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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 27 October 1986, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. MATTURI
(Vice-President)

(Sri Lanka)

later:

Mr. YUSOF
(Vice-President)

(Malaysia)

- Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic: draft resolution [139]

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Matturi (Sierra Leone), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 139

ZONE OF PEACE AND CO-OPERATION OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/41/L.11)

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Brazil, who wishes to introduce the draft resolution in document A/41/L.11.

Mr. MACIEL (Brazil): The Charter of the United Nations enjoins all Members of the Organization to maintain international peace, to develop friendly relations, to achieve international co-operation, to settle their disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force, and to refrain from intervening in the internal affairs of any State.

In developing these principles and purposes, the international community recognize long ago that the establishment of zones of peace in various regions of the world can contribute to strengthening the security of States within such zones and to international peace and security as a whole. Concrete efforts to that end have been made by countries concerned in different areas of the world, such as the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and South-East Asia.

I think that the time has now come to formulate and proclaim a well-articulated set of principles and norms which, taking into account the legitimate interests of the countries of the region of the South Atlantic, will contribute to the peace and security of that area as well as strengthening the links of co-operation and solidarity between the peoples on both sides of the ocean.

It should be as obvious to all as it is to us that the furtherance of the common interests of our peoples is in full conformity with the ideals and the standards that must govern friendly relations among States.

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

Draft resolution A/41/L.11, which I have the honour to introduce on behalf of the delegations of Angola, Argentina, Cape Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Uruguay and Brazil, was prepared after extensive consultations among countries of the region and has also benefited from constructive opinions and suggestions presented by countries from other regions. The draft resolution reflects concepts and ideas which over the years have evolved in parallel on both sides of the ocean.

I cannot fail to mention the particularly significant contribution to the development of these ideas that was made by a seminar which took place in Lagos in 1976 under the auspices of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs. We are deeply indebted to the remarkable foresight of the sponsors of and participants in that seminar and, in particular, to Dr. Bolaji Akyniemi, the present Foreign Minister of Nigeria, and our colleague Ambassador Joseph Garba.

From that time on the theme of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic has been discussed by high officials of several countries of the region, thus building up gradually a solid consensus on the fundamental lines of the proposal which is now before the General Assembly. The draft resolution incorporates aspirations, principles and objectives which these countries share with regard to the future of their region and underlines their commitment to improving understanding and co-operation among them, as well as to contributing to a healthier climate in international relations.

Although we consider the draft resolution to be self-explanatory, I should like to make a few remarks on some of its main features.

In the preamble the bases of this proposal are set forth. It states that the countries of the South Atlantic region are determined to preserve their

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, to develop their relations in a climate of peace and liberty, not only for their own benefit but also for that of all mankind. It also emphasizes the special interest and responsibility that our countries have in promoting regional co-operation for peace and development, through which the region can contribute significantly in strengthening international peace and security and promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter.

We are convinced of the need to preserve the South Atlantic from measures of militarization, from the arms race, from the presence of foreign military bases and, above all, from nuclear weapons. We are also persuaded of the critical importance for regional peace and security of the attainment of Namibia's independence and the elimination of the régime of apartheid.

The operative part of the draft resolution solemnly declares the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation. As it develops, the text, in paragraph 2, calls upon the States of the region to promote regional co-operation. Inextricably linked to the maintenance of peace is the achievement of economic and social development. In addition to undertaking the greatly needed efforts to improve the rationality of North-South relations, we have before us the opportunity to expand South-South co-operation between countries on both shores of the South Atlantic in search of new ways to develop our potentialities and attain better living conditions for our peoples.

There is a broad horizon for co-operation among our countries in the economic, social, technological and scientific fields. There is a great deal to be done, and the South Atlantic peoples, with the decisive assistance of the international community and the relevant multilateral institutions, will certainly do their utmost to overcome their own deficiencies and lack of resources, working together

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

for the common good. We are resolved to explore the possibilities open to nations that have confidence in themselves, in their partners and in the future of co-operation among developing countries.

The sea between Africa and South America remains one of the lesser-known parts of our planet. It is therefore of great interest to intensify the study of this mass of water and of its interaction with the atmosphere. Thus, the zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic would contribute to scientific co-operation, the optimum utilization of living and non-living resources, the preservation of the marine environment and to the development of transport and communications, all to the benefit of the international community and, in particular, of course, of the peoples of the region.

The moment at which we propose a framework for this new understanding comes shortly after the culmination of a long process of drafting a new law of the sea. The South Atlantic countries, which participated in this undertaking in an effective and constructive way, have every reason to dedicate themselves with enthusiasm to the application of its results. Co-operation within the South Atlantic zone, in all its aspects, must be carried out with full respect for the principles and norms of the law of the sea and, in particular, with the principle that the oceans shall be used for peaceful purposes.

The maintenance of peace and security in the region of the South Atlantic Ocean, to which operative paragraph 3 refers, is of paramount importance for the countries of the area. Just as our countries are committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to the establishment of a propitious climate for international peace and understanding, so it is necessary for the States of all other regions to act in the same way.

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

A fundamental measure for the preservation of peace consists in eliminating from the South Atlantic tensions and confrontations that are foreign to it. The South Atlantic cannot be viewed as a backdrop in the context of the rivalries between opposing blocs. It is a region with its own identity whose peoples have a vocation for mutual co-operation for peace and development. The framework for this co-operation cannot fail to reflect primarily the legitimate interests of the countries within the region.*

*Mr. Yusof (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

At this time, when important attempts between the East and the West to negotiate a reduction in armaments are taking place, we insist that the South Atlantic be for ever free from nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the reduction and eventual elimination of any foreign military presence will unquestionably contribute to the lessening of tensions in the region itself and in the world as a whole.

Operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, as well as the spirit and letter of the proposal as a whole, does not, as it could not, in any way imply any restriction whatsoever on the principles of international law relating to the freedom of navigation on the high seas and to the right of innocent passage through territorial waters. The countries of the region subscribe to these principles, respect them, and wish to see them fully respected.

Operative paragraph 4 calls upon all States, not only from outside the region but also from the region itself, to co-operate in the elimination of all sources of tension in the area, and reaffirms the basic principles of the Charter governing international relations.

The peoples of the countries of the South Atlantic region are struggling for economic and social development and yearn for peace and justice. They are determined to overcome poverty, to keep the peace and, where it does not exist, to establish peace.

There are problems that affect peace and hinder the development of the region. Their causes are outside the area in some cases, inside the area in other cases. Many of them are extremely difficult to solve and have defied years, and sometimes decades, of efforts and negotiations. The countries of the region are anxious to contribute to a fair settlement of these problems. They do not wish to

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

see themselves reduced to immobility by the lack of progress that so often characterizes the treatment of these questions.

The countries of the South Atlantic are determined to persist, as reflected in operative paragraph 5, in their struggle for the full implementation of United Nations resolutions pertaining to the independence of Namibia and the elimination of apartheid. Soon the day must dawn in which an independent Namibia and a South Africa free from apartheid will be able to participate in regional co-operation.

We do not live in the best of all possible worlds. Respect for the principles and rules of justice and law have not been the hallmark of our times. However, it is also true that the international community is anxious to restore those values, principles and norms of law in international life. Every State, whether powerful or not, must lend its support to this objective.

We are familiar with the instruments of international diplomacy and we are all aware that the means at our disposal are those of exhortation, reason and persuasion. Thus, the conscience of the international community must be an important factor to discourage policies and actions which run counter to the spirit of the proposed declaration.

This is a constructive initiative. It is not and cannot be interpreted as being directed against any one country or any group of countries. Its text reflects the consensus of the States of the region. Its success depends on the support of the international community. We expect all countries that strive for peace, development and co-operation to give it their full support.

In the process of preparing the draft resolution now before us, the sponsors made all possible efforts to accommodate all views and constructive suggestions brought to their attention. The group of sponsors was at all times available for

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

consultations and open to dialogue. Our goal has always been that of drafting a text which could be adopted by consensus.

Brazil reiterates its willingness to work untiringly on behalf of peace and development among nations. The Latin American and African countries, our partners, are familiar with our policy. They know that we reject domination and oppose hegemony. The strengthening of our relationship with our Latin American and African neighbours is a priority of the Brazilian Government, as President Sarney himself emphasized when he addressed the General Assembly at its fortieth session. We believe in egalitarian and mutually beneficial co-operation, based on mutual respect, acceptance of pluralism and non-intervention. By working together, our peoples should succeed in making the South Atlantic a region of peace, justice, independence and progress.

Mr. TONWE (Nigeria): In a world divided by poverty and greed, beleaguered by ideological conflicts and other follies, threatened by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it is the duty of every nation to seek every available means of promoting peace and progress through co-operation. It is in this context that my delegation speaks today to support a crucial step in the pursuit of one of the principal geo-political objectives of Nigeria: the international consecration of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation, as contained in draft resolution A/41/L.11, now before the Assembly.

In seeking this objective, Nigeria is motivated by an ardent desire to make a modest contribution to guaranteeing peace and security in the region - a pre-condition for its own socio-economic development. It is not motivated by any inordinate ambition to carve out a part of the world over which it could, with its associates, establish its influence or pre-eminence. We are motivated by a desire

(Mr. Tonwe, Nigeria)

to pre-empt a dangerous and resource-wasteful arms race in the region, and not by an urge to establish military supremacy. My country is spurred on by the urgent need to reduce tension in the region and progressively remove the potential causes of conflict among its peoples; not by any design to outmanoeuvre possible adversaries in a potential conflict. Far from being an attempt by Nigeria and other riverine countries to reserve the area of the South Atlantic for their exclusive economic exploration and commerce, our aim is to guarantee peace, free passage and sovereign partnership to all countries whose conduct will not jeopardize the tranquillity of that region.

(Mr. Tonwe, Nigeria)

Nigeria wants to see the South Atlantic develop into an active zone of progress and economic and technological advancement; a zone of prosperity which will not only provide abundant essential raw materials for the world but also share fully in the transformation of those resources into better living standards for the people of the region. We should also like to see the region become a pole of attraction for all nations, in such a manner as to leave no room for colonial, neo-colonial and imperial ambitions but rather to nurture relations based on sovereign equality and mutual interests.

Last but not least, Nigeria wishes to work relentlessly to ensure that the South Atlantic region becomes a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It is not that we have any illusions about the divisibility of our planet in the event of a major nuclear war; it is more in the deep hope that our actions will, in a small way, be a contribution to the disarmament process, one of the most urgent aims of this Assembly.

In the pursuit of these noble ideals, we count on the good will and support of all nations, large or small, rich or poor, militarily significant or militarily weak. We therefore commend the draft resolution (A/41/L.11) now before the Assembly for adoption by consensus.

Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Argentina shares the ideals of peace, security and co-operation that inspire the initiatives for the establishment of zones of peace in various parts of the world. That is what we told the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for example, in connection with his report on the strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region.

During the fortieth session of the General Assembly the President of Brazil, Mr. Sarney, expressed his country's special interest in preserving the South

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

Atlantic as a zone of peace, protected from the arms race, from the presence of nuclear weapons and from any form of confrontation originating outside the region. Argentina shares that interest, as affirmed during the general debate by the Argentine Foreign Minister:

"My country's backing of the initiative of the Federal Republic of Brazil ... also takes its inspiration from the same dedication to peace that characterizes the Argentine people and Government. Demilitarization of the South Atlantic ... will contribute substantially to a lessening of international tension." (A/41/PV.5, p. 96)

The geographic proliferation of nuclear weapons and the impossibility of verifying the commitments entered into by the nuclear Powers produce a picture of insecurity in the area. At the same time, the Republic of Argentina, because of its permanent interest in the South Atlantic, observes with deep concern the existence of sources of tension in the area and firmly believes that the problems causing them should be resolved as soon as possible in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly.

In fact the persistence of colonial situations such as the question of the Malvinas, the inadmissibility of apartheid and the illegal occupation of Namibia in southern Africa cannot be reconciled with the aspirations of the peoples of both coasts of the Atlantic and are incompatible with a zone of peace and co-operation in that ocean. The elimination of those sources of tension would facilitate relations and friendship and would encourage the promotion of economic, trade, cultural and technical relations for the benefit of all.

One demonstration of the spirit of co-operation inspiring the countries of the region is their continuing efforts to establish South-South co-operation on a solid

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

and permanent basis. The integration agreement recently signed by Argentina and Brazil is an important step in that direction.

Draft resolution A/41/L.11 clearly reflects the ideas I have just mentioned and is designed precisely to achieve the twofold objective of peace and co-operation. Furthermore, a declaration such as the one proposed in that draft would be consistent with the systems in adjacent regions that are already the subjects of an agreement on non-militarization, denuclearization and international co-operation.

We are convinced that the adoption by the General Assembly of a declaration of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation is clearly based on the purposes and principles of the Charter and will be a positive instrument for the benefit and development of our peoples.

Lastly, my delegation, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/41/L.11, expresses its confidence that it will receive the unanimous support of the Assembly.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): The delegation of the German Democratic Republic is speaking in the debate on this agenda item because it responds with sympathy and understanding to the proposal by Latin American and African States to declare the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation. On 24 October 1985 the United Nations General Assembly at its fortieth session took the unanimous decision, in its resolution 40/3, to observe the year 1986 as the International Year of Peace. In doing so it expressed, on the one hand, its concern about the maintenance of international peace and security in view of the growing dangers emanating from the nuclear-arms race on earth and the plans for its extension to outer space, a danger threatening the very existence of mankind. On the other hand, the General Assembly, in taking that decision, called upon all

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic
Republic)

Member States to press for tangible progress in the field of arms limitation and disarmament as well as for the strengthening of confidence and co-operation.

At this forty-first session of the General Assembly the general debate, which ended a few days ago, has fully confirmed the topicality and urgency of that demand. It has also shown that a growing number of States is opposed to a continuation of confrontation and nuclear arms build-up, and that they are determined to increase their contribution to the preservation of peace and the strengthening of international security.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

This is borne out by the many initiatives taken at both the global and regional levels to halt the arms race and promote the peaceful coexistence of States and peoples.

At the regional level special importance is undoubtedly attached to those activities which are aimed at establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones free of other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons, and zones of peace and co-operation in various areas of our globe, activities which have recently been considerably increased.

Proceeding on the basis of its positive attitude to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in all parts of the world, the German Democratic Republic welcomes and supports the proposal submitted by Brazil to declare the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation. We regard the proposal as an important step towards reducing tensions and strengthening peace and stability in that region. At the same time, it is directed against attempts to include the South Atlantic in the sphere of operations of imperialist military alliances. The proposal's implementation is inseparably linked with the settlement of focal points of conflict and tension existing in the region, especially the liquidation of the apartheid régime in South Africa and the granting of independence to Namibia.

As the President of Brazil, Mr. Jose Sarney, reaffirmed in his statement at the fortieth session of the General Assembly last year, the idea of the initiative to establish a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic is, above all,

"to ensure that the South Atlantic is preserved as an area of peace, shielded from the arms race, the presence of nuclear arms and any form of confrontation originating in other regions." (A/40/PV.4, pp. 14-15)

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The initiative is indeed, as is said in the letter from the Minister for External Relations of Brazil to the Secretary-General,

"a logical follow-up for other outstanding initiatives such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, on the prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America, and the Organization of African Unity's Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa." (A/41/143, p. 2)

The initiative's significance of course goes far beyond the South Atlantic. Its implementation would undoubtedly have a positive influence on the entire process of arms limitation and disarmament.

The establishment of zones of peace and co-operation in various regions - such as the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, South-East Asia, the South Pacific and the South Atlantic - could at the same time constitute an important step towards establishing a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

On the European continent, the German Democratic Republic, situated as it is at the dividing line of the two most powerful military coalitions in the world, guided by the principles and recommendations of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe as well as by a set of European treaties, is striving to make its own contribution to transforming that continent step by step into a region of lasting peace and mutually advantageous co-operation. In accordance with the German Democratic Republic's special experience and historic responsibility - first and foremost, the responsibility that war must never again start from German soil - only a few days ago the leading party of the German Democratic Republic, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and the Social Democratic Party of Germany in the Federal Republic of Germany submitted in a joint document principles for a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

This new initiative is aimed at relaxing the situation in Europe politically and militarily and bringing about step by step stable joint security at an ever lower level of armaments and armed forces.

Pursuant to its policy of dialogue, understanding and co-operation with all forces of common sense and realism, the German Democratic Republic will continue to support regional efforts of States which are conducive to peace and security and contribute to a climate of trust in international relations. In so doing, it is guided by the conviction that in the conditions of the nuclear and space age it is more than ever imperative that all States - large and small, and irrespective of their social order - act jointly and with a sense of responsibility to prevent the spread of the arms race to outer space, end it on Earth and proceed to disarmament and confidence-building measures which guarantee for all peoples peaceful conditions in their socio-economic development and fruitful international co-operation.

Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation has carefully studied Brazil's proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic and the draft resolution on the question submitted by a wide range of African and Latin American States. We view this initiative primarily as a manifestation of the desire of those countries whose shores are washed by the waters of the South Atlantic for a safer world in which States may devote their efforts to economic and social development.

The South Atlantic region comprises a large group of countries of two continents, each of which has its own political identity, history and traditions.

(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

It is an area in which hundreds of millions of people live, which is criss-crossed by major shipping lanes and trade routes and in which comprehensive, multifaceted international co-operation is carried on.

The majority of States of the South Atlantic make an important contribution to the attainment of the ideals of peace and security and the development of mutual understanding between peoples. The broad ocean expanses of the South Atlantic do not divide the States of Latin America and those of Africa in their desire to protect the region against militarization and the presence of military bases and nuclear weapons. As the general debate at the current session has shown, they are united in support of a nuclear-free world and concrete steps towards disarmament and opposition to the spread of the arms race to space.

The majority of the countries of the region are keenly aware that security, primarily in the military sphere, is the central problem of our age. In that connection, they have advocated the elimination of focal points of tension and military and other types of interference in the affairs of the region. Everyone is well aware of the constructive efforts of the countries of the region to bring about a settlement of regional crises and conflicts.

(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

It is essential that the African and Latin American States of the South Atlantic solve the problems of development. For them, the most acute problems are how to guarantee their economic security, how to establish a new order in international economic relations, how to eliminate the crisis phenomena in their economies, such as external indebtedness and so on. The developing countries realized that it is precisely militarism that calls into question not only the physical survival of mankind but also its socio-economic progress.

In the opinion of the Soviet delegation, the proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic is clear evidence that a new political thinking in keeping with the realities of today's world is gaining ground in the international arena. This initiative is evidence of the desire of the States of a wide region to build their security on the basis of co-operation so that, with the help of multilateral guarantees, they will be able to guarantee their own security as well as regional and international security.

The Soviet Union endorses this approach to the solution of security problems. Evidence of this was provided by the Soviet proposal for the strengthening of the foundations of peace and a radical reduction of armaments.

The recent meeting in Reykjavik, held at the initiative of Mr. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States for the first time took the world a long way towards finding ways to achieve disarmament and demonstrated that the elimination of the nuclear threat is a realistic possibility. The outcome of the meeting has been very encouraging to those who sincerely look forward to a breakthrough. What happened in Reykjavik should bring home to all peoples and Governments, regardless of their political philosophy, the need for decisive action to normalize the international situation, strengthen peace and dispel the threat of nuclear war.

(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

We view the proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic as very much an integral part of these efforts. As President José Sarney of Brazil commented in his statement to the General Assembly in September 1985:

"Brazil will make every effort within its power to ensure that the South Atlantic is preserved as an area of peace, shielded from the arms race, the presence of nuclear arms and any form of confrontation ..." (A/40/PV.4, pp. 14-15)

The Soviet delegation considers the joint initiative of the countries of Africa and Latin America to be a development of the well-known ideas enshrined in the Tlatelolco Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, adopted by the Organization of African Unity.

The establishment in the South Atlantic of a zone of peace and co-operation could serve as an additional stimulus for the mobilization of the action of States both within that broad region and beyond it to put an end to acts of aggression and bring about the peaceful settlement of disputes pursuant to the Charter.

A prerequisite for the establishment of such a zone is the normalization of the situation in southern Africa, which is fraught with the danger of explosion and contains within it a serious threat to peace in the South Atlantic and international peace and security as a whole. This threat is largely due to the aggressive foreign policy of Pretoria and the unprecedented brutality of the repression inflicted by the racists on the majority population of South Africa. It is urgently necessary that the intolerable situation in southern Africa be solved. The inhuman practice of apartheid and the Pretoria régime's deliberate acts of destabilization and aggression against neighbouring African States but be brought to an end.

(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

Based on its policies of principle, the Soviet Union advocates the adoption by the Security Council of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against racist South Africa. We resolutely condemn Pretoria's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons, and share the indignation which has been expressed at the actions of those that, notwithstanding the opinion of the international community, have stubbornly continued their co-operation of all kinds, including military co-operation, with the racist régime.

Nor can there be any further delay in finding a solution to the problem of Namibia. The prompt attainment of independence by its people, as demanded in United Nations resolutions, is an essential condition of peace and security in the South Atlantic region.

Furthermore, one cannot fail to be seriously alarmed by the tense situation that still exists in the South Atlantic on account of the dispute over the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. As far as that problem is concerned we support Argentina's advocacy of a peaceful solution on the basis of existing United Nations resolutions.

The Soviet Union resolutely condemns the policy of militarization of that region; this poses a direct threat to the States of Latin America and Africa, and to others as well. A necessary prerequisite for the establishment of a zone of peace is undoubtedly the elimination of all foreign military bases.

The establishment of a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic could help promote the development of mutually advantageous economic co-operation among all States in the region. This is in keeping with the demands of States for the enhancement of the well-being of their populations inter alia by means of the development of the resources of the ocean.

The initiative for the establishment of a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic complements appropriately the proposal of the group of socialist

(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

countries, submitted for consideration at this session of the General Assembly, on the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. The substance of the proposal is that the emphasis of the problem of guaranteeing security should be shifted from military methods to political methods. This presupposes the broadest co-operation and interaction of all members in the international community in various spheres. The approach proposed by the socialist States would encompass all aspects of international security: military, political, economic and humanitarian. This approach is based on the assumption of the close interdependence of regional and global aspects of the maintenance of peace and security.

The Soviet Union strongly advocates the establishment of zones of peace and security and considers that the formation of such zones is a positive trend in international relations. Everyone is familiar with the integrated set of proposals submitted by my country for the improvement of the situation in the Asian and Pacific region: our energetic efforts in connection with the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace; our initiative on making the Mediterranean area a region of stable peace, security and co-operation; and our support for the proposals for the establishment of nuclear-free zones in northern Europe, the Balkans, and other parts of the world.

In the opinion of the Soviet delegation, the establishment of a zone of peace and security in the South Atlantic could be an important step towards the incorporation of various parts of the world in a system of comprehensive, equal security for all States, encompassing all spheres of contemporary international relations.

(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

Implementation of this idea could serve as a barrier to the emergence of focal points of tension and help to ensure that the South Atlantic serves solely the cause of peace and co-operation. The United Nations must make a major contribution to the attainment of the implementation of this proposal.

In the light of those policies, the Soviet delegation supports the draft resolution declaring the South Atlantic to be a zone of peace and co-operation, submitted by a group of African and Latin American countries, and is prepared to vote in favour of it.

Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde): The climate of violence that has poisoned the international environment in the present century and that can best be illustrated by the two most destructive wars of all time, has brought about untold suffering to the population of many countries. For them, for the peoples who have been in one way or another submitted to the ordeal and destructiveness of military conflicts, there is nothing more precious than peace, which must be cherished, carefully preserved and promoted world-wide. The promotion of peace and co-operation amongst nations has thus become a basic objective of the international community and its translation into practice has been the object of a wide range of efforts.

Although peace is spoken of abundantly and the need for its attainment is stressed time and again by all nations, we are still confronted with acts which subvert its very foundation. Militarization, the arms race, proliferation of nuclear arms, military occupation, colonialism and racism are powerful negative elements present in today's world relations. The threat posed by these negative elements to a climate of peace is obvious. Their removal is an urgent need if we are serious about our quest for international peace.

I know of no country which does not explicitly assert the pursuance and the attainment of peace as a major objective of its foreign policy. And yet we live in

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

a world where peace is still a goal to achieve; where some countries either out of greed, national pride, strategic dominance or for other selfish reasons, break or weaken international peace by resorting to the use of force, or by choosing violence as a means of settling their conflicts and disputes, or of imposing their will. This tendency, which unfortunately is still strong in the international arena, runs counter to the best interests and well-being of the peoples of the countries involved.

Humanity has reached a stage where peace and co-operation between countries should replace violence and ideals of dominance; where the security and development of a country should be considered part and parcel of the security and development of all nations; where the words "peace", "co-operation" and "brotherhood" can find true realization and translation into the day-to-day activities of States.

For countries like mine, whose past colonial history has left a legacy of sources of conflict and underdevelopment, the meaning of living in peace and co-operation cannot be misunderstood. For us, peace is not only an ideal to attain for the well-being of our peoples but would also create an indispensable framework within which our development can take place. It is thus a prerequisite for the development of our countries, that a climate of confidence, peace and stability be promoted and strengthened. In the creation of this climate of peace, regional co-operation at all levels plays an important part and if pursued with consistency can contribute to the elimination of sources of tension in the region, strengthen respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations and foster the development of the whole region.

The Republic of Cape Verde, in accordance with its policies of peace and co-operation with all nations, supports any initiative that can promote peace, co-operation, and the development and well-being of all peoples.

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

In this context, my country from the very outset welcomed and sponsored the initiative of declaring the region of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation. We did so because we firmly believe that the establishment of such a zone will contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security and will benefit not only the peoples of the region but all mankind as well.

We are certain that the establishment of the zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic will be a concrete and substantive contribution towards strengthening understanding and dialogue between the nations and peoples of the region and will significantly promote their ideals of development.

The peoples of Africa and South America are bound by traditional relations of friendship and co-operation. As neighbours sharing the same ocean, similar problems and difficulties of economic underdevelopment, they can best promote their development if a climate of peace and co-operation in the region is further enhanced.

We are of the view that the establishment of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation is, under the circumstances, an important step in furthering peace and co-operation in the region, and an indispensable alternative to the militarization and nuclearization of the area, thus strengthening peace and security at large.

In a world where we witness the extension of rivalries to other regions, to the detriment of the basic interests of their peoples, it is essential that such rivalries should not be allowed to poison the harmonious development and peaceful co-operation of the peoples and countries of the South Atlantic. To this end all nations should respect the region as a zone of peace and co-operation and should refrain from taking actions and carrying out activities which undermine the pursuit of this noble and legitimate goal that the peoples of the South Atlantic region have set for themselves.

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

We therefore urge all countries to support the draft resolution in document A/41/L.11.

Mr. LUPINACCI (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): Uruguay, a country on the shores of the South Atlantic, is a sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/41/L.11, on the zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic.

My country's history and its existence as a nation, its past, its present and its future, are all closely related to the South Atlantic. Through that Ocean came those who brought civilization and culture, and the settlers who constituted the roots of our nationality and the sub-stratum of our cultural identity. Later, the waves of immigrants who helped to shape our personality as a people, also came across the Atlantic, as did the ideas, philosophy, sciences and arts that shaped our environment, opened up our knowledge of the world, developed and enriched our cultural heritage and contributed decisively to the shaping of our mentality, our idea of the world and of life and our love of peace and freedom. Much of our trade and communications abroad pass through the South Atlantic. The Rio de la Plata, the motive force of our development empties into the South Atlantic which bathes our beautiful beaches, the source of our main income from tourism. The waters of the South Atlantic also have great wealth in fisheries, the exploitation of which provides work and food for our people and foreign exchange for our development.

(Mr. Lupinacci, Uruguay)

Along the sea-bed and subsoil of those waters our territory naturally extends along the continental shelf, to the outer borders of the continental margin, which is approximately 300 miles from our coast. There, too, lie rich resources that need to be surveyed.

For all those reasons, Uruguay wants and needs the South Atlantic to be a zone of peace and co-operation for the benefit of our peoples, for peoples on both sides of the South Atlantic, the peoples of South America and Africa, indeed a zone of peace and co-operation for the benefit of all mankind. The solemn declaration of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation as the draft resolution proposes, is more than a mere rhetorical exercise, more than the simple recording of an aspiration which is part of the universal aspiration that all the seas and oceans should be arenas of peace and co-operation. This declaration has a special legal and political importance because it involves translating that aspiration into specific action designed to attain the two essential aims of promoting and ensuring peace in the region, and encouraging and developing regional co-operation.

Hence making the declaration of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation effective involves, as a response to the appeals it contains, the undertaking of specific commitments by all the States of the region and by the States of other regions as well.

Above all, those commitments are based on observance of the relevant principles and rules of international law, including, in particular, respect for the national unity, sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of the States of the region; the need to refrain from the threat or use of force; the inadmissibility of any situation involving the military occupation of the territory of a State or the acquisition of territories through the use of force, in violation of the United Nations Charter; the peaceful settlement of international disputes; full respect for human rights; and lastly, the principles of

(Mr. Lupinacci, Uruguay)

international law relating to the high seas and the rules of the new law of the sea, in particular the use of the seas and oceans for peaceful purposes.

In terms of strict observance of these principles and rules, our desire, in the interest of maintaining peace, is for all States so to act that the South Atlantic will be kept free of militarization measures, free of the arms race and free of foreign military bases and nuclear weapons. We call on all the States of the region, and those outside the region, to co-operate for the elimination of all sources of tension in the zone, and urging the States of all other regions, particularly those with great military power, to reduce and eventually withdraw their military presence in the region, to refrain from introducing into the zone rivalries and conflicts extraneous to it, and above all to refrain from bringing into the zone nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The ominous institutionalized violation of human rights practised by the racist régime of South Africa and the illegal occupation by South Africa of the territory of Namibia, whose people have thus far been prevented from exercising their right to self-determination and independence, are threats to peace and security in the South Atlantic region of such a serious nature, and so urgently need to be brought to an end, that they are a subject of special concern in the draft resolution. We share that concern.

The elimination of apartheid, the achievement of independence for the people of Namibia and the cessation of acts of aggression and subversion against the States of the region are essential prerequisites for making the South Atlantic a real zone of peace and co-operation. The effective establishment of that zone requires that those factors and all other factors that affect peace or create international tension must be eliminated. A significant contribution to that end will be made by the implementation of United Nations resolutions on colonialism, racism and apartheid.

(Mr. Lupinacci, Uruguay)

From the standpoint of co-operation, the States of the region should play their part as protagonists by increasing their trade and other contacts in order to promote their economic and social development and share, with due respect for the sovereignty of each individual State, their responsibilities in safeguarding their common interests, in particular in terms of preserving the peace and security of the region as a whole and the defence of its natural environment and natural resources. In that connection it is particularly important to agree on measures in line with the new law of the sea on the protection and preservation of the marine environment, with due regard for the particular characteristics of each region and the preservation of the living marine resources.

To sum up, my delegation, in supporting this draft resolution, believes that its adoption will constitute a step forward in the efforts to create, in different parts of our world with specific characteristics, to make of those regions areas of co-operation for the development of their peoples, free from confrontation and threats to peace, and in particular free from nuclear strategic confrontation. Those efforts will represent steps in a gradual advance towards the establishment of mutual trust and towards general and complete disarmament as a basis for the order of peace and justice in the world to which we all aspire.

Mr. OBEO (Cotê d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): My delegation has always felt that the collective efforts of States at the regional level to settle disputes by peaceful means and to meet threats to peace and security on the basis of a common approach can do much to help create an atmosphere of peace and confidence, conducive to the promotion of international peace and security. That was clearly the intention of the General Assembly when it decided to include on the agenda of the forty-first session the item "Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic". The United Nations, together with the coastal States of the

(Mr. Obeo, Côte d'Ivoire)

region, including my own, wished to preserve that part of the Atlantic between Africa and South America from military confrontation and rivalries, which could jeopardize the peace which, fortunately, prevails there. This climate of peace has already made possible fruitful co-operation among the States involved in several spheres. The transformation of that part of the Atlantic Ocean into a zone of peace and co-operation must contribute further to the strengthening of co-operation for the greater good of the partner States.

(Mr. Obeo, Côte d'Ivoire)

That is why my delegation warmly welcomed this initiative to turn the South Atlantic into a zone of peace and co-operation, and why my delegation took an active part in the preparation of draft resolution A/41/L.11, which we hope will be adopted by the General Assembly by consensus.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to announce that Bangladesh, Ghana, Nepal and Saint Lucia have become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/41/L.11.

We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote before the voting on the draft resolution. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. BIRCH (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes this draft resolution and commends Brazil for its initiative. We shall therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The establishment of a zone of peace for the South Atlantic region, which we understand will consist of the South Atlantic Ocean between Africa and South America not already covered by treaty, may make an important contribution to and, as the resolution says, strengthen the peace and security of the South Atlantic.

We, along with other States of the region, are concerned for the peace and security of the South Atlantic. That is well known and has been demonstrated in various ways, including our ratification of the Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The draft resolution does not, of course, affect our rights and obligations under those Protocols, other treaties, or general international law. Nor does it affect our attitude to certain of the resolutions referred to in operative paragraph 5.

Another object of the draft resolution, as expressed in its preamble, is the promotion of the principles and purposes of the United Nations. That must surely

(Mr. Birch, United Kingdom)

be so, although the draft resolution cannot, of course, affect Member States' rights and obligations created or recognized by the Charter, or other basic texts such as the Covenants.

Mr. BENYAMINA (Algeria) (interpretation from French): The Algerian delegation welcomes the commendable initiative taken by the sponsors of draft resolution A/41/L.11 to declare the area between Africa and South America a zone of peace and co-operation. Coming after similar initiatives concerning the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, the present one makes it quite clear that the need to restore the historic vocation always fulfilled by these expanses of ocean - that is, the vocation of promoting exchanges and co-operation - now extends to all seas and oceans.

This initiative is particularly important as we are dealing here with the strengthening of the historic link which the South Atlantic represents for Africa and South America and which has had such a distinct and profound impact on their peoples, their traditions and their cultures.

It also fulfils a salutary political and economic need, since both those parts of the world are developing and non-aligned. From that point of view, it cannot fail to encourage trade consistent with the objectives of South-South co-operation, and to strengthen the political harmony that is very much in the tradition of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, particularly in the case of a region of the world - the South Atlantic - which is frequently exposed to the rivalries of the major Powers because of its strategic value.

For that reason, it was important for draft resolution A/41/L.11 to reaffirm principles greatly cherished by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations, principles that are essential to the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

(Mr. Benyamina, Algeria)

Hence, my delegation would have liked to see the draft resolution enunciate the interrelationship of such fundamental principles as those contained in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations - resolution 2625 (XXV) - to which appropriate reference seemed to us to be very desirable.

In that connection, particular importance should have been given to the reaffirmation of the peoples' right to self-determination and to independence. That is of special significance in this case, since we are dealing with a continent - Africa - where, as the case of Namibia shows, there are some last remnants of colonialism and where that right needs to be strictly applied in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the relevant resolutions. Hence, the right of self-determination should also have been reaffirmed in its general sense, as a valid right, in this draft resolution.

My delegation realizes that a shortage of time accounts for the fact that the foregoing concerns are not reflected in the draft resolution. We trust that they will be reflected on some future occasion - that is, when the geographical limit of the zone of peace in question is precisely defined.

Subject to those comments, my delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/41/L.11.

Mr. LACLETA (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Spain will vote in favour of draft resolution A/41/L.11, which we owe to the initiative of Brazil.

That vote in favour of the draft resolution will reflect our support for a major political principle - the strengthening of international peace and security. There may be some shortcomings in the text, including its geographical imprecision, with no delimitation of the zone. Nevertheless, the aspirations set forth in the

(Mr. Lacleta, Spain)

declaration are universal, and we shall therefore support the draft resolution, with the reservation that the text cannot presuppose any change whatsoever in the legal norms and principles of applicable international law, especially the principles of the law of the sea.

The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/41/L.11. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Belgium, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal.

Draft resolution A/41/L.11 was adopted by 124 votes to 1, with 8 abstentions

(resolution 41/11).*

*Subsequently the delegations of Afghanistan, Democratic Kampuchea, the Dominican Republic, Liberia and Zaire advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of their vote on draft resolution A/41/L.11.

May I remind Members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The Mexican Government is pleased at efforts aimed at the establishment of a zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic. We commend the sponsors of draft resolution A/41/L.11, especially the Government of Brazil, for this important proposal. In adopting the draft resolution by 124 votes to 1, the General Assembly has given its categorical support for what a moment ago the representative of Brazil referred to as a constructive initiative. My delegation had the opportunity to follow very carefully the process of preparing the draft resolution just adopted. It is our understanding that it offers an appropriate framework within which to channel the efforts of the countries of the region to turn it into a zone of genuine peace and effective co-operation.

Of course, the draft resolution recognizes that the immediate independence of Namibia and the elimination of the abominable régime of apartheid will facilitate those efforts. This is why the draft resolution contains the appeals it does in operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, paragraph 3 being of special significance. It

"Calls upon all States of all other regions, in particular the military significant States, scrupulously to respect the region of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation, especially through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence there, the non-introduction of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction and the non-extension into the region of rivalries and conflicts that are foreign to it;"

(A/41/L.11, para. 3)

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

We hope that in the near future the States of the region of the South Atlantic may be able to reaffirm their own commitment in that same direction.

Mr. STROMHOLM (Sweden): I have asked to make an explanation of vote on behalf of the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, on the draft resolution in document A/41/L.11 which has just been adopted by the General Assembly.

Our delegations voted in favour of the draft resolution because we support regional efforts to promote peace and security. In the opinion of our delegations, proposals to establish zones of peace and co-operation stand the best chance of being successful if they are supported by all countries in the region. Our support for the draft resolution is without prejudice to our position on certain other resolutions referred to in operative paragraph 5.

Mr. AL-GHELANI (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): Given our faith in the principles of the United Nations and the right of peoples to self-determination, and fully aware of the effect of nuclear weapons on human development in all areas, my country had no hesitation in supporting draft resolution A/41/L.11 in compliance with the wishes of the States in the region.

Mrs. GROSS (United States of America): The United States has voted against draft resolution A/41/L.11 "Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic". In the opinion of my delegation, the resolution contains a number of serious defects which required our opposition.

The draft resolution inadequately defines the waters that would be covered and specifically excludes the littoral and hinterland States of the South Atlantic region from the zone. In addition, the resolution attempts to create an internationally recognized zone of peace through the adoption of a General Assembly resolution, rather than as the result of multilateral negotiations.

(Mrs. Gross, United States)

The resolution continues to imply that restrictions should be placed on naval access to and activity in the South Atlantic Ocean. Such restrictions would be inconsistent with the generally recognized principles under international law of the freedom of navigation on the high seas and the right of innocent passage through territorial waters.

Finally, operative paragraph 5 endorses various resolutions of the General Assembly that have not been acceptable to the United States. For these reasons, as well as other problems with the draft resolution, the United States voted against it.

Mr. BROCHAND (France) (interpretation from French): France can only encourage efforts to promote co-operation among States at the regional level. This policy has been repeatedly reiterated and we reaffirm it now in respect of the States of the South Atlantic region. That is a region which concerns us directly and with which we have many bonds of friendship and trade. None the less, the text just adopted by the Assembly includes certain provisions on which my delegation has reservations. Certain ambiguities could also have been corrected. The operative part of the resolution provides no adequate guarantees for freedom of navigation on the high seas. With regard to the ambiguities in the resolution, these concern the vagueness concerning the limits of the zone concerned, the definition of the States to which the obligations provided for would apply and the nature of the obligations in question.

In the light of these considerations, France had to abstain.

Mr. NISSIM-ISSACHAROFF (Israel): The delegation of Israel voted in favour of draft resolution A/41/L.11. The vote of my delegation is subject to the position of the Government of Israel that there should be no impediment to freedom of navigation of any kind for ships or other vessels in any region of the world. However, my delegation wishes to record its reservations regarding the latter part of operative paragraph 5, which urges the implementation of all United Nations resolutions pertaining to the issues referred to therein. It is the position of my delegation that the implementation of those resolutions should be considered on their substance on a case-by-case basis. My delegation's affirmative vote should not be construed as indicating support for all those resolutions.

Mr. SCHMIDT (Federal Republic of Germany): My delegation would like to explain why it abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/41/L.11. The Federal Republic of Germany supports the aim of the resolution just adopted. However, we have doubts as to the relationship of this laudable initiative to relevant principles of international law and, in particular, to the freedom of navigation on the high seas. Moreover, in our opinion, the geographical limits of the proposed zone remain unclear. This may create difficulties in fitting in this zone with other contractually established zones in the region designed to enhance peace.

Mr. MORRISON (Canada): My delegation would like to explain its vote on draft resolution A/41/L.11, which has just been adopted. Canada voted in favour of that draft resolution and, in doing so, bore in mind a number of statements made by the representative of Brazil in his introduction of the text, one of the most notable being: "We do not live in the best of all possible worlds" (supra, p. 12). Thus, we laud the attempt of Brazil, through this resolution, to make our world a better place in which to live. Secondly, we also note his remarks to the effect that this constructive text reflects the consensus of the States of the region.

Canada also wishes to make it clear that the wording of operative paragraph 5 does not change in any way any position that we have heretofore taken on any resolution of the United Nations.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 139.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.