

UNITED NATIONS  
**General Assembly**

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

*Official Records*

FIRST COMMITTEE  
29th meeting  
held on  
Wednesday, 6 November 1991  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

---

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. MROZIEWICZ

(Poland)

CONTENTS

- Consideration of and action on draft resolutions under all disarmament agenda items (continued)
- Programme of work

---

This record is subject to correction.  
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned  
*within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-501,  
2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

91-61688 7204V (E)

Distr. GENERAL  
A/C.1/46/PV.29  
14 November 1991

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS UNDER ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the European Community and its member States, I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.22, entitled "Confidence- and security-building measures and conventional disarmament in Europe". This draft resolution has been submitted jointly by the Twelve and is co-sponsored by all the States Members of the United Nations that are taking part in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), as well as by Belarus and Ukraine.

This text, which is a sequel to resolutions 43/75 P of 1988, 44/116 I of 1989 and 45/58 I of 1990, concerns the results to date and the continuation of the Vienna negotiations taking place in the framework of the CSCE - one set of negotiations relating to conventional armed forces in Europe and the other relating to confidence- and security-building measures in Europe.

Last year the General Assembly welcomed the signing in Paris, on 19 November 1990, of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the adoption at the CSCE Paris summit on 17 November 1990 of the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Europe.

The Twelve are pleased that it has been possible to remove the obstacles that had arisen on the way to the ratification of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. This should lead to the rapid and complete implementation of that important Treaty. The Twelve are convinced that the

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

implementation of the Treaty and the confidence- and security-building measures agreed upon by the States participating in the CSCE will contribute to reinforcing not only security and stability on the European continent, but also international peace and security world-wide.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

The decision taken by the States involved - first, to continue the current negotiations and, secondly, to prepare for the negotiations that are to follow the Helsinki summit meeting in 1992 - constitutes a further step in establishing a new security order in Europe. That new security order must continue to be based on the process provided by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which, more than ever, constitutes an important element of stability at a time when the continent is going through considerable but positive upheavals - sometimes, unfortunately, involving conflict. The Twelve hope that, as in the past, the draft resolution they are submitting will be adopted by consensus.

(spoke in English)

I should now like to make some comments on the issue of conventional disarmament, again speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community.

The Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament states:

"Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, the limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons should be resolutely pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament." (S-10/2, para. 81)

Without doubt, nuclear disarmament has received a tremendous boost from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (the INF Treaty) and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

Conventional disarmament has also seen major progress through the signing in Paris of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe in November 1990. The process of conventional arms control and disarmament in Europe is continuing. Questions such as the reduction of manpower levels and stabilizing measures

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

are being considered. After the 1992 follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe new negotiations on disarmament and on confidence-building and security-building are to begin between all CSCE participating States.

The increasing attention being given conventional disarmament is to be welcomed. Since the Second World War conventional weapons have caused an enormous number of casualties. But it is not simply the high number of casualties that should induce States to embark on a process of conventional disarmament. More than anything else, the Gulf War has shown that the international community does not accept the use of armed aggression to solve disputes. Acquiring vast arsenals of conventional weapons in quantities that clearly go beyond the needs of defence and exerting efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction simply do not pay and will eventually lead to disaster. States should base their defence policies on military capability sufficient for individual or collective self-defence. They should not resort to the threat or use of force to settle differences. The principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes should be upheld and reconfirmed.

The Twelve have on a number of occasions in the past elaborated on the necessity to embark on conventional disarmament. The European model is not one for all regions to follow in all its aspects, but it is precisely because the Twelve are only too aware of the difficulties of embarking on a process of conventional disarmament that they cannot but urge others to begin without delay.

Last year's session of the General Assembly was positive in that sense as well, as can be seen in resolution 45/58 G, which was adopted by consensus and which stated that it would be welcome if the Conference on Disarmament were to address the issue of conventional disarmament when practicable. It is noted

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet included conventional disarmament on its operative agenda.

The European example shows that conventional disarmament cannot be viewed in isolation. Breakthroughs and progress occur when political circumstances allow for such potential developments. States should therefore strive to reduce the risk of conflict.

The political will to settle disputes peacefully and the adoption of confidence-building measures can be conducive to disarmament measures. Openness and transparency should be the first priority and an essential step towards creating a climate of confidence. States should concentrate their efforts first on establishing stability, in particular by eliminating the capability to launch surprise attacks and large-scale offensive operations. The objective of conventional disarmament measures should be increased security at the lowest-possible level of armaments and military forces.

In the future, conventional disarmament will certainly get a tremendous boost from the increased transparency of international arms transactions, if this body indeed agrees on the establishment of an international arms-transactions register under the auspices of the United Nations.

It should of course be clear that weapons and equipment that are the subjects of a conventional-forces reductions agreement should not be transferred, either directly or indirectly, to States not parties to the agreement in question. The principal method of dealing with such reduction should be the destruction of such weapons and equipment.

A clearer insight into each other's military capabilities will help States to embark on disarmament efforts focused on systems that are perceived to be particularly threatening and, by that very nature, destabilizing.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

The subject of conventional arms control and disarmament should be kept at the forefront of the multilateral debate on disarmament. Further consideration should be given to the subject of conventional disarmament in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. The Twelve stand ready to provide any assistance and expertise they have gained.

Mr. HYLTIENIUS (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.13 concerning the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, together with three protocols on non-detectable fragments, on land-mines, booby traps and other devices and on incendiary weapons.

(Mr. Hyitenius, Sweden)

After many years of negotiations the Convention was opened for signature in April 1981 and the Secretary-General of the United Nations was designated as the Depository.

The adoption of the Convention was the result of several years of laborious work. The fact that it had already entered into force in December 1983 was an encouraging indication of the wish of the international community progressively to develop international humanitarian law in the field of conventional weaponry and to give it effect. The draft resolution reflects the satisfaction felt at this positive development but it also notes the need for a wider ratification of the Convention and the three annexed Protocols. The draft resolution urges States that have not yet become parties to the Convention and its annexed Protocols to exert their best endeavours to do so as early as possible so that the instruments might ultimately obtain universal adherence. The draft resolution also notes the potential of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to consider questions pursuant to the Convention.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia and my own country, Sweden. On behalf of the sponsors, I should like to express the hope that draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.13 will be adopted without a vote.

Speaking on behalf of my own delegation, I should like to make the following additional remarks. According to paragraph 3 of article 8 of the Convention, a review or amendment conference can be convened 10 years



(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

following the entry into force of the Convention, that is, in 1993. Sweden considers that the appropriateness of such a conference should now be actively considered with a view to taking a decision during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. In the opinion of my country, some weapons categories, like incendiary weapons, should be subjected to further specific restrictions. It is also our opinion that naval mines should be the object of restrictions in a new protocol, preferably within the framework of the present Convention. The Swedish Government presented a draft protocol on this subject at the meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in May 1989 (A/CN.10/141). Sweden now intends to present and circulate as an official United Nations document a new version of the draft protocol introduced in 1989. My delegation hopes that it will be issued in the next few days. It is, like the earlier version, elaborated on the basis of the concepts of neutralizing mechanisms and information, concepts already incorporated in the eighth Hague Convention and the second Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices, attached to the United Nations Convention on certain conventional weapons. The new version is the product of consultations among a small number of international experts acting in their personal capacity. The text differs from the earlier one in that the reference to torpedoes is deleted and the draft protocol is presented as an additional protocol attached to the United Nations Convention on certain conventional weapons. Other changes are basically of a drafting nature. We hope that the up-dated version will serve as a useful basis for further deliberations.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

In addition, developments in laser technology should, in the view of my delegation, be followed closely. There is a clear risk of the development of lasers for anti-personnel purposes on the conventional battlefield. It is then technically possible to develop and manufacture specific laser weapons, the main effect of which would be to blind the adversary's soldiers permanently. Such anti-eye laser weapons may yield certain military advantages but, on balance, taking into account humanitarian considerations, it seems that such lasers should be subject to prohibitions or restrictions on their use either in a new protocol annexed to the United Nations Convention or by some other means. Swedish experts have continually consulted with other experts in the field during the last few years and have participated in several expert meetings, many of them organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Sweden attaches great importance to the further development of international humanitarian law in armed conflicts. Many of these questions will, it is hoped, be widely discussed during the twenty-sixth international conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent that will take place in Budapest, Hungary, from 29 November to 6 December this year.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): Ten years ago last year a United Nations Conference in Geneva adopted the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

All along the Netherlands has been a strong supporter of the goals and objectives of the Convention. In our view, therefore, States should be

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

encouraged to become parties. The wider the adherence to the Convention, the stronger will be the international norm that is laid down in the Convention.

We believe that an added advantage of the Convention is that it induces States to reflect and to weigh the military effectiveness of certain weapons against humanitarian considerations. Thus the Convention, besides prohibiting or restricting certain types of weapons, may also lead States to think twice before acquiring or using them.

On behalf of my delegation, I should like fully to endorse and support the introductory statement just made by my colleague from Sweden on draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.13. The Netherlands expresses the hope that the Convention will in future command universal adherence. Such a call is also made in the text of draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.13 which, in operative paragraph 3:

"Urges all States that have not yet done so to exert their best endeavours to become parties to the Convention and the Protocols annexed thereto as early as possible, so as ultimately to obtain universality of adherence." (A/C.1/46/L.13)

Such universal adherence - or at least wide adherence - would strengthen the authority of the Convention. The international community should look at ways and means to achieve this goal.

One possibility could be the medium of a review conference. Indeed, reviewing the operation of the Convention might help to focus international attention on this important instrument of international humanitarian law. The Convention itself states that a review conference can be convened 10 years after its entry into force: that would mean in 1993.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

The Netherlands believes that the possibility of convening a review conference should be seriously considered in the time to come and in the appropriate forums, for example during the forthcoming General Conference of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Budapest.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

Non-members can attend such a review conference as observers. Interest in the Convention and awareness of its merits would thus be increased. These may be only modest steps on the road towards universality, but they should not be underestimated either. The General Assembly at its present session can give an added impetus by again adopting draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.13 by consensus.

Mr. HANSELMANN (Norway): My delegation would like to make some brief comments regarding the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and its three Protocols. The Convention was the product of many years of consideration by the international community - in particular the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - aimed at prohibiting or restricting the use of specific conventional weapons which could have unnecessarily injurious effects. In Norway's view, the Convention represents a successful attempt at developing humanitarian law in the field of disarmament, intended to protect civilians and reduce the suffering of victims of armed conflict.

The draft resolution on this issue, which is contained in document A/C.1/46/L.13, just introduced by Sweden, and of which my country is a sponsor, emphasizes that article 8 of the Convention deals inter alia with the question of amendments or new protocols. A conference may, according to that article, be convened to review the scope and operation of the Convention and to consider additional protocols relating to other categories of conventional weapons not covered by the existing Protocols.

(Mr. Hanselmann, Norway)

If a proposal for such a conference is made, Norway would like to stress that the issue should be subject to broad consultations, in particular with regard to new categories of weapons which one might wish to include.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to urge countries that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols. The aim should clearly be universal participation.

Mr. ERRERA (France) (interpretation from French): I should like to make a brief statement under agenda item 50 concerning the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The French arms-control and disarmament plan, introduced on 3 June 1991 (A/46/212), on which my delegation will make another statement, recalls that preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is an urgent task, which is in the vital interest of all States, both North and South. It is in that spirit that France has announced its decision to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As the French Minister of Foreign Affairs announced to the General Assembly, our instruments of accession to the Treaty will be deposited before the end of this year.

It is also in that spirit that France took note with satisfaction of the decision of some countries in Latin America - in particular Argentina, Brazil and Chile - to take measures with a view to speeding the full entry into force of the Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in Latin America. Indeed, France has always stated that it would neither anticipate the decisions of the countries of the region with regard to the entry into force of the Treaty nor do anything to delay its entry into force.

(Mr. Errera, France)

In view of these developments, I wish to announce here that France is giving positive consideration to the possibility of ratifying Additional Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Mexico wishes to refer to agenda item 50 concerning the signature and ratification of Additional Protocol I of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. As members are doubtless aware, the Treaty already has 23 States parties from among the 33 independent States of the region. Moreover, in Additional Protocol II, the five nuclear-weapon Powers have undertaken to respect the nuclear-weapon-free status of Latin America and the Caribbean and have undertaken not to use, nor threaten to use, nuclear weapons against the parties to the Treaty.

At the same time, there are in the area of application of the Treaty certain territories which, although not sovereign political entities, are none the less in a position to receive the benefits deriving from the Treaty through its Additional Protocol I, to which the four States that de jure or de facto are internationally responsible for those territories may become parties. Those States are the United States, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom became a party to that Protocol in 1969, the Netherlands in 1971, and the United States in 1981. The only one still missing is France, which signed the Protocol in 1979 but has not yet ratified it.

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

This fact accounts for the urgent appeals of the General Assembly and also for the draft resolution now before the Committee in document A/C.1/46/L.2.

On behalf of the 18 sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.2, we wish to point out that we have listened most attentively to the statement just made by the representative of France to the effect that his Government is prepared to give serious consideration to the ratification of Additional Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Such ratification would bring to a close a very lengthy chapter in the history of efforts to secure the full effect of the Treaty. We thank the representative of France for the information he has given us and we welcome the step which his Government seems prepared to take.

In the light of the foregoing, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.2 will not - I respect, will not - insist on having a vote taken on the draft resolution, and we hereby withdraw it. Instead, we request the First Committee to decide to include the following item on the provisional agenda of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session: "Signature and ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean - the Treaty of Tlatelolco - and of its two Additional Protocols".



The CHAIRMAN: The representative of Mexico has, therefore, withdrawn draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.2 and expressed the intention of submitting a draft decision on the same subject, to be circulated officially. I believe that the Committee will agree with that procedure.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Costa Rica, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.34.

Mrs. CASTRO DE BARISH (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): As this is the first time that my delegation has spoken in the First Committee, I take special pleasure in congratulating you on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of this Committee at this forty-sixth session, not just because of your professional and personal qualities, but also because you represent Poland, a country which Costa Rica has always admired. We also offer our congratulations to your fellow officers of the Committee.

I now have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/46/L.34, entitled "Education and information for disarmament". The text is for the most part in line with resolution 44/123, adopted on 15 December 1989, the purpose of which was to continue the follow-up to paragraph 106 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2), referred to in the first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. Emphasis is also laid on the importance of paragraphs 99, 100 and 101 of the Final Document, which provide a whole range of concrete and positive recommendations for mobilizing world public opinion in favour of disarmament and drawing attention to the special importance of giving greater publicity to the Final Document.

Stress is also laid on the importance of the World Disarmament Campaign as a valuable adjunct to educational efforts promoting disarmament, and we

(Mrs. Castro  
Costa Rica)

would furthermore like to stress an obvious point, albeit one that needs emphasis, which is that if irreversible results in this venture are to be obtained, training programmes must be developed at all levels of formal education so as to alter basic attitudes to aggression, violence, armaments and war. This idea brings to mind the preamble to the UNESCO constitution, which states, inter alia, that "since wars began in the minds of men, it is the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

We are glad to note the unprecedented changes that have taken place in many parts of the world, aimed at promoting freedom, democracy, respect for and enjoyment of human rights, and social and economic development. In the present circumstances we cannot fail to take account of these positive and encouraging facts, and we have therefore referred to them in the last paragraph of the preamble and operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution

We cannot treat disarmament exclusively as a political and technologic problem, ignoring the fact that the artifacts of death and destruction, whether nuclear, conventional, chemical or bacteriological, in fact all weapons of mass destruction, victimize human beings and other living creatures and destroy the ecological systems. It is for this reason that we believe reference to it in our draft resolution is relevant and necessary.

In the operative part of the resolution thanks is expressed to the Secretary-General for his report, submitted in response to resolution 44/12 and for the valuable information it contains, provided by Member States, international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions for peace and disarmament.

(Mrs. Castro de Barish,  
Costa Rica)

In operative paragraph 4 we emphasize the vital objectives of the World Disarmament Campaign: to inform, educate and generate understanding of and support for the goals of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament.

In operative paragraph 5 Member States and governmental and non-governmental organizations and educational institutions for peace and disarmament are invited to redouble their efforts to respond to the appeal made in paragraph 106 of the Final Document and to submit to the Secretary-General a report on their activities in that regard.

Lastly, the Secretary-General is requested to submit the reports requested in operative paragraph 5 to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, under the item entitled "Education and information for disarmament".

We are grateful to the sponsors of this draft resolution for having supported us in this endeavour. They are: Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, the Marshall Islands, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela - now joined, as I have just been informed, by India, Ireland, Peru, Togo and Uruguay. We would also be very grateful to the members of the First Committee for a favourable response to our initiative. We very much trust that it will prove possible to adopt it without a vote.

#### PROGRAMME OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to inform the Committee that on Friday, 8 November, the Committee will begin to take action on draft resolutions under the disarmament agenda items. As indicated earlier, draft resolutions will be taken up cluster by cluster.

(The Chairman)

On Friday, decisions will begin to be taken on cluster 1, comprising resolutions A/C.1/46/L.1, L.3, L.5, L.8, L.10, L.13, L.26, L.33 and L.39. Thereafter, time permitting, we shall proceed on the same day to take action on the draft resolutions contained in cluster 2, namely A/C.1/46/L.15 and L.40.

The meeting was rose at 4.10 p.m.