



Chairman: Mr. Erik SUY (Belgium).

AGENDA ITEM 89

Need to consider suggestions regarding the review of the Charter of the United Nations: report of the Secretary-General (continued) (A/8746 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/C.6/L.870, A/C.6/L.881)

1. Mr. YASSEEN (Iraq) said that the question raised by the agenda item under consideration prompted a query as to the nature of the Charter, designed to ascertain whether its review was necessary. Strictly speaking, the Charter was nothing more than a treaty, which like other written rules of international law should follow the trend of history and constantly adapt to changes in international life. However, the Charter as the constituent instrument of the United Nations was formulated in very general terms and was confined to regulating the more important issues, a fact which gave it an internal adaptability to the evolution of international relations. It should also be pointed out that its implementation was entrusted to representative organs whose decisions could constitute a continuing adaptation of the Charter, either by way of interpretation or through the formulation of supplementary rules. It was always possible through interpretative resolutions to give the provisions of the Charter the interpretation dictated by new circumstances.

2. When the organ taking action consisted of representatives of the whole body of States, which was vested with the power to amend the Charter, there was no point in trying to draw a line of demarcation between the faculty to interpret and the faculty to amend. Thus, a trend emerged from the Organization's practice: successive resolutions on the same subject could have the effect of reducing the importance of certain provisions of the Charter or even of making them fall into disuse. For example, the effect of the series of resolutions on decolonization was that today Chapters XII and XIII of the Charter had lost some of their importance; and it was not beyond the bounds of imagination to envisage an opposite trend in the field of economic development. Similarly, it was the practice of the Security Council that had made it possible to determine the meaning of the expression "affirmative vote" used in Article 27.

3. The foregoing illustrated the eminently flexible nature of the Charter and made it clear that the Organization's practice had given rise to a real "United Nations law" for interpreting and even rounding out the Charter. But the adaptability characteristic of the Charter did not rule out the possibility of amendment and review. The question

therefore was whether a review was necessary at the present time. It was a question which had already been tackled at the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions. His delegation had argued at the time that the situation in international life did not justify a review; and today it maintained the same stand.

4. Examination of the comments received from Governments on the question (see A/8746 and Corr.1 and Add. 1) showed that the great majority of States were not in favour of an over-all review, although a number of States envisaged the possibility of specific amendments. It was encouraging to note that none of the amendments proposed were aimed at the purposes and principles of the Organization; but some Governments had criticized the functioning of the United Nations. The answer to such criticisms was that the United Nations was an association of States and that its smooth functioning depended entirely on the will of its Members. If the Organization functioned badly, States must ask the question how they themselves were behaving in regard to it.

5. In another direction, it would be possible to fill certain gaps in the Charter by special collateral conventions. Some Governments had noted that Article 33 did not impose on States the obligation to have recourse to any particular means for the pacific settlement of disputes. The text of the Charter could not very well have gone further on that point; but there was nothing to prevent that Article from being rounded out by collateral conventions or by the inclusion of particular provisions in international agreements. Thus a number of multilateral conventions provided that any disputes arising in connexion with them must be compulsorily submitted to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

6. Some of the proposals by Governments had to do with the constitutional structure of the Organization, in particular its composition and its principal organs. Any modification in that field implied a direct amendment to the text of the Charter. That had been done in the past, when the need had arisen to enlarge the membership of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Present circumstances did not seem to justify a further modification of those organs.

7. In any case, in order to change a particular provision of the Charter, it was not in any way necessary to embark on the process of over-all review provided for in Article 109. All that was needed was the adoption of a specific amendment to that effect. To undertake an over-all review of the Charter without sufficient reason would be to run the risk of impairing the prestige it enjoyed. His delegation was

therefore of the opinion that a review was in no way called for, though it was not in principle opposed to examining any limited amendments which might in due course be submitted.

8. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.6/L.870 had very wisely avoided mention of a "review of the Charter" in the operative part, but it was obvious that the instructions to be given to the proposed special committee would amount to instituting the process of Charter review. The creation of the special committee would be tantamount to institutionalizing the process of review or amendment, and the delegation of Iraq could not subscribe to that.

9. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had already had occasion to expound its position of principle on the question under consideration (*ibid.*) and that the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gromyko, had recently pointed out to the General Assembly (2040th plenary meeting) the great dangers that a revision of the Charter could have for the entire complex of activities of the Organization. The Soviet Union believed that the interests of all States without exception required that attention be focused not on a revision of the Charter but on its strict observance and on the fuller utilization of the opportunities it offered. In view of the importance of the question under consideration for the destiny of the world, his delegation would like once more to explain its position on the substance of the issue.

10. It was on the basis of the Charter in its present form that the States Members of the United Nations had for the past 27 years been practising their multilateral co-operation. The Soviet Union viewed the Charter as a major document of international significance which served the cause of strengthening peace and promoting co-operation among States. The emergence of the United Nations and its Charter had been influenced by the historical development of inter-State relations and above all by the victory of the United Nations over the aggressive forces of nazism and militarism which had determined the characteristic features of the Organization. The strict observance of the provisions of the Charter represented for the Soviet Union and for other socialist and all peace-loving States the right way towards preventing the repetition of the sacrifices and sufferings of a world war.

11. The Charter was based on the just and democratic principles of sovereign equality of States and self-determination of peoples. The maintenance of international peace and security was still the main objective of the United Nations, so long as there were forces that continued to act in a manner at variance with the principles of the Charter. Indeed, the United Nations had succeeded in making its contribution to the strengthening of peace and prevention of a new world war for more than a quarter of a century. The full correspondence of the Charter to the needs of the present day and the present level of international law and political relations was corroborated by the fact that during its existence, the number of Members had grown from 51 to 132. Each State on joining the Organization declared solemnly that it recognized the provisions of the Charter.

Unfortunately, not all Members complied with it: the mention of Israel and South Africa would suffice; and some States had become Members in order to undermine the foundations of the Organization from within. It was no coincidence that at its twenty-fifth session the General Assembly had unanimously adopted the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which reaffirmed all the basic purposes and principles of the Charter. Everyone was aware that in 27 years the international situation had changed considerably, but if the changes were analysed, it was evident that they were moving closer and closer to the purposes and principles of the Charter. The successes scored by national liberation movements and the accession of many former colonies to independence would surely not have been possible if the progressive peace-loving forces had not striven to ensure the inviolability of the Charter and the strict observance of its major provisions. The insistence of certain Member States on changing the Charter was bewildering. The facts testified that the realistically-minded majority of Member States did not see the need to revise and break the Charter, and were thus parrying the blow aimed at the Organization. An analysis of new ideas such as "weighted voting", changes in the system of financing, different categories of membership, and the revision of the purposes and principles of the Organization, showed that they arose from individual aspirations of certain States or narrow group interests, and that they were aimed at sapping the legal and political basis of peaceful coexistence and comprehensive co-operation among States. It was contended that the Charter should be renovated because the membership of the United Nations had increased. However, that was an argument in favour of the Charter, since it demonstrated an ever-increasing recognition of its purposes and principles. It had been maintained that the Charter had been worked out during the Second World War and laid emphasis on peace rather than justice; that was regarded as a deficiency. However, it was only in the conditions of peace that justice was possible and that fundamental approach of the Charter had not prevented the United Nations from solving, in addition to the problems of peace, security and disarmament, the problems of decolonization, and economic and social progress. The United Nations had also been criticized for not having lived up to the expectations of mankind in the maintenance of international peace and security and it was said that such a situation could be remedied through the introduction of structural changes in the United Nations. It would be naïve to contend that the reasons for the tensions and military conflicts prevailing in the world were to be found in one or another provision of the Charter. The reasons for the tension existing in the world were rooted not in the Charter but in the flagrant violations of the Charter by the imperialist States, waging an aggressive war with the aim of seizing and appropriating alien lands and suppressing the national liberation and revolutionary movements of peoples.

12. According to certain supporters of Charter review, the principle of the unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council was the prime evil. Nothing could be more incorrect than that assertion, since the principle was one of the key principles of the Charter.

13. The essence and meaning of that principle was to ensure that one system—the capitalist system, which had enjoyed the majority of votes in the United Nations and, in particular, in the General Assembly from the day of the foundation of the United Nations up to the present—should not be able to utilize the United Nations in order to impose its will and “to take by the throat” the other system, that of socialism. The principle of unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council, which was the cornerstone of the Organization, ensured the legal equality at the international level of the two great modern social systems, socialism and capitalism. Without that equality, co-operation within the United Nations and the existence of the Organization itself would be impossible. The principle of unanimity reflected the need for the agreed adoption of decisions, especially with respect to such a crucial matter as the preservation of international peace and security. The founding States of the United Nations had formulated that principle with great sagacity. It served as a safeguard against the conversion of the Security Council into an instrument of one or another group of States to the detriment of the interests of countries having a different social system. The danger of such a turn of events had appeared on more than one occasion during the existence of the United Nations.

14. The principle of unanimity had repeatedly helped to avoid hasty decisions which might have grave implications for the cause of peace. It was also of particular importance for new States, small countries and peoples fighting for their freedom. The Soviet Union had not used the right of veto for the sole purpose of protecting its own national interests and those of the other States of the socialist community, but always also to defend the interests of peoples fighting for their freedom and the interests of small States. There had naturally been instances when the rule of unanimity had been used by the imperialists for the defence of colonial and racist régimes. It must be remembered, however, that within the United Nations system it represented a realistic and the best possible solution in the modern world, and its revision or abolition would bring about the collapse and ruin of the Organization, by undermining the very basis of its existence. It was wrong to believe that the idea of revising the Charter was shared by a substantial number of States; in fact only 29 out of 132 Member States had sent their replies to the Secretary-General and of those 29 States only 7 had pronounced themselves in favour of a general revision of the Charter. The majority of States sensibly did not see any need for such a revision. That fact simply testified to the merits of the Charter, which fully met the needs of the international community.

15. The purposes and principles of the Charter had been solemnly reaffirmed in a number of important declarations of the United Nations such as the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of their Independence and Sovereignty, as well as the resolution on the non-use of force in international relations and permanent prohibition of the use of nuclear

weapons, which had been adopted the previous day by the General Assembly. States were being guided by the provisions of the Charter in work on the progressive development and codification of contemporary international law and in the international legal settlement of different problems between States, whether they concerned outer space or the sea-bed. If States did not strive unswervingly and fully to observe their obligations under the Charter, it would be impossible to solve the problems facing the United Nations.

16. It was sometimes said that it was not a question of revising the Charter but of studying and considering arguments for its revision. At first sight, that might appear to be a harmless and innocent exercise. But that was only a first impression. In fact, the mere raising of the question of revision was inevitably an expression of doubt about the correctness of the Charter and thus led to a weakening of its political and legal force and its moral prestige. As one of the founders of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, the Soviet Union resolutely opposed even the raising of the question of a revision of the Charter and it did so in the interests of strengthening international order. Those who were pushing the Organization for a revision of the Charter might well be asked what they had to suggest as a replacement for the existing provisions. It was no secret that different States had different ideas as to the desirability of correlating the political, economic and social aspects of the activities of the United Nations and as to the structure and methods of functioning of the Secretariat and other United Nations bodies. Surely a magician could not be found who would be capable of reconciling and harmonizing all the different opinions which existed and which would only multiply as soon as the question of revising the Charter was opened for discussion. It might result in a situation where the existing Charter would be undermined and impaired without the possibility of replacing it by anything constructive, useful and acceptable to all the diverse States of the modern world.

17. For that reason, the delegation of the Soviet Union believed that the only correct decision that the Sixth Committee could take was to recommend the General Assembly merely to take note of the views expressed, to discontinue consideration of the item in any forum and to remove it from the agenda. The delegation of the Soviet Union favoured that course and would vote in favour of a resolution along those lines.

18. It would be unable to accept a decision to continue consideration of the question in any organ whatsoever, since it considered that “dangerous fussing” with revision of the Charter was fraught with far-reaching political implications.

19. Mr. NAKAGAWA (Japan) said no one could deny that the United Nations had made considerable progress towards the realization of the purposes of the Charter in many different fields. Nevertheless, there were widespread views questioning whether the United Nations had really been as effective as it had been expected to be at the time of its foundation. It must be admitted that it had not wholly

lived up to the expectations of humanity, especially in the field of peace-keeping and international security. It was often said that it was high time for serious reflection on the past achievements and failures of the Organization and such opinions reflected the dissatisfaction of Member States. That feeling of dissatisfaction was due to a large extent to the failure of the Charter to function properly in a manner adapted to the contemporary and constantly changing political and economic realities of the international community. Great changes had taken place in the world since 1945; the independence of a large number of countries, the growth of the importance of United Nations economic and social activities, the participation of the Organization in such fields as the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, outer space and the sea-bed, as well as the shift in world power had not been envisaged in the Charter when it was adopted. Many of the 51 original signatories of the Charter had accepted membership on the understanding that adjustments to it would later be possible under the provisions of Articles 108 and 109. Moreover, many of the newer Members wanted to have a say about the Charter and to suggest improvements in the light of their own experience. As a result of those considerations, certain delegations had come to advocate that the Charter should be reviewed.

20. He outlined the representations—undertaken in 1969 and consistently supported by Japan—which had led the General Assembly by its resolution 2697(XXV) to request the Secretary-General to invite Member States to submit their comments on the question. Some 30 States had responded to that invitation and had shown a substantial interest in the problem, many of them favouring the review of the Charter in one way or another. During the general debate in the Assembly, more than 30 delegations, many of which had not yet submitted their views in writing, had expressed themselves in favour of the Charter review or had expressed ideas which would lead to such a review. Naturally, there was strong opposition from those countries which claimed that review of the Charter would inevitably jeopardize the basic foundations of the United Nations. However, not a single delegation had advanced the argument that the part of the Charter relating to its purposes and principles should be questioned. On the contrary, all the protagonists of review, including the Japanese delegation, considered those purposes and principles to be sacrosanct. Furthermore, it might be recalled that those purposes and principles were reaffirmed and elaborated 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, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly in 1970. The argument for Charter review was mainly directed towards those provisions relating to the implementation of the purposes and principles.

21. It was often argued that most of the failures of the United Nations were due not so much to any defects in the provisions of the Charter as to the failure of Member States to abide faithfully by its purposes and principles and by the resolutions of the various United Nations bodies. In fact, efforts had already been made to remedy that situation in the

past, but satisfactory results had not yet been achieved. Moreover, there was a limit to what could be achieved by stricter observance of the Charter. His delegation therefore believed that everything possible should be done to strengthen institutionally the functions of the United Nations as the irreplaceable machinery for ensuring world peace. It was necessary to consider how the ideals of the United Nations could be translated into practical terms, and how best the Organization could adapt itself to the changing reality of the international situation. His delegation was aware of the complexity of the problem and thought it important to avoid hasty conclusions. It might be that, in many cases, the amendment of the provisions of the Charter would turn out to be unnecessary or that, if it was necessary, the changes could be introduced piecemeal, as had been done in the past. His delegation was open-minded on that point.

22. His Government's position, of which a detailed statement, accompanied by specific suggestions, had already been provided at the twenty-fifth session (1239th meeting), had led it to join in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.6/L.870.

23. Mr. STEEL (United Kingdom) said that his delegation's position had not changed since the Committee's discussion of the question at the twenty-fifth session. It was always ready to consider reasonable and practicable proposals to improve the Charter of the Organization of the United Nations; but one test of the reasonableness and practicability of a proposal was the likelihood of its securing the degree of acceptance prescribed by Article 108 and Article 109, paragraph 2. That likelihood was currently no stronger than it had been in 1970. Only 29 Governments out of the total membership of the United Nations had felt that the subject was sufficiently pressing to require them to submit written comments; moreover, many of those 29 had commented in a sense unfavourable to the institution of a general review of the Charter or to the making of far-reaching amendments to it. The establishment of a review committee could not therefore be justified. His delegation entertained grave doubts regarding the wisdom of embarking on a substantial reopening of the Charter, for such an attempt seemed destined, as things stood, to peter out into futility; this was especially undesirable at a time when the United Nations had many other important tasks before it. There was also the consideration that very many of the more substantial suggestions that had been put forward for Charter revision were ones which could not be pursued without running into the firm opposition of a number of Member States. To seek to give effect to those suggestions would therefore not only be futile but would tend to create friction and dissension that would weaken rather than enhance the effectiveness of the Organization.

24. To entertain such doubts was not to assert that the Charter was necessarily immutable. It was, after all, a human institution, and it must be accepted that the Organization did not always function as it had been meant to do or as its Members might think it should do. But it would be a mistake to assume that substantial amendment or revision of the Charter was the cure for those ills. In the first

place, many of the apparent defects in the daily working of the Organization proved on a true analysis to be no more than defects in the way its affairs were conducted, defects which could be cured by a change of attitude. Secondly, even where there was a genuine institutional defect, the remedy was often attainable without any amendment to the Charter being necessary; very often what was required could be achieved by some modification of internal procedures. Much had already been done in that respect in recent years, notably in consequence of the work of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly. That work had not yet borne fruit in every case, but it was all proof that the ills in question did not stem from deficiencies in the Charter and could best be remedied by means other than the amendment of the Charter.

25. Nevertheless, there were certain problems whose root cause was undoubtedly some provision in the Charter that had either been a mistake in the first place or had grown out-dated with the passage of time. In such cases, the amendment of the provision in question might be the only effective solution. It was a solution which had already been resorted to in some cases where a clear need had arisen. But the Charter, in its existing form, was not seriously defective or out of balance or out of date; by and large and in most of the important things, it reflected the realities of current international life just as it had done in 1945. But on matters of detail, sometimes even important detail, there might occasionally be a genuine case for amendment; and where it could be shown that the necessary support for the amendment could be obtained from the requisite majority of Member States, the United Kingdom Government would always approach the problem with an open and sympathetic mind, as it had done in the past.

26. On the other hand, it did not seem wise to embark on a general review or to press for specific amendments which might encounter substantial opposition. Any amendment which seriously altered the existing structure and basic mode of operation of the United Nations would fall into that category. It was for that reason that his delegation, while fully understanding what had motivated the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.6/L.870, did not think that the approach it represented was one that it would be wise to adopt. It did not matter whether the draft resolution was regarded as aiming at a general review or at a process of specific amendments or at a mixture of both; all those objectives were incapable of achievement in existing circumstances and the attempt to achieve them was potentially harmful to the Organization and would thus run contrary to the real aims of those who advocated it. It was therefore necessary to approach the matter realistically and make absolutely certain, before attempting to amend the Charter, that it really contained a specific deficiency which could only be remedied—or at any rate could best be remedied—by a textual amendment. Even then, it was necessary to consider carefully what other effects such an amendment might have if it was not to do the Organization more harm than good. Finally, it was necessary to be sure that the amendments envisaged stood a reasonable chance of commending themselves to other States.

27. It was with those considerations in mind that his delegation had studied the various proposals set out in the written comments and listened to the statements made in the course of the debate. For the time being, it had still to be convinced of the necessity, desirability or feasibility of a wholesale or systematic review of the Charter, and of the case for embarking forthwith on specific amendments to any of its important provisions.

28. Mr. SPÁČIL (Czechoslovakia) said that the question of reviewing the Charter was of vital interest. What was at stake was the problem whether the United Nations would be able to continue discharging its noble duty—that of promoting the strengthening of international peace and security—under the present Charter, or whether it was to be doomed, by the calling into question of its very basis, to the sorry fate of the League of Nations, which had disintegrated just when its existence and intervention were most needed. In its 27 years of existence, the United Nations had encountered numerous grave crises, overcome many an obstacle and achieved important results—not, of course, without making a number of mistakes. There could be no doubt, however, that it had gained tremendous authority and become one of the most significant instruments for the maintenance and strengthening of universal peace. That was largely due to the fact that the bases on which it had been founded—i.e. its Charter—were eminently sound. An attempt to change those bases would not only endanger the existence of the Organization but would also cast doubt on what it had accomplished in the past.

29. Moreover, the significance of the Charter went far beyond the very existence of the United Nations. It could be said without exaggeration that almost all the multilateral instruments adopted in the post-war period were based upon the Charter of the United Nations and upon its principles. Similarly it was impossible to imagine the existence of the various international organizations without the Charter. An attempt to review the Charter would undermine the very foundations of international coexistence.

30. The Charter was certainly not an ideal instrument, and Marxists thought, for their part, that if it had been drawn up by them it would have had a more consistent character. However, it represented the best compromise attainable, embodying the progressive principles of international law which had won world-wide acceptance and which the States Members of the United Nations had undertaken to respect. If those principles were abandoned, the whole structure of the mechanism for maintaining peace would collapse. Experience had proved that when a crisis occurred it was not the Charter that was to blame but the fact that it had been inconsistently implemented or directly violated.

31. The advocates of revision claimed that the Charter had become obsolete and that the formulations adopted in 1945 did not suit the needs of 1972; but it was obvious to everyone that the Charter, in its existing form, was not a rigid instrument, but provided on the contrary for a number of changes so far as they were in accordance with its purposes and principles. A number of organs had been created on the basis of the Charter, their membership had

been enlarged and their procedures adjusted. All those things went to show that the Charter was still far from obsolete.

32. Nor was it true that the political aims of the Charter were now out of date. That amounted to saying that the struggle against colonialism, which had its justification in the Charter, was no longer relevant. The United Nations would always have to preserve future generations from the scourge of war. That main purpose was inseparable from the rest of the provisions of the Charter. If it was still to be pursued, the instruments for so doing must be retained in the form established by the Charter.

33. The fiercest criticism was levelled against the principle that the Security Council and, more particularly, its permanent members were primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. His delegation wished to emphasize that it was precisely that provision which it considered most important, in so far as it guaranteed that the measures taken by the Council would promote the cause of peace and security. The right of veto enjoyed by the permanent members of the Council was not a privilege granted only to the great Powers who, because of their economic and military strength, had special responsibility for peace and security; it was equally, perhaps primarily, a guarantee of the full equality of the two opposed social systems into which the world was at present divided. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic did not hide the fact that in its view the right of veto of the USSR guaranteed that the Security Council and the whole United Nations system would not be used against the interests of the socialist countries.

34. It was not the first time that attempts had been made to initiate a review of the Charter. Up to the present the majority of States Members of the United Nations, by rejecting such action, had seen to it that reason and realism prevailed. His delegation firmly hoped that the General Assembly would prove itself as rational at the current session as it had been in the past. It was submitting draft resolution A/C.6/L.881 because of its faith in the United Nations. There was no need to introduce the text in detail, for it could be readily understood. Its essence lay in the request that the General Assembly should state that the Charter of the United Nations had successfully stood the test of time and that it was not desirable at present to take any steps to review the Charter.

35. Mr. VAN BRUSSELEN (Belgium) stressed that although his Government's views on the item under consideration might appear negative, they were in fact positive, for it was concerned to preserve the Charter and, consequently, the United Nations. The Charter was the constitution of the United Nations, and it was for each individual Member State to give effect to the Charter by interpreting it or adapting it to circumstances. If that static text was to become dynamic, the United Nations must keep it constantly under review. Apart from that type of change, the Charter could be altered by amendments or by the drafting of a new constitutional instrument. To date, States had had the wisdom to limit themselves to the first type of

change, and there seemed no reason, at the present time, to go further than that.

36. It was first necessary to establish whether the Charter had any serious defects. In their comments States had always criticized the Charter as being a rigid instrument incapable of adaptation to changing circumstances. In that respect, the circumstances which had attended the establishment of the United Nations should be borne in mind, for they had determined its character to a large extent. It must also be remembered that the United Nations was made up of Governments which were of necessity guided by *raison d'état* and by political and social imperatives. Consequently, the Charter had indisputably stood the test of time well. It had been the framework for the most radical transformation of international society. It could certainly be adapted to meet new requirements without radical transformation—witness the increase in the number of members of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, the establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the projected Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme. Thus there was no legal, constitutional or political reason for any substantial revision of the Charter. Moreover, even if there were strong reasons for a revision, it was doubtful whether it could be carried out in present circumstances. It was already clear from the observations made by Governments and the debate in the Committee that the permanent members of the Security Council would not be prepared to ratify substantial changes, and their unanimous agreement was required under Article 108 of the Charter. In present circumstances, therefore, there was little likelihood that an attempt to revise the Charter would succeed.

37. Even if the idea of a thorough review of the Charter was abandoned, the continuing interpretation of its text would still be possible. To that end, however, full use must be made of all the possibilities of the Charter—something which had not always happened in the past. There was a lack of political will on the part of States, which had found expression in the Organization's current financial difficulties. In 25 years the world had evolved towards an inevitable interdependence; seemingly impossible dialogues had been established, and there was no doubt that certain of the Organization's current problems could be solved without changing the Charter if Member States really wanted to solve them. Many of the proposals put forward by Governments, such as the idea of economic and collective security, were contained implicitly or explicitly in the Charter. It would be sufficient to make it more dynamic and display the will to find means of utilizing its full potential. His delegation was not entirely satisfied with the working of the United Nations, especially with respect to the exercise to the right to veto and the voting procedure in the Security Council. But it feared that a review of the Charter might weaken or even call into question a universally accepted system which had already undergone considerable change since its inception. Thus, its position was positive. It was designed to avoid the risk that, through the revision of the Charter, the world would be deprived of a forum, for which, at the present time, there was no perceptibly better alternative. His country did not entirely rule out the

possibility of making individual changes in the Charter, but it doubted whether any such action was likely to be undertaken at present.

38. One of the representatives who had spoken on draft resolution A/C.6/L.870 had said that the only aim of the draft was to initiate a new study of the Organization. If that was the case, the Secretary-General might perhaps be able to undertake such a study. Although other representatives had declared that the draft had not been submitted for the purpose of bringing about radical changes, some of the

suggestions put forward by Governments would certainly involve very substantial changes.

39. In his delegation's view the proposal to establish a special committee, whose terms of reference had still not been made clear, was hardly well-timed.

40. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers on the item under consideration would be closed that evening at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.