year.

*Tribute to the memory of General Oscar D. Gestido,
President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay*

65. The CHAIRMAN: Members of the Committee, I am sure, will have heard with profound regret of the death yesterday of His Excellency General Oscar D. Gestido, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay. I am sure that I express the unanimous feelings of the members of the Committee in extending my condolences to the representative of Uruguay and, through him, to the family of President Gestido and the Government and people of Uruguay.

66. Mr. BERRO (Uruguay) (*translated from Spanish*): I was deeply moved by your words, Mr. Chairman, as I was by the tributes expressed in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly and in its various Committees. Yesterday, when I saw my colleagues stand in almost religious silence, it crossed my mind that Uruguay's grief had thereby taken on a world-wide dimension and universal significance. I must say that I was deeply moved by this. At the same time, however, I felt that, in a way, it was an act that did justice to a country which throughout its history has shown a spirit of universality, a profound sense of democracy and a deeply-rooted sense of law. I also felt it was a fitting act doing justice to a man who wore the military uniform, but who was stirred by a genuine feeling for democracy and who had a civic consciousness that ennobled all his actions.

67. General Gestido was the first President of the Republic in our country's new constitutional period since the reform abolishing the collegial system of government. He held office for only nine months and died a victim of public service.

68. In the space of only a few days, the United Nations has been moved by the death of three Heads of State, three men who were in their maturity and at the height of their powers and who died as a result of that effort, that anxiety, that pressure, that pain which has burdened command since the State has ceased to act merely as judge and policeman to become the depository of all the concerns and aspirations of the community and a banker, industrialist and businessman, swamped by all the problems and pressures of social, economic and financial groups. All of this leaves its mark on the spirit, the mind and the very life of a ruler.

69. I therefore accept this tribute, this homage done by the First Committee in recognition of that sacrifice which public office today implies, and to that immense sacrifice demanded of all men in government who give their lives for the good of the community.

Organization of work

70. The CHAIRMAN: I hope that representatives will be ready to speak on the draft resolution on the sea-bed and the ocean floor this afternoon and tomorrow afternoon. I intend to dispose of that item during tomorrow's meeting,

so that we may start on the disarmament questions on Monday, and in that connexion I would again urge the representatives to be ready with their statements.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.