

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTIETH SESSION

Official Records



**FIRST COMMITTEE, 1354th
MEETING**

Friday, 15 October 1965,
at 3.45 p.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Károly CSATORDAY (Hungary).

<u>Order of discussion of agenda items (A/C.1/896 and Add.1) (continued)</u>	
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1. The CHAIRMAN said that he had held informal consultations with many delegations with a view to solving the problem of the order of priority of the twelve items which had been allocated to the First Committee. Following those consultations, there seemed to be general agreement that the following six items should be discussed first, in the order read out: (1) agenda item 106 (Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons); (2) agenda item 95 (Question of convening a world disarmament conference); (3) agenda item 105 (Declaration on the denuclearization of Africa); (4) agenda item 30 (Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament); (5) agenda item 29 (Question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament); (6) agenda item 28 (Question of general and complete disarmament: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament).

2. Each of the items would be discussed separately, together with all relevant proposals and draft resolutions, which would be put to the vote at the end of the consideration of each item.

3. Mr. VINCI (Italy) said he agreed that the six items connected with disarmament should take priority over all the other items on the agenda. Two tendencies seemed to emerge from the procedural discussion which had taken place at the preceding meeting. One was based on the assumption that disarmament was a single problem, and should therefore be considered as a whole, before any solutions were sought; the other favoured the consideration by the First Committee of the convening of a world disarmament conference.

4. His delegation appreciated the efforts made by the Chairman to smooth the way to agreement among the members of the Committee; it emphasized, however, that it had not been consulted on the matter and therefore did not feel bound by any compromise agreement reached. It seemed, however, that the Committee had not yet arrived at a final decision

and that the possibility of organizing the work in a rational and practical way, on the basis of the facts and data available, still existed.

5. In the view of the Italian delegation, the First Committee had a twofold task: first, to make a dispassionate assessment of the present state of the disarmament negotiations from a substantive point of view and to study the outlook in order to determine whether there were specific problems needing urgent attention or lending themselves to separate solutions.

6. On the basis of that assessment and after a comprehensive study of the reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, the Committee would be able to turn its attention to its second task: to consider whether the existing machinery for disarmament negotiations was working or whether new methods should be found which were better suited to that purpose. It would be illogical and time-wasting for the Committee to devote its attention to the task of convening a world disarmament conference before ascertaining what was wrong with the current negotiations and whether the difficulties could be overcome in a different context. For those reasons, the Italian delegation thought that it would be proper to start with agenda items 28, 29 and 30, and that the Committee should then take up item 106—the Soviet proposal on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The consideration of those four items would give the Committee a comprehensive picture of the results of the work accomplished by the Eighteen-Nation Committee. Two different conclusions could be drawn: either the results were positive and the way was clear for further progress, or else no development was in sight. In either case, the possibility and the usefulness of a world disarmament conference would be confirmed, either because what had been done by the Eighteen-Nation Committee would have to be completed or because it would be realized that that Committee could do no more useful work.

7. In any case, by examining the reports of the Eighteen-Nation Committee and the Soviet proposal the First Committee would achieve the following results: it would not belie the decisions of the Disarmament Commission, which had given clear guidelines for the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee and asked it to submit a report; it would not ignore the result of the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, and, finally, it would draw up an inventory—positive or negative—of the debates and the work accomplished to date and of the possibilities available and problems to be faced. That inventory would enable the First Committee to decide whether the

world disarmament conference was desirable and practicable.

8. His delegation did not reject a priori the idea that a world conference might be a useful instrument for solving the problems of disarmament; it could not, however, share the view of those who believed that a conference would succeed where other negotiating bodies had failed. Primary attention should be devoted to the substance of the problem, before methods of procedure were considered.

9. The question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be given first place; any other order of priority would show unforgivable laissez-faire. To a certain extent, the compromise presented by the Chairman recognized that point of view, and the Italian delegation would therefore be prepared to accept that element of the compromise, on condition that the context of non-proliferation was sufficiently widened to make it possible to take advantage of all the work done at Geneva and all the contributions made by the various delegations represented on the Eighteen-Nation Committee. The Italian delegation therefore suggested that the first item in the compromise proposal should read: "Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons: relevant sections of the report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and former item 106".

10. With regard to the order of the other items, consideration of a world disarmament conference should follow and not precede the Committee's consideration of the substantive questions. A logical, objective and constructive method should be employed, and his delegation asked the countries which had argued that priority should be given to a world disarmament conference to consider its views as a gesture of sincere collaboration.

11. Mr. MBAH (Nigeria) said that his delegation had no serious objection to the programme outlined by the Chairman; it thought, however, that the question of a world disarmament conference should take priority over all other questions, including that of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Much work had already been done on the subject of a world disarmament conference, and many delegations attached the utmost importance to the choice of the widest possible forum for disarmament deliberations. Furthermore, the question of the convening of a world disarmament conference was in a sense procedural, since the Disarmament Commission had called for such a conference by an overwhelming majority. It therefore seemed more logical to dispose of it before dealing with the other items on the agenda, which were more concrete in nature and touched on the very substance of disarmament.

12. In accepting the programme outlined by the Chairman, his delegation expressed the hope that the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons would be disposed of as speedily as possible, so that the question of a world disarmament conference could be examined.

13. Mr. ALARCON QUESADA (Cuba) said that the first question which the First Committee should examine was agenda item 107 (The inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of States

and the protection of their independence and sovereignty), which had been submitted by the Soviet Union. Questions relating to disarmament and world peace, for all their importance, must not be allowed to obscure the real situation, which was that at the moment not all peoples were at peace. Peace must be based on the respect of all peoples for the rights of all nations, however small. It would be most distressing to listen to long dissertations on peace and the spirit of conciliation and peaceful coexistence while bombs were being dropped on the Viet-Nameese people, while the territory of the Dominican Republic was being invaded by foreign forces and while the United States Government was making statements which violated the principle of non-intervention.

14. His delegation was prepared, however, to accept the proposed solution if it reflected the opinion of the majority. Nevertheless, it was obliged to express certain reservations and to ask that the question immediately following the six items on disarmament should be the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of States and the protection of their independence and sovereignty. Among the six items on disarmament, moreover, priority should be given to the question of convening a world disarmament conference. Such a conference, which would be attended by all the countries of the world, including the People's Republic of China, would at the moment be the only suitable forum in which effective solutions could be found.

15. The Cuban delegation would therefore agree to any proposals accepted by the majority of the members of the Committee; it urged, however, that agenda item 107 should be taken up immediately after the items on disarmament.

16. Mr. CARVALHO SILOS (Brazil) welcomed the flexibility displayed by delegations, which had enabled the Chairman to open the way to agreement on the organization of the work. His delegation would feel at liberty to consider all aspects of disarmament directly related to the item under discussion; that applied in particular to the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, an issue which should be discussed in the broad context of disarmament before the consideration of each proposal or draft resolution was begun. His delegation might also examine all the reports and relevant documents directly connected with the question under consideration.

17. Mr. GEBRE-EGZY (Ethiopia) said that he accepted the order of items suggested by the Chairman, which had resulted from consultations with many, if not all, delegations. The Italian representative had advanced the argument that the problems of disarmament were all one problem and should therefore be discussed together. There could be no quarrel with that, except that technically and procedurally, and also in terms of their history, the items had been presented separately; they should therefore be discussed separately, as they had always been in the past, if serious difficulties were to be avoided. The Italian delegation's argument that the substance of disarmament should be examined before the machinery was discussed would be tenable if the Committee were dealing with a new question;

but disarmament had been discussed in its various aspects in the First Committee and at Geneva, and since it was very doubtful whether any radical changes of position could be expected in one session, the Italian argument was not convincing. He therefore appealed to the representative of Italy to accept the Chairman's suggestion. When the Committee had reached agreement with regard to the convening of a world disarmament conference it would certainly not on that account refrain from considering the other questions. In any case, his delegation could not agree to linking two or three disarmament items and discussing them as one, or to placing the question of a world disarmament conference almost at the end of the six items under consideration.

18. Mr. MATSUI (Japan) said he was glad to note that agreement seemed to have been reached on how the Committee should proceed with its work. He hoped that the procedural discussion would be brief, since the questions on the agenda were issues of life or death. While his delegation recognized the importance of the questions relating to non-proliferation and the holding of a world conference, it would have preferred that first priority should be given to the item concerned with the urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests. A large stride forward had been made with the coming into effect of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, signed at Moscow on 5 August 1963, and it was important to take advantage of that momentum. However, Japan was quite ready to accept the order of business suggested by the Chairman, subject to the understanding that during the discussion of any specific item each delegation could make such proposals and touch on such aspects of the question as it considered relevant.

19. Mr. MISHRA (India) said that the Foreign Minister of India had spoken in the General Assembly (1358th plenary meeting) of the importance his country attached to the questions of a comprehensive test ban treaty and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and had also mentioned the concrete proposals submitted by India together with the other non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, on those questions and on the question of convening a world disarmament conference. His delegation felt that the priorities suggested by India had been given due consideration, and it therefore favoured the suggestion read out by the Chairman.

20. Mr. OTEMA ALLIMADI (Uganda) said that his delegation would have preferred to see priority given to the question of convening a world disarmament conference. The response elicited by that item would provide an indication of the success the Committee might have on the other items, since that success would hinge entirely on the possibility of bringing all nations to agreement on the need for eliminating destructive weapons. Nevertheless, in the spirit of accommodation referred to by the Chairman, his delegation was prepared to accept the order of business suggested in the Chairman's statement.

21. Mr. COULIBALY (Mali) said that the convening of a world disarmament conference was indisputably a matter of great importance; after the Committee

had taken a decision on that item, efforts should be made to bring about the conditions necessary for convening the conference, the success of which could be ensured only by long and serious negotiation. With the clear understanding that the Committee would devote the same interest to the study of all the items on its agenda, his delegation vigorously supported the suggestion read out by the Chairman and appealed to other delegations to avoid any undue delay over that procedural question.

22. Mr. OWONO (Cameroon) said his delegation had always held the view that related questions should be considered together; and it was strengthened in that view by the fact that the Committee had only a short time to deal with its agenda. For that reason, and in an attempt to ensure that the discussion on the relative priority of the agenda items did not degenerate into polemics, he had proposed at the 1353rd meeting that the Committee should consider simultaneously all the items relating to disarmament. In a spirit of compromise, however, his delegation was prepared to respond to the Chairman's appeal and to accept the suggested order of priority.

23. Mr. TABOR (Denmark) said that his delegation approved the sensible compromise formula put forward by the Chairman, since it would enable delegations, during the discussion of draft resolutions under a specific item, to take up all the other relevant problems.

24. Mr. PADILLA TONOS (Dominican Republic) said he would accept the order of priority which was satisfactory to the majority of members. His delegation attached less importance to the priority which the Committee assigned to the specific question of the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of States than to the fact of its being given an opportunity to express its views on the matter.

25. Mr. VINCI (Italy) said he was still convinced that the Committee's debates should be concerned essentially with the substance of the disarmament problem, and that the machinery, despite the importance which the Ethiopian representative rightly attached to it, was simply a means to the desired end. Nevertheless, his delegation would support the order of items indicated by the Chairman, with the understanding that the item concerning non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which was the first to be discussed, would be linked to all other aspects of disarmament and that each delegation would be free to put forward during the debate any suggestions it regarded as useful to the work of the Committee.

26. Mr. RAMANI (Malaysia) endorsed the order of priority suggested by the Chairman, which appeared to be acceptable to a sizable number of delegations and was perfectly logical.

27. Mr. CARUANA (Malta) expressed the view that a general debate on all the disarmament questions—taken together or separately—should precede the consideration of the question of a world disarmament conference. However, his delegation was prepared to accept the order of business suggested in the Chairman's statement.

28. Mr. DIALLO (Guinea) said that while the order of items mentioned by the Chairman did not satisfy

all delegations, it was a compromise which resolved long-standing difficulties, and his delegation therefore supported it.

29. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection he would consider the Committee to have adopted the order of priority of the six agenda items which he had suggested at the beginning of the meeting.

It was so decided.

30. The CHAIRMAN reminded the members of the Committee that a decision still had to be taken

on the order of priority of the other six items on the agenda, and invited them to express their views on the matter.

31. Mr. BARNES (Liberia), supported by Mr. MISHRA (India), proposed that the Committee should ask the Chairman to continue his consultations with delegations and to report the results to the Committee at a future date.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.