



# General Assembly

Seventy-first session

## First Committee

1<sup>st</sup> meeting

Friday, 30 September 2016, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Boukadoum . . . . . (Algeria)

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### Introductory statement

**The Chair:** At the outset, I should like to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all delegations participating in the First Committee's deliberations at the seventy-first session. I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to all Member States for the privilege and distinction they have bestowed upon my country and on me personally through my election as Chair of such an important Committee. I am indeed honoured and deeply in debt to the entire Committee for the trust and confidence that you have placed in me.

Before proceeding to the matters at hand, I am sure that I speak on behalf of the entire membership of the Committee in extending our congratulations to Ambassador Karel van Oosterom of the Netherlands and his team for the skilful and effective manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the First Committee at its seventieth session. I should also like to pay tribute to the other members of the previous Bureau for all their hard work in ensuring the success of that session. I would also like to pay tribute to the secretariat and the Office for Disarmament Affairs for the work done during the previous session.

I also take this opportunity to formally express my warmest congratulations the other members of the Bureau at the seventy-first session — Vice-Chair Mrs. María Soledad Urruela Arenales of Guatemala, Mr. Kamapradipta Isnomo of Indonesia and Mr. René

Zelený of the Czech Republic, as well as Rapporteur Darren Hansen of Australia — for the distinction that has been conferred upon them. I am confident that we will jointly discharge the important responsibilities mandated to us by the Assembly. I have met several times with the other members of the Bureau and I am pleased to report that we have developed a strong, collegial and professional approach to our work, which certainly augurs well for this session of the Committee.

As I assume my responsibility as Chair of the Committee, it is gratifying for me to know that I can count on the cooperation of all members of the Committee, as well as on the support of the secretariat. I wish to assure all delegations that I shall do my utmost to discharge my responsibilities in order to ensure that our work is carried out efficiently and that our endeavours meet with success. I hope that our deliberations will be guided by a spirit of consensus and understanding.

### Organization of work

**The Chair:** The Committee has before it document A/C.1/71/1, which contains a letter dated 16 September 2016 from the President of the General Assembly and addressed to me. In that letter, the President informs me that the General Assembly, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September, decided to allocate 20 items to the First Committee for its consideration. The Committee also has before it documents A/C.1/71/CRP.1 and A/C.1/71/CRP.2, which contain, respectively, the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable for 2016 and the draft indicative timetable for structured discussion on specific subjects on the adopted thematic

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approach on disarmament and international security agenda items.

Before taking up those documents one by one, with the Committee's indulgence, I should like to make some procedural remarks concerning the conduct of the Committee's work. I should also like to draw the Committee's attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly regarding the work of the Main Committees, contained in the report of the General Committee in document A/71/250. In order to make full use of the time and conference services made available to the Committee, with its cooperation and support, I shall convene the meetings of the Committee at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. sharp. Similarly, I shall adjourn the meetings punctually at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. I trust that delegations will observe punctuality. I appeal to all speakers, especially the first three speakers at a given meeting, to kindly be present in the conference room on time.

In that connection, I sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort during this session in order to enable the Committee to maintain, or even improve, the record of the utilization of conference facilities. I should like to remind members that the Assembly has decided to continue its practice during this session of waiving the requirement that at least one quarter of the members be present in order to declare the Main Committee meetings open and permit the debates to proceed. The Assembly made that recommendation with the understanding that such a departure from the rules did not involve any permanent change in the provisions of rule 67 [108] of its rules of procedure.

On the question of explanations of vote, rights of reply and points of order, the Committee will conduct its work strictly in accordance with decision 34/401 (A/520/Rev.17, annex V), which states that explanations of vote should be limited to 10 minutes. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation, on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention should be limited to 5 minutes. In line with the decision taken by the Assembly in 16 September, upon the recommendation of the General Committee, points of order should be limited to 5 minutes.

Returning to the organization of work of the Committee and the agenda items allocated to it, as set out in document A/C.1/71/1, I would like to draw

the attention of the members of the Committee to the following.

First, five new sub-items have been added to the Committee's agenda, namely, sub-items (mm) and (qq) of agenda item 98, entitled "General and complete disarmament". Those sub-items result from the decisions taken by the Assembly at its seventieth session.

Secondly, as noted in the document, some parts of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is to be considered directly in plenary meeting under item 88, deal with the subject matter of item 98. I have been informed that the Assembly will consider the report of the IAEA tentatively on Monday, 12 December.

Thirdly, agenda item 121, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", is allocated to the First Committee for the purpose of discussing its working methods, as well as considering and taking action on its tentative programme of work for the Committee's next session, in 2017. In that connection, the attention of the Committee is invited to a note by the Secretariat, contained in document A/C.1/71/INF/4, which highlights the provisions of resolution 70/305, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Finally, agenda item 135, entitled "Programme planning" is allocated to all the Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly. That is to enhance discussion on evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports. So far, I have not received any information concerning that item.

I will now highlight a few details relating to the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable, as outlined in the document before the Committee (A/C.1/71/CRP.1), which is based on decision 70/516, of 7 December 2015. As indicated in document A/C.1/71/CRP.1, the First Committee will commence its substantive work on Monday, 3 October. It will hold a total of 26 substantive meetings and should conclude its work by 3 November, instead of 2 November as initially planned. That adjustment was made to accommodate the religious holidays identified in resolution 69/250 and the request contained therein to avoid holding meetings on those days. This year the holy days fall on Wednesday, 12 October and Sunday, 30 October. Accordingly, the First Committee will meet for an informal segment on 12 October to hear statements by representatives of civil society.

In accordance with the Committee's established practice, and as currently reflected in this session's provisional programme of work, the Committee will conduct its work in three phases. The first phase is the general debate on all agenda items. The second phase is a thematic discussion on specific subjects. And the third is action on all draft proposals. I shall reflect briefly on what we should expect under each segment.

The general debate on all items will run from 3 to 11 October, with the informal segment on 12 October to hear statements by representatives of non-governmental organizations, after which delegations will be given the floor to make comments or pose questions to those speakers. In A/C.1/71/CRP.1, it is indicated that the Committee will have its exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the follow-up to resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions and on presentations of reports on Thursday, 13 October. I have since been informed that the Deputy to the High Representative will engage in that exchange on Tuesday, 11 October. Document A/C.1/71/CRP.1 will therefore have to be revised to reflect that change of date. I have also been informed that the President of the General Assembly will address the First Committee on Thursday, 13 October.

To maximize the time available to us during the general debate, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open for inscription by all delegations wishing to take the floor. I am aware that a considerable number of delegations have already inscribed their names on the list. I invite all those who intend to speak but have not yet inscribed themselves to do so as soon as possible. As indicated in the programme of work, the list of speakers for the general debate will be closed on Tuesday, 4 October at 6 p.m.

I would also like to remind all delegations inscribed on the list to keep in mind that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to intervene at any time, possibly even one meeting sooner than they had originally planned to speak. To make the most efficient use of the resources allocated to us, I would like to urge all delegations taking the floor to kindly respect the time limits for statements, recognizing the maximum of 10 minutes when speaking in the national capacity and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of groups of delegations. The *Journal of the United Nations* has indicated a two-minute reduction in speaking time to

address the time-management concerns expressed by several delegations during the informal meetings on the working methods of the Committee. I would therefore strongly urge all delegations with relatively long statements to deliver a concise summary of their texts and to submit the full statement in written form for posting on the First Committee web portal, QuickFirst. For those who need assistance in accessing the web portal, kindly contact the Committee's secretariat.

The second stage of the Committee's work will focus on thematic discussion on specific subjects, as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and draft decisions submitted under the Committee's agenda items. The segment will run from Thursday, 13 October to Wednesday, 26 October for a total of 12 meetings. In line with the Committee's established practice, the details of the programme of work for our thematic segments are contained in the indicative timetable outlined in document A/C.1/71/CRP.2.

During that second phase, the Committee will take up the respective subject areas listed in the timetable and comprising the seven clusters on which it has traditionally focused during this phase of its work. They are as follows: nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, outer space (disarmament aspects), conventional weapons, other disarmament measures and international security, regional disarmament and security, and disarmament machinery. For each of the seven clusters, our proceedings will be made up of two parts. The first will begin in a formal mode with a panel or guest speakers, as applicable, followed by an informal question-and-answer segment during which delegations taking the floor will need to ask concise questions rather than read statements. The second part will be in a formal mode and will consist of interventions by delegations, including the introduction of draft resolutions and draft decisions.

On the afternoon of 13 October, the first day of the thematic debate, after the statement of the President of the General Assembly, the Committee will engage in an exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament on the theme "Current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and the role of international organizations with mandates in this field". To stimulate lively interaction, the panellists have been requested to submit, adequately in advance, summaries of the key elements to be included

in their remarks. Those summaries will be circulated to the members of the Committee by the secretariat. In addition, during the thematic segment, the Committee will hold panel discussions under cluster 6, related to regional disarmament and security, and cluster 7, on disarmament machinery, and introductory statements under clusters 1, 4 and 5.

On 26 October, the Committee will hold a traditional certificate award ceremony for graduating Disarmament Fellows. In addition, I have received a request from His Excellency Mr. Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, to participate in the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in context of the thematic discussions. I intend to consult with interested delegations on that matter.

The list of speakers for the thematic segment will open on Thursday, 6 October. This year, for the first time, delegations can inscribe their names on the list through the e-Speaker tool for the First Committee and the e-Delegate web portal. This is an initiative by the Bureau and is in keeping with resolution 70/305, which encourages Member States, to the extent possible, to make full use of the e-services provided by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will make a presentation on that new tool immediately after the conclusion of this organizational meeting. As indicated in the programme of work, the deadline for inscription on the thematic discussion list in Monday, 17 October at 6 p.m. Thereafter, the list will close. All delegations wishing to take the floor during that segment of our work are therefore urged to make every effort to inscribe themselves on the list of speakers before the stipulated deadline.

During the thematic segment, delegations taking the floor are strongly encouraged to limit statements delivered in their national capacity to five minutes, and statements on behalf of a group of countries should not exceed seven minutes. With members' understanding, I intend to apply such limits faithfully to enable the Committee to complete its work on schedule and avoid the difficulty of time shortage. I therefore urge all delegations wishing to take the floor at that stage to kindly prepare their statements in accordance with the noted time limits.

The third and last segment of the work of the Committee, namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions, will run from Thursday, 27 October to Thursday, 3 November for a total of six meetings. However, as noted earlier, the Committee will aim to conclude its work earlier, on Wednesday, 2 November. Therefore, the sixth meeting, on 3 November, will be held only if necessary. As indicated in the programme of work, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and draft decisions is Thursday, 13 October at noon. Compliance with that deadline will provide sufficient time to delegations for consultations and also ensure the timely issuance of all draft documents in all the official languages. The sponsors of draft resolutions and draft decisions wishing to schedule informal consultations on their draft documents are encouraged to begin as soon as possible in order to ensure that they have sufficient time for those consultations. Delegations which need assistance in booking conference rooms in that regard should contact the secretariat.

Taking into account the lesson learned from the Committee's experience last year regarding the need for the early determination of the programme budget implications (PBIs) of draft resolutions and draft decisions before the Committee, sponsors organizing informal consultations on the draft documents are encouraged to engage Secretariat officials in the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Committee Secretary for guidance, in accordance with the outcome of the Committee's informal meetings on working methods held on 3 December 2015 and 6 September.

I would like to remind all delegations that, in accordance with paragraph 12 of decision 34/401, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee require sufficient time to review the programme budget implications of any draft resolution or draft decision before it can be acted upon by the General Assembly. The General Committee also drew the attention of the Assembly to the views expressed by the ACABQ regarding the use of the phrase "within available resources" as set out in document A/54/7. In that regard, I would refer members to paragraph 59 of document A/71/250. Accordingly, the use of that phrase in draft resolutions and draft decisions should be avoided.

On a final note, delegations are reminded to consult the document entitled "PBIs: regulatory framework process and practice for the Main Committees". That document was prepared by the Budget Division and



presented at the informal meeting on working methods of the Committee on 6 September. It includes very useful information on the PBI process for the Committee as it makes its preparations.

All submitted draft proposals will continue to be listed in document A/C.1/71/CRP.3 and grouped under the seven clusters that I mentioned earlier. Those drafts will be issued subsequently as “L” documents, which will have on the title page the list of delegations that have signed on as sponsors of the draft prior to its submission to the Secretariat. Delegations that sign on as sponsors after the submission of a draft will be listed in document A/C.1/71/CRP.4 and subsequent revisions. Delegations are reminded that this year, for the first time, the Committee will be required to sponsor draft proposals through the e-Sponsorship tool for the Committee on the e-Delegate portal. The technical briefing today by the Secretariat will also cover that new tool.

During the action phase, the Committee will continue to be guided by the informal papers issued by the secretariat and listing the draft resolutions and draft decisions on which action will be taken each day. Those informal papers will be revised by the secretariat on a daily basis in order to update the drafts that are ready for action at each of the remaining meetings. In that regard, I propose that the Committee retain the procedure it followed in previous years by which draft resolutions and draft decisions are grouped under the seven clusters that I mentioned earlier. Also during the action phase, a draft provisional programme of work and timetable for next year, to be issued under the symbol A/C.1/71/CRP.5, will be circulated for the Committee’s consideration and action. Closer to the final phase of our work, further information will be provided on how we will proceed and will include the traditional ground rules for taking action on draft resolutions and draft decisions prepared by the secretariat and made available on QuickFirst.

The documents before the Committee for this session, including those already issued or forthcoming, are listed in document A/C.1/71/INF/1. One of the forthcoming documents is a list of participants, which will be issued as document A/C.1/71/INF/2. In that regard, delegations are requested to submit the names of their respective members to the secretariat as soon as possible and no later than Friday, 14 October at 6 p.m. The names of participants submitted after that deadline will be included in an addendum to be issued after the

conclusion of the Committee’s work. The Department of Public Information will issue press releases with daily coverage of First Committee proceedings, which will be posted on the United Nations website a few hours after each meeting.

Before taking action on document A/C.1/71/CRP.1, does any delegation wish to take the floor at this time for comments or questions on the information I have provided so far regarding the organization of the Committee’s work for this session?

As there are no such requests from representatives, may I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the provisional programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/71/CRP.1, as orally revised to reflect the new date of the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the follow-up of resolutions and decisions?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** Are there any comments or questions on the indicative timetable contained in A/C.1/71/CRP.2?

**Mr. Robotjazi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair and we wish you success in discharging your duties. I thank you, the Secretariat and your colleagues for preparing the draft indicative timetable and provisional programmes.

I have a comment regarding the draft indicative timetable for structured discussions, as contained in A/C.1/71/CRP.2. As I review the draft, I do not see any reference to, or mention of, a briefing that was proposed informally by the Chair of the Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I believe that everyone knows that that Working Group has already convened two sessions. The Committee deserves to be briefed on any progress that has been made. That is my question, and I would appreciate some clarification on the issue.

**The Chair:** The Chair takes note of the remarks of the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we will revert to him.

**Mrs. Schneider Calza** (Brazil): I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the Bureau on assuming your duties for the upcoming First Committee session.

With regard to document A/C.1/71/CRP.2, we note that, on the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on Thursday, 13 October, there is no mention of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares. We note that it was mentioned earlier that his request was received. We would like to reiterate the request that we made on 6 September to have him included in that panel.

**The Chair:** The Chair will get back to the representative of Brazil with an answer.

**Mr. Mahfouz** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to reiterate our satisfaction in seeing Algeria chairing the First Committee. We are delighted to see a sister Arab nation at the helm of the Committee. You, Sir, have the full respect of the delegation of Egypt, which will be giving you and the other members of the Bureau its sincerest support.

With regard to procedural matters, and specifically to document A/C.1/71/CRP.2, my delegation endorses the comments made by our colleague from Iran, Chair of the Working Group on fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). The Working Group has done very good work during its two sessions. A great deal of technical and thematic details were discussed, which we believe should be shared with all colleagues at the First Committee. It might also be interesting to hear a summary of what was said over the past year in the meetings of the Working Group. It would also help to prepare for SSOD-IV. In our view, it is of prime importance. It is also beneficial, and so we would endorse the proposal to discuss it in our Committee's work during this session.

**Ms. Luna** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. We would also like to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

It is my honour to speak on behalf of the 33 members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). As the Committee knows, all of CELAC's members are also parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, and members of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

(OPANAL). We believe that the interactive panels to be held during this Committee session will give all members an opportunity to exchange views with the panellists on specific topical issues, and not simply to present reports.

It is for that reason that, during First Committee organizational meetings in 2015 and at the informal meeting held at the beginning of this month, we requested the participation of the Secretary-General of OPANAL in one of the panels. CELAC's members would like to reiterate that request at today's organizational meeting, since the Treaty of Tlatelolco and OPANAL make up the specialized forum in the region to develop common positions and joint actions on nuclear disarmament. They have been a point of reference and source of inspiration for creating other nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world. We believe that OPANAL's participation in the most apt panel will add relevant, topical and interesting elements to the discussion.

On another matter, we would like to add our support for an additional panel under the thematic group discussion on nuclear weapons to include a representative from Humanitarian Initiative.

**The Chair:** With regard to the question raised by the representatives of Brazil and the Dominican Republic, I intend to follow up on OPANAL's request. In my statement, I said to the Committee that I will consult with all interested delegations. I intend to report back to the Committee next week on the OPANAL issue.

With regard to the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, there will be follow-up with the Secretariat. It was not brought to the attention of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, but I will be following up on that.

**Mr. Robotjazi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Given the explanation by the Chair with regard to our proposal for the inclusion of a briefing by the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, under the thematic discussion, it is our understanding that this briefing will be included in the revised indicative timetable. If so, we can join in adopting A/C.1/71/CRP.2. Is our understanding correct?

**The Chair:** I intend to continue working on that issue with the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Secretariat. If there is no objection from the floor, the

briefing will be added under the cluster on disarmament machinery on Tuesday, 25 October.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the draft indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/71/CRP.2?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** Before we adjourn, I would like to draw members' attention once again to agenda item 5, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees", and to rule 99 (a) of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

"All the Main Committees shall, at least three months before the opening of the session, elect a Chairman. Elections of the other officers provided for in rule 103 shall be held at the latest by the end of the first week of the session."

In that connection, the General Assembly, in its decision 68/505, of 1 October 2013, approved an interim arrangement concerning the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees of the Assembly at its next five sessions. In accordance with that decision, the Chair of the First Committee will be nominated from the Group of Asia-Pacific States for the seventy-second session, in 2017, and from the Group of Eastern European States for the seventy-third session, in 2018. In the light of that provision, I would like to propose that the First Committee consider that item some time in May or June 2017, approximately three months before the opening of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. Eloumni** (Morocco): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. You can count on our constructive support to ensure that all issues under consideration are moved forward in a balanced and efficient manner. We agreed to the

timetable and to the documents submitted today, but we would like to make the following comments.

With regard to time limits, we will support any measure that you take, Sir, to ensure that time limits are observed. In the same vein, with regard to draft resolutions, we insist that the authors of draft resolutions start consultations on their drafts as early as possible. That would allow sufficient time for consultations to take place. In the past, we have been rushed to take action and there was very little time for consultations on some of the very important drafts. Delegations should take advantage of the time allotted for consultations. In the past, we were put in a difficult position by substantive but very late amendments to the draft resolutions, and there was practically no time for us to seek instructions from our capitals. We therefore encourage delegations with substantive amendments to make them to the drafts as early as possible to give us time to seek instructions on our positions.

With regard to the panels, we agreed to the timetable and to the panels as proposed. That is the practice, but we would also like to point out that we remain unconvinced that this is the best way for them to be organized. Proposals were made on the timing, the participants invited and type of presentations given. We do not believe that the way they are currently organized and have been organized so far is the best possible way or that the purpose of the panels is being served. We would therefore like to invite you, Sir, as Chair of the First Committee, to continue consultations after this meeting to ensure that we find a better way of dealing with the panels. You will have our support on that, Sir.

**The Chair:** I would have made similar remarks to those of the representative of Morocco. Those are my feelings exactly. I invite all delegations to follow his remarks. Of course, it is up to the Chair to act in an impartial and neutral manner — perhaps more impartial than neutral — on all of the issues and in the organization of the Committee's work.

*The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.*