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Chairman:

Mr. RANA

(Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42.

Mr. HYLTEINIUS (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42, entitled "Study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification". I do so on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Yugoslavia, Zaire and my own country, Sweden.

I see this task as a token of the co-operation between those countries which were active in launching and carrying out the study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. The enabling resolution for the study was submitted in 1988 after long negotiations between the countries represented in the Six-Nation Initiative on the one hand and Canada, France and the Netherlands on the other. The Group of Experts was chaired by Ambassador Fred Bild of Canada. Governmental experts from 20 countries participated in the study.

Initiatives on the question of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification are by no means limited to the nine countries to which I have specifically referred. There are in fact a large number of States which take an active interest in this matter. This has been demonstrated in the General Assembly and its First Committee, as well as in the Disarmament Commission and in the Group of Qualified Governmental Experts; it testifies to the importance of the matter,

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

and it also bodes well for the future prospects for pursuing multilateral co-operation in this field within the United Nations.

The draft resolution underlines the important role that the United Nations, in accordance with its Charter, has to play in the sphere of disarmament. By that text, the General Assembly would recall that all the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations and that, consequently, all States have the duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament. It would further note that the critical importance of verification of and compliance with arms limitation and disarmament agreements was universally recognized, and would stress that the issue of verification was a matter of concern to all nations. In the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would recognize that the United Nations, in accordance with its role and responsibilities established under the Charter, could make a significant contribution in the field of verification, in particular of multilateral agreements. The General Assembly would take note of all proposals that had been put forward in the field of verification by Member States, including those by Canada and the Netherlands, France and the countries of the Six-Nation Initiative. It would also affirm its support for the 16 principles of verification drawn up by the Disarmament Commission, and recall the enabling resolution to which I referred earlier, resolution 43/81 B, and its mandate for a study of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification.

In the operative part, the General Assembly would welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/372 and Add.1), and note that it had been approved by the Group of Qualified Governmental Experts. The General Assembly would commend the report to the attention of Member States, and request the Secretary-General to give it the widest possible circulation. It would also request the Secretary-General to take appropriate action within available resources on the recommendations of the

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

Group. Member States would be encouraged to give active consideration to the recommendations contained in the concluding chapter and to assist the Secretary-General in their implementation where appropriate. The General Assembly would request that the Secretary-General report to it at its forty-seventh session on actions taken by Member States and by the United Nations Secretariat to implement these recommendations. Lastly, the General Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-seventh session an item entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification". The agenda item, while maintaining its broad character, would thus also specifically focus on the role of the United Nations in this vital field.

The Group of Experts was able to agree on a recommendation that the United Nations should develop a consolidated data bank of published materials and data provided on a voluntary basis by Member States on all aspects of verification and compliance, and that it should make the data easily accessible to all Member States. It also recommended that the United Nations should promote exchanges between experts and diplomats. The Group further expressed the view that, in the short run, the Secretary-General's capabilities might be further strengthened and broadened, provided that he was granted the necessary mandate. An example was mentioned, that of possibly extending the Secretary-General's fact-finding mandate. The Group of Experts also considered the possibility of the use by the United Nations of aircraft and satellites as verification tools. It did not pass definitive judgement on these issues. However, the Experts stated that a first step towards this could be a decision to organize, within the existing architecture, a clearing-house for data gathered from existing satellites, where training would also be offered in the field of basic photo-interpretation.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

Finally, the Group of Experts considered the question of an international verification system. The establishment of such a system within the United Nations had been proposed, inter alia, by the countries of the Six-Nation Initiative. Although the Group did not pass definitive judgement on this issue, it recognized that the subject would continue to be considered in the light of future developments.

The chapter on conclusions and recommendations is, of course, of particular interest as a basis for further action. However, it should be noted that the study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification contains an overview of that issue which is very comprehensive, and should therefore be of value as a reference work for the future.

To conclude, I should like to express the hope that this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Ms. MASON (Canada): As we have just been reminded by my colleague from Sweden, two years ago the General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it requested the Secretary-General to undertake, with the assistance of a group of qualified governmental experts, an in-depth study of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. It was an honour for Canada that a Canadian was selected to serve as Chairman of the Group of Experts that conducted this study.

My delegation is highly satisfied with the outcome of the Group's deliberations, which is summarized in the foreword by the Secretary-General to document A/45/372. The Group of Experts carried out a thorough and stimulating debate on the role that the United Nations might play in the field of verification, which included discussion of a wide range of specific proposals in this area.

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

Canada is pleased to join 39 other Member States from all regions in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42, introduced this afternoon by Sweden, in which the Secretary-General is requested to take appropriate action within available resources on the recommendations of the Group. The recommendations, as a component of the Group's report as a whole, were agreed by all the experts serving in the Group, and include specific suggestions on measures in the field of verification that the United Nations can take at this time.

The creation of a consolidated data bank was the first of the three recommendations and one that my delegation believes, when implemented, has the potential to provide a valuable service. This centralized source of information on verification may be drawn upon by all States as well as by experts interested in learning of the experience acquired and expertise already developed in the verification of arms-limitation and disarmament agreements. Canada has begun to provide such information and will continue to make available to the Secretary-General relevant material based on our research and experience in the area of verification.

I urge other Member States with relevant experience in this field to do likewise. The usefulness of the United Nations consolidated data bank will be determined, in large measure, by the support that it receives from its Members.

Canada equally looks forward to the implementation of the second of the Group's recommendations, namely that of exchanges between experts and diplomats. Both groups stand to benefit from such interaction, and the United Nations is uniquely in a position to co-ordinate such exchanges.

The third recommendation reflects the consensus view within the Group of Experts that the Secretary-General's fact-finding capabilities in connection with certain arms-limitation and disarmament agreements may be strengthened and

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

broadened, provided he is given the necessary mandate. This recommendation should be kept in mind by parties to existing and future arms-limitation and disarmament agreements.

The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report represents another step in the process of elaborating an appropriate role for the United Nations in the field of verification. Canada urges all Members to assist the Secretary-General, as they are able, in his efforts to act on the recommendations and thereby allow the United Nations to demonstrate its ability to make a positive contribution in the field of verification of arms-limitation and disarmament agreements. We look forward to the report of the Secretary-General at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly on actions taken to implement these recommendations.

In conclusion, I should like to echo the words of Ambassador Hyltenius in Sweden's introduction of the draft resolution and express the hope that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Verification in its broadest sense is one of the fundamental tasks of the United Nations. The conduct of Governments in various spheres has been a continuing concern of the Organization, much of whose activity has been focused on considering, and even on occasion judging, the conduct of countries in a wide variety of areas, including decolonization, international economic relations, human rights and - more recently - the environment.

With regard to decolonization, for example, the General Assembly demanded that it be made aware of the situation of various peoples under colonial régimes. Administering Powers have had to report on their policies towards their colonies, and the United Nations has frequently, despite the resistance of various Member

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

States, sent observers to those Territories or heard petitioners, and has thus verified, so to speak, the information given to it.

The United Nations has also played an important role in the verification of disarmament agreements. In recent years, at the request of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Secretary-General has investigated alleged violations of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. For nearly two decades the United Nations has been perfecting an instrument for the standardized international reporting of military expenditures. In this regard, we are grateful for the data recently transmitted to the Secretariat by the Governments of Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland.

At the same time, an Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament has been perfecting a system for the world-wide exchange of seismic data through the establishment of a network of high-quality seismographic stations, national and international centres and telecommunications channels for the rapid exchange of data between them. The work of that Ad Hoc Committee is of special importance for the verification system that might be used for an eventual treaty banning nuclear tests.

Through many peace-keeping operations and observer missions, the United Nations has acquired a great deal of experience which will prove useful in the matter of verification. Similarly, both the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research have carried out activities relating to various aspects of verification and have done studies of the subject.

Starting with its first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978, the General Assembly has intensified its work on verification in disarmament. There have been an increasing number of proposals aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations in this area. For example, in 1988, on the basis of the Stockholm Declaration of January that year, Argentina, Greece, India, the United Republic of

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

Tanzania, Sweden and Mexico proposed, at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, approval of the principle of a multilateral, integrated verification system under the aegis of the United Nations, as part of a sounder multilateral mechanism needed to guarantee peace and security during the process of disarmament and in a world free of nuclear weapons. Here I refer to document A/S-15/AC.1/1.

In 1988, in its resolution 43/81 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to undertake, with the assistance of a group of qualified governmental experts, a study of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. The results of that study have been distributed in document A/45/372 and Corr.1. We thank Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden for introducing draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42, in which the General Assembly would welcome the Secretary-General's report. As has already been said, the report is a good starting-point for enhancing the role of the United Nations, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in this field.

The delegation of Mexico believes that the Secretary-General must now carefully consider the various proposals in the report. Of course, the ability to collate data must be improved and exchanges between experts and diplomats must be encouraged. But it is also necessary now to identify means to help create an international verification system and thus follow the course that the vast majority of Member States have been advocating.

Mr. PATOKALLIO (Finland): I am speaking in support of what was said earlier by the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Hyltenius, when he introduced draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42, subtitled "Study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", and of what has been said by other delegations who have already spoken in support of the draft resolution.

My delegation attaches great importance to the subject of verification of international disarmament and arms-limitation agreements. Likewise, we support an enhanced role for the United Nations in this field. As we already stated in the general debate in the Committee, on 18 October, Finland welcomes the study at hand. The study contains a number of solid and practical recommendations. We are especially pleased that the idea of a verification data base, put forward by Finland in 1986, is incorporated in one of the recommendations. For our part, we are ready to make our computerized analytical data base for verification of chemical weapons available for use in the consolidated United Nations data bank.

My country sets great store by the fact that the study reflects a consensus of those who participated in its preparation. It seems to us that consensus is essential for further progress in enhancing the role of the United Nations in verification. Draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42 has been prepared with that in mind. We are grateful to Canada, and to Ambassador Mason in particular, for the efforts undertaken with the objective of consensus as the lodestar.

The study represents a common denominator of various views on the role of the United Nations in verification. This is the first time there has been such a convergence of views as far as practical recommendations in this field are concerned.

Coming from a land of vast forests, we learn early on that the most practical way to climb a tree is from the roots up. That is why we attach so much importance

(Mr. Patokallio, Finland)

to this draft resolution, and to its paragraph 5 in particular. It is a beginning - and that is what is important at this point.

Like those who spoke before me, my delegation urges that draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42 be adopted without a vote.

Mr. AMIGUES (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation, which is one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42, just introduced by the representative of Sweden, supports the essential points made by Ambassador Hyltenius. As he rightly noted, France is among the countries on whose initiative the Secretary-General undertook a study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. Moreover, a French expert took part in the preparation of the study, which the draft resolution commends to the attention of Member States.

That is why France fully supports the content of the report and hopes its conclusions and recommendations will be implemented. This is a first realistic step towards strengthening the activities of the United Nations in the field of verifying arms-limitation and disarmament agreements. In that connection, France is pleased that the report recognizes that

"The context in which verification takes place is that of the sovereign right of States to conclude arms-limitation and disarmament agreements and their obligation to implement them. Verification is conducted by the parties to an agreement, or by an organization at their request". (A/45/372, annex, para. 255)

My delegation wishes to thank most particularly the delegations of Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden for the active role they played in the consultations that resulted in draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.42. Like preceding speakers, I hope the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. NEGROTTO CAMBIASO (Italy): I should like on behalf of the European Community and its member States to make some comments on agenda item 60 (g), concerning confidence- and security-building measures - an issue on which two of our partners have submitted specific draft resolutions.

Confidence- and security-building measures are a pillar of our security, and they play an important role in complementing and facilitating progress in arms control and disarmament. Our aim is to develop further the régime of the Stockholm document established by the countries participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) by promoting further transparency, openness and predictability in the military field, thus reducing the danger of military confrontation. In this context, we look forward to an early and successful agreement in the negotiations under way in Vienna on confidence- and security-building measures.

The degree of mutual confidence in Europe has already increased as a result of the implementation of specific measures which are designed to reduce the risk of armed conflicts and are contained in the Stockholm document. In that framework, the use of on-site inspection has now become accepted. The clear link between this practice and the future requirements for verification of further arms-control agreements is another substantial benefit resulting from the Stockholm document.

The negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures taking place simultaneously with the talks on conventional forces in Europe, within the framework of the CSCE process, began in Vienna in March 1989. The Twelve, together with other States, are actively involved. These negotiations, in addition to improving security and co-operation, have been developing further communication and understanding among participants.

(Mr. Negrotto Cambiaso, Italy)

An important seminar devoted to the security concepts and military doctrines of the then 35 CSCR countries, which took place from 16 January to 5 February 1990 as an integral part of the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures, represented a step unprecedented in the history of arms control. The dialogue underscored the usefulness of strengthening the co-operative dimension of security and the need to ensure that actual military capabilities and deployments are in line with defensive concepts and doctrines.

In a world where examples of the use or threat of use of force continue to be a source of concern to the international community, confidence- and security-building measures should play an ever-increasing role. Although they do not by themselves represent a substitute or a pre-condition for disarmament, they are none the less a complementary element of great importance.

(Mr. Negrotto Cambiasso, Italy)

The positive developments in East-West relations already apparent at the last session have accelerated further. Dramatic political changes have taken place in Europe. Promising indications have been emerging in other regional contexts. However, these positive developments are marred by conflicts and tensions elsewhere. In particular, they are being overshadowed by the unacceptable Iraqi aggression in the Gulf.

In the view of the Twelve, confidence- and security-building measures, for their part, can play a significant role in translating positive political developments into greater transparency, openness and predictability in the military sphere, particularly at the regional level, thus contributing to the prevention of misperceptions and wrong assessments about respective national security requirements.

Transparency in military spending and exchanges of information on military budgets have also been taken into account as a means of fostering confidence- and security-building measures on the basis of a United Nations instrument for standardized international reporting of military expenditures.

The Twelve welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the experience collected by Member States in the implementation of confidence-building measures, which represents a further follow-up of the Disarmament Commission's approval in 1988 of a set of guidelines for the development of confidence-building measures. The Twelve would also like to mention the draft resolutions that have been submitted on the issue of confidence- and security-building measures.

Although the security situation in Europe has particular characteristics owing to special military and geopolitical configurations, the possibility of using the experience of European confidence- and security-building measures in other regions of the world must not be dismissed a priori or overlooked. The Twelve therefore

(Mr. Negrotto Cambiaso, Italy)

encourage all States to consider in this respect the widest possible use of confidence-building measures in their international relations, whether bilateral, regional or global.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I have to inform the Committee that the following countries have become sponsors of the following draft resolutions: draft resolutions A/C.1/45/L.11, Yemen; L.17, L.23, L.29 and L.47, the Ukrainian SSR; L.36, Senegal; L.46, Suriname; L.49 and L.50, the Byelorussian SSR; and L.51, Bulgaria and Papua New Guinea.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: As I informed members earlier, it is my intention this afternoon to distribute to the Committee an informal paper containing a list of all draft resolutions under disarmament agenda items arranged in appropriate clusters.

After intensive consultations with the Committee's officers, and with the assistance and co-operation of the Secretariat of the Committee, I am now in a position to present to the Committee a paper setting out the Chairman's suggested programme listing those resolutions in 13 clusters.

As the Committee is aware, a certain pattern has evolved during the past few years with respect to the clustering exercise, and the officers of the Committee were cognizant of this when they undertook the task of grouping the various draft resolutions on the basis of the most logical and practical criteria available. At the same time, the officers of the Committee endeavoured to group them, to the extent feasible, according to the subject-matter dealt with. In this connection I should like to reiterate that the officers were guided in their task by their desire to facilitate and expedite the work of the Committee with a view to ensuring the most effective and efficient utilization of the time available during this phase of the Committee's work.

(The Chairman)

With regard to the timetable for action on the draft resolutions and on the basis of precedent, it is my intention to move, as far as possible, from one cluster to another cluster sequentially upon conclusion of action on each cluster.

Nevertheless, in following that procedure we shall, of course, maintain the desirable degree of flexibility. Whenever I am in a position to give a precise indication of the days on which any particular cluster will be taken up, I shall advise the Committee accordingly.

As I informed members earlier, I was hoping that the Committee could proceed to take action on draft resolutions and decisions on Thursday, 8 November. However, during my informal contacts and consultations I received several representations that in view of the ongoing consultations delegations would like to have a little more time before we proceed to take action. After consultation with officers of the Committee and the Secretariat I would like to propose that the Committee meet on Friday morning, 9 November 1990, to take action on draft resolutions and decisions. I will keep members informed at appropriate stages of the clusters to be acted upon as we proceed further.

The procedure during the decision-taking stage on each individual cluster will be as follows: delegations will first have the opportunity to introduce any particular draft resolutions. Subsequently they may make any statements, other than in explanation of vote, which they regard as necessary with respect to draft resolutions in that cluster. Thereafter, delegations wishing to explain their positions or their votes on any or all of the draft resolutions in a particular cluster before a decision is taken will be able to do so. Then, after the Committee has taken a decision on the draft resolutions contained in a given cluster, delegations will be able to explain their positions or votes after the decision has been taken, if they so wish.

(The Chairman)

In order that the Committee's work may proceed in a systematic and efficacious manner, delegations are urged to make, in so far as is possible, one statement on the draft resolutions in any individual cluster, whether in explanation of position or in explanation of vote.

May I take it that the Committee is in agreement with the programme of work and the procedures that I have just outlined?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I therefore propose that we meet on Friday, 9 November 1990, to take action on clusters 1 and 2, and, time permitting, on cluster 3 as well.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.