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**President: Mr. Rüdiger von WECHMAR**  
(Federal Republic of Germany).

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Aboul-Nasr*  
*(Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**AGENDA ITEM 113**

**Draft world Charter for Nature (*concluded*)**

**AGENDA ITEM 120**

**Historical responsibility of States for the preservation  
of nature for present and future generations (*concluded*)**

1. Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) (*interpretation from French*): It is upon the initiative of the Soviet Union [see A/35/194] that the General Assembly has taken up the very important and timely question of the historical responsibility of States for the preservation of the world's environment for present and future generations.

2. The People's Republic of Bulgaria highly values that initiative as an exceptional and timely step aimed at drawing the attention of the international community to a problem of a global nature which is becoming particularly acute and which affects the interests of all States and peoples without exception.

3. Man and nature are indissolubly linked. For millennia man, through his activities, has been making constant changes in the natural environment. It is an objective process that determines the existence and the evolution of human society, and that process will in the future continue and take on increasing dimensions. The forms, the degree and the methods by which man affects nature are constantly changing. History has many examples of cases in which the thoughtless attitudes and interference of man in nature have left behind arid spaces, inanimate and hostile. Marx has written that the use of land, if it develops in an uncontrolled manner and if it is not consciously planned, leaves behind only desert.

4. Thanks to the triumphs of the scientific and technological revolution, mankind has taken to the use of

many new types of energy and the resources of the seabed and of outer space. At the same time certain human activities have an extremely pernicious effect on the environment and threaten to have even more harmful effects on nature in the future.

5. We do not believe that mankind is doomed to an inevitable ecological catastrophe. However, far be it from us to underestimate the warnings of scientists and experts that senseless behaviour toward nature breeds dangerous consequences for all mankind. Moreover, the close ecological links existing among countries on the regional and global levels are a new phenomenon in the evolution of contemporary society. Today the preservation of the environment has become a problem common to all people, one of the global problems of our century.

6. The solution of the problem of the environment in its current aspects is taking place in a complex international and political context, but we believe that the problem can be resolved and that mankind can preserve nature for future generations in all its beauty and richness.

7. This is a broad field for noble, fruitful co-operation on the part of all States, large and small, developed and developing alike, because these problems, like the problems of peaceful coexistence and the problems of peace and war, cannot be resolved by one State alone. The preservation of the environment and of nature on our planet is a matter of concern to all States without exception and, if it is not resolved promptly, it can harm the prospects for later development.

8. The problem of the preservation of the environment is closely related to the problem of the rational utilization of natural resources, to the need to overcome the vestiges of the burdensome colonial past and to the struggle for rapid social and economic development and the achievement of genuine economic independence.

9. The past decade has witnessed certain measures for promoting international co-operation with a view to preserving the environment, measures which have produced specific results.

10. In implementation of the provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, signed at Helsinki in 1975, and acting upon the initiative of the Soviet Union, the States of the European continent, the United States and Canada adopted the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, which was concluded at Geneva on 13 November 1979.<sup>1</sup> Substantial measures to preserve the world's oceans from pollution are being prepared through the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. A major success

<sup>1</sup> Document E/ECE/1010.

was won in the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques [*resolution 31/72, annex*]. The conclusion of bilateral or multi-lateral agreements on co-operation among States in environmental preservation is under way.

11. The United Nations also has acquired considerable experience in the solution of these problems in the framework of its own environmental protection programme.

12. The results so far achieved demonstrate that there exist vast possibilities for international co-operation geared to the solution of these exceptionally important problems. None the less it should be pointed out that the adoption of significant environmental protection measures during the 1970s was made possible by the favourable changes in international relations through the policy of détente. Clearly the preservation of détente as a guiding principle in the political life of our planet is of capital importance for the future development of international co-operation in this field.

13. Here I should like to highlight a fact clearly indicated in the Soviet initiative: that the question of environmental protection is closely related to the struggle for peace and social progress.

14. The principal merits of the new Soviet initiative reside in the fact that it draws the attention of the international community to a particularly important aspect of the question of the protection of our world's environment—that is, the harmful effects of military preparations and the arms race on the nature of earth.

15. In our view it is impossible even to think what the catastrophic consequences of another world war would be not only for nature but for all mankind. We must also emphasize that at this very moment military preparations and the arms race are assuming increasing dimensions, causing considerable and often irreparable harm to the environment of our world, which is of vital importance for the existence of mankind.

16. Today there is global awareness of the pernicious effects of nuclear-weapon tests on nature, on flora and fauna, on the atmosphere and the hydrosphere. The conclusion of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, signed in Moscow on 5 August 1963,<sup>2</sup> contributed to containing that danger, but only the complete and total prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests can completely eliminate the dangers of radioactive pollution of the soil and of the world's oceans as a result of nuclear-weapon tests.

17. Another serious threat to nature is presented by military preparations in the nuclear field. The world has often teetered on the brink of ecological catastrophe because of accidents in the stockpiling, testing or transporting of nuclear weapons.

18. Another tangible threat to the environment comes from chemical weapons, which have as their target the very bases of life on earth. Apart from the catastrophic results of possible massive use during another world war, the very stockpiling of those weapons entails great dangers for mankind and the environment.

19. Less easily foreseeable consequences of tremendous magnitude for the environment could arise from the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction and systems of such weapons, especially those aimed at disrupting elements of the ecological and geophysical environment.

20. We must not underestimate the harm done to nature in our world by so-called normal or routine military activities such as the construction and use of military airports and armoured vehicle bases, the firing of rockets, military overflights, large-scale military exercises, naval exercises, and so on. Often those military activities are not in keeping with national and international standards of environmental protection.

21. The arms race that has lasted for so many years does irreparable damage to nature also because military industry unproductively and irrationally squanders growing quantities of non-renewable resources, raw materials and energy. It is also a source of excessive environmental pollution. The arms race also diverts material and intellectual resources from the solution of pressing problems, which could help to preserve nature in our world. The arms race also hampers international co-operation in this field, particularly as regards wide-ranging regional and global programmes that require the efforts of many countries and involve considerable expenditure.

22. Because of its commitment to the attainment of the socio-economic goals of development, the People's Republic of Bulgaria is making great efforts within the framework of its policy of intensive economic growth to preserve and improve the natural environment. Bulgaria is also playing an active role in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, as well as that of other international organizations that deal with environmental protection.

23. As was stated in 1972 by the President of the Council of State of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Todor Zhivkov,

“We base ourselves on the position that the preservation and improvement of the environment must be a strategic matter of State policy. We all share a historic responsibility to mankind not only today but also to coming generations. It depends on us what kind of earth, what kind of future, we bequeath to them.”

24. The draft resolution submitted by the Soviet Union [*A/35/L.7*] reflects the need to adopt a more comprehensive, more diversified, approach to the problem of the deleterious effects of the arms race on nature. For all those reasons my delegation fully supports that draft resolution.

25. The achievement of an agreement among States to put an end to military preparations and to the arms race would immediately contribute to the reduction of the damage caused to our world. The implementation of such measures would also create a world climate conducive to joint action by States to resolve global problems, including the problem of the preservation of nature.

26. Of particular interest in that regard is the draft resolution contained in document *A/35/L.8/Rev.1*, whose objective is the drafting of a world charter for

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 480, No. 6964, p. 43.

nature and which is one more piece of evidence that the international community is not and cannot be indifferent to the resolution of these problems. The States of the world are in duty bound by their historical responsibility and their obligations to the present and future generations to take all the steps necessary with a view to preserving nature.

27. Mr. FRANCIS (New Zealand): My delegation is happy to give its support to draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, introduced by the representative of Zaire at the 48th meeting.

28. New Zealand is an active member of UNEP and of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. Our firm commitment to the principle of environmental conservation is reflected not only in our involvement in these international activities but, equally importantly, in our domestic environmental legislation. The environmental impact reports advocated in the draft World Charter for Nature [A/35/L.8/Rev.1, annex II] which is addressed in draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, form an integral part of New Zealand's planning procedures for industrial and development projects.

29. This year, moreover, we welcomed to New Zealand a review team from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. We look forward to the publication of their report as a means of encouraging even greater awareness of the environmental dimension of planning activities.

30. The environment in which we live and of which we are a part provides the basis for all human activity. Any decision involving the use of resources, be it domestic or a collective international initiative such as the International Development Strategy, must have implications for our environment. For that reason New Zealand welcomes the fact that the draft World Charter puts the emphasis on the need to pursue those development policies within the wider context of maintaining mankind's natural environment.

31. In supporting the draft resolution, my delegation would like to make the point that there are several aspects of the draft Charter we should like to see defined and developed a little more.

32. In particular we see a need to ensure that in any world conservation strategy careful consideration is given to the marine environment. As an example, the Pacific Ocean region, with its fragile ecosystem, has perhaps been given less attention in international environmental debate than its importance to the world's environment would warrant. We should also like to see due recognition given to the contribution that can be made by non-governmental organizations working in conjunction with Governments, in developing a national environmental strategy.

33. In accordance with our commitment to the principles of environmental conservation, New Zealand wishes to play an active part in the development of the draft World Charter for nature which has been put before us today. We see draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1 as a major step forward. New Zealand will with great pleasure give its full support to that text.

34. Mr. PASTINEN (Finland): The General Assembly has before it today two items relating to the same issue. The first, agenda item 113, is entitled

"Draft World Charter for Nature". The second, item 120, is entitled "Historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations". Two draft resolutions have been submitted for our consideration: draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1 on item 113, which was introduced by the representative of Zaire; and draft resolution A/35/L.7 on item 120, by the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Those two items and the submission of two draft resolutions thereon by delegations representing such different parts of the world and such different stages of development are a graphic illustration of the universal concern about the preservation of nature.

35. The preservation of nature and the human environment is indeed one of the important issues of our time. Respect for ecological principles, be they the preservation of the human environment, the protection of nature, the rational management of non-renewable resources or the maintenance of the balance of fragile ecosystems, affects the very basis of human society. Our action or inaction today is decisive for the well-being and quality of life of future generations as well.

36. The Government of Finland has consistently emphasized the importance of the adoption of ecologically sound principles as the basic for global and regional action.

37. On the global level, the United Nations, in general, and UNEP, in particular, have a vital role to play. The Foreign Minister of Finland, Mr. Vayrynen, said from this rostrum a year ago that the most important tasks of the United Nations in the 1980s would be the promotion of détente and disarmament and the realization of a new international economic order in accordance with sound ecological principles.<sup>3</sup> We must therefore focus our action not only with a view to ourselves but also with the interests of the coming generations in mind.

38. Although global in dimension, the ecologically sound management of the human environment also has important regional implications. In the European context that has been properly recognized in the relevant provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and the follow-up action, either undertaken or planned.

39. My Government also welcomes the fact that ecological considerations have received their due recognition in the International development strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, which is before this session of the General Assembly for adoption.<sup>4</sup> In the context of the International Development Strategy, these considerations have been pursued particularly by the Nordic countries. That is especially important because the instrument encompasses objectives and policy measures that will guide international economic co-operation during the 1980s and beyond.

40. The Finnish Government has carefully considered the two draft resolutions before us on the basis I have just explained. We have no difficulty in

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Plenary Meetings, 9th meeting, para. 246.*

<sup>4</sup> Subsequently adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 35/56.

supporting them. While they approach the question of the preservation of nature from different angles, there is no contradiction between them; rather, they complement each other. Both texts are also closely linked to the World Conservation Strategy<sup>5</sup>, the implementation of which was recently considered by Governments of States members of the Governing Council of UNEP as a high-priority requirement for sustained socio-economic development.

41. In both draft resolutions the Assembly requests that reports be submitted by the Secretary-General, with the assistance of UNEP, at the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Finnish Government looks forward to a substantive discussion on the basis of those reports at that session.

42. Mr. CORRÊA da COSTA (Brazil): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela and Brazil, States parties to the Treaty for Amazonian Co-operation. Those delegations are requesting the Secretary-General to circulate as official documents of the General Assembly, under items 61 and 113, both the text of the Treaty for Amazonian Co-operation [see A/35/580] and the text of the Declaration of Belem [A/35/593, annex], to which the Foreign Ministers of the eight States parties to the Treaty subscribed at their first meeting, held in the city of Belem on 23 and 24 October this year—that is, last Thursday and Friday.

43. I should like at the outset to state that in their Declaration our Foreign Ministers made it clear that the development of the Amazonian region and the preservation of its environment are inseparable and fall within the exclusive responsibility of the Amazonian countries themselves, without any other limitations than those established by the Treaty itself in its article IV. Any other form of international co-operation must thus, and as a matter of course, be harmonized with those fundamental principles solemnly established by the Treaty.

44. It therefore follows naturally that the Foreign Ministers of the eight Amazonian countries stated in their Declaration that the utilization of the natural resources existing in any of the territories of the Amazonian countries constitutes a sovereign and **live right of each party to the Treaty.**

Those concepts, which serve as an introduction to the statement on item 113 which I have the honour to make on behalf of the Amazonian countries, are—and there must be no mistake about this—the very foundation of the co-operation which the Amazonian countries are undertaking among themselves, and therefore the only basis on which they would be prepared to contemplate international co-operation in this area.

46. Concerning agenda item 113, we have before us two types of documents. On the one hand, document

A/35/141 contains the proposal of the delegation of Zaire; and, on the other, document A/35/L.8/Rev.1 contains a draft resolution on the subject. I should like first of all to thank the delegation of Zaire. I would also say at this stage that several international instruments have addressed themselves to the type of concern that we understand is reflected in the ideas contained in the proposal of Zaire, as defined in annex II to document A/35/141.

47. Those instruments, which have as a major concern the protection of the environment, have also recognized the paramount importance of other fundamental principles, among which—to quote only one—I should like to refer to that on the permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources and the inalienable responsibility of States to ensure the development of their own peoples. The States parties to the Treaty for Amazonian Co-operation, in their endeavours, not only consider that to achieve the over-all development of their respective Amazonian territories it is necessary to maintain a balance between economic growth and conservation of the environment, but also are confident that co-operation among the Latin American nations on specific matters which they have in common will contribute to progress on the road towards the integration and solidarity of all of Latin America. Those objectives are to be found in the text of the Treaty itself.

48. The economic development of developing countries—that is, their own development—is an obligation which the Governments of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela and Brazil have towards their own people, an obligation they will not relinquish, whatever the circumstances. Poverty and underdevelopment are major causes of the deterioration of the human environment. Therefore, the eradication of poverty and the process of economic and social development are a primary responsibility of the developing countries.

49. The Amazonian countries will therefore, at the appropriate time in the process that is called for in draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, express their views on the draft World Charter for Nature, as contained in annex II to document A/35/141.

50. Mr. KRAVETS (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR welcomes the initiatives for the inclusion in the agenda of the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly of an item on a draft world charter for nature and an item on the historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations.

51. The problems of the preservation and rational utilization of the environment are undoubtedly among the most pressing problems facing mankind today. Thanks to progress in science and technology, mankind has achieved extremely intensive utilization of natural resources for economic and social development. At the same time, some types of human activity have an unfavourable impact upon the ecological balance and this is fraught with extremely grave if not fatal consequences for coming generations.

52. The preservation of the earth's environment is the responsibility of all mankind and requires collective efforts on the part of all States. International

<sup>5</sup> World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development, prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, with the advice, co-operation and financial assistance of the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Wildlife Fund and in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1980.

co-operation in protecting the environment has acquired special significance at this time.

53. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR will cooperate constructively in preparing a draft world charter for nature. We support draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1.

54. I must speak at somewhat greater length on the item on the historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations, especially those aspects which relate to the totally intolerable and inadmissible damage to the environment of our planet resulting from the continuing arms race and the unceasing tests of various types of weapons, primarily nuclear weapons. The toxic radioactive cloud formed as a result of a nuclear explosion in the atmosphere cannot be dissipated by any forces. It sows death and disease indiscriminately among all living things. It is regrettable that China refuses to acknowledge this incontrovertible fact and is continuing to conduct nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere.

55. The prevention of the pollution of the atmosphere, the soil, internal water reservoirs and oceans, the creation on a massive scale of varied and effective anti-pollution devices and the development and perfection of low-waste and pollution-free technology call for enormous expenditures, totalling tens of billions of dollars for the world as a whole. However, these expenditures can in no way be compared with the astronomical costs borne by mankind in connexion with the arms race. Nuclear-weapon tests, the loss of nuclear bombs, accidents involving strategic missiles with nuclear warheads, the leakage of military toxic substances, the stockpiling of chemical weapons and pollution resulting from the production of other types of weapons of mass destruction are the inevitable results of the policy of military preparation. Therefore, the most important *sine qua non* of fruitful co-operation in protecting and improving the environment is the intensification of the process of international détente, the limitation and reduction of military expenditures, the curbing of the arms race and the achievement of disarmament. That course would provide sufficient resources for a broad range of conservation measures.

56. The health and prosperity of present and future generations depends on the timely and proper solution of global questions involving the protection of the environment. And therein lies the historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature.

57. The distinguishing feature of draft resolution A/35/L.7, submitted by the Soviet Union, lies in the fact that it establishes a connexion between the need for international co-operation to preserve the environment of our planet and measures to halt the arms race and to increase, develop and further the relaxation of international tension. Therein lies the basis of principle in the approach taken by the socialist countries to ecological problems.

58. Peace—as was stated by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, L. I. Brezhnev—is not a question of security alone. It is the most important prerequisite for tackling the major problems

of contemporary civilization, to the solution of which the future of mankind is linked.

59. Agreement among States to halt military preparations and the arms race, with their pernicious impact on the environment, not only would help to reduce the damage caused to the environment of our planet but would be accompanied by the creation of a favourable international climate for organizing joint efforts on the part of States to solve problems common to all mankind. It would help to release material and intellectual resources for global and regional programmes to protect the environment.

60. A broad range of persuasive examples could be adduced to demonstrate that there were considerable specific achievements in co-operation among States to preserve the environment precisely during the period of détente. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1975 adopted a broad programme of preventive measures to avoid the contamination of the environment and preserve the ecological balance of nature. In carrying out that programme European States, including the Ukrainian SSR, in 1979 adopted the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution. With a view to implementing the Helsinki agreements, the Soviet Union took the initiative of convening the High-Level Meeting within the Framework of ECE on the Protection of the Environment, which was held at Geneva in November 1979.

61. Substantial global measures to prevent the pollution of seas and oceans were agreed upon at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. Useful work along those lines has been done in conjunction with other international organizations by UNEP, which was established in 1972.

62. In drawing the attention of the United Nations to this matter and the need to solve a problem posed by life itself, we believe that it is precisely this Organization that can make a significant contribution to furthering co-operation in preserving the environment, taking into account the interests and requirements of the developing countries.

63. It is common knowledge that the developed capitalist countries sometimes combat the pollution of the environment in a very original way. They export to the developing countries those industries which contaminate the environment to the greatest degree. In so doing, they save money by refusing to build anti-pollution devices, in their striving for maximum profits. The contamination of the environment of developing countries is hardly a matter of concern to them. What is most important to them is profits.

64. In the Ukrainian SSR the task of preserving nature is embodied in the Constitution, and to that end a number of legislative measures have been adopted. The sum of 4.4 billion roubles was spent in our Republic in the last five years in order to implement measures to protect the environment. Various aspects of that pressing problem are at all times the focus of attention of Ukrainian scientists, who have developed a special programme for the future, up to the year 2000, of activities for the preservation of nature.



65. The preservation of nature is a task which is truly concerned with the future and it is in that sense that the question is raised of the historical responsibility of States for its preservation for present and future generations. I repeat, the problem can be solved only by joint efforts by the entire international community.

66. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR supports draft resolution A/35/L.7, and we would express our hope that the implementation of the specific provisions of that draft resolution will enable the United Nations to adopt new measures in the near future to further international co-operation to protect the environment as one of the most important conditions for normal life.

67. Mr. LAI Yali (China) (*translation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation has listened carefully to the introductory statement on item 113, "Draft World Charter for Nature", made by the representative of Zaire at the 48th meeting. We have decided to vote in favour of draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, on this subject, sponsored by Zaire and more than 40 other countries.

68. The protection and proper management of the natural environment and living resources, an important question affecting the development of all countries, merits the attention of the international community. The abuse and excessive exploitation of natural resources by the industrialized countries over the years have caused damage to the ecology and led to serious social and economic problems.

69. In the course of conquering and making use of nature, man has enhanced his creativity and gained a wealth of experience. In today's world of advanced science and technology, how best to protect, while rationally exploring and making use of nature and natural resources is an important question common to all countries, particularly the developing countries, one which should be treated with the seriousness it deserves.

70. We wish to express our appreciation to His Excellency President Mobutu of Zaire for the initiative he has taken and valuable effort he has made in the formulation of the draft World Charter for Nature as a code of conduct for the international community in the protection and management of our environment and natural resources. We are prepared to join other countries in friendly consultations and give the draft Charter our serious consideration.

71. As regards draft resolution A/35/L.7, the Soviet representative in his introduction of that draft this morning claimed, with seeming compassion, that in order to preserve nature, it is necessary to promote international détente and banish war from the life of mankind and to put a stop to the arms race. However, people cannot help asking, who exactly is going all out in the arms race and who has dispatched an army of 100,000 troops for an armed invasion and military occupation of a non-aligned Islamic country? Instead of saying a single word about the Soviet Union's deeds in intensifying the arms race and external wars of aggression, the Soviet representative offers nothing but high-sounding rhetoric about the preservation of nature and the banishing of the threat of war from the life of mankind. But aside from listening to his words, people might also observe his deeds.

72. In observing the actual deeds of the Soviet Union, people cannot help but be suspicious. Is the author of draft resolution A/35/L.7 really concerned with the preservation of nature and really concerned with the easing of international tension, or is he merely trying to take advantage of the occasion to whitewash his own acts of arms expansion and aggression and at the same time to level a countercharge in order to shift the blame on to others?

73. The Soviet representative also stated that nuclear testing would have harmful effects on the human environment and the flora and fauna of the earth and attacked China on this score. We do not deny that nuclear testing would produce a certain amount of pollution in the atmosphere; however, over a long period of time, the Soviet Union has carried out hundreds of nuclear tests and has piled up nuclear weapons sky-high in its arsenals. And at this moment, it is making a threat of nuclear war against other countries. It is entirely understandable that the third world countries are concerned with the resulting atmospheric pollution from nuclear tests. But the Soviet Union is certainly not qualified to speak on the subject.

74. If the Soviet Union is truly concerned with the question of atmospheric pollution, then it should, together with the other super-Power, drastically reduce and destroy its nuclear weapons, stop its underground nuclear tests and remove the threat of nuclear war it poses to other countries. After that, other countries would no longer have any reason to carry out nuclear tests in the atmosphere, nor will they do so any more.

75. The Soviet representative also referred to the stockpiling of toxic chemical weapons as also having an adverse effect on the human environment. However, what the people of the entire world are seriously concerned with are the many reports regarding the use by certain countries of chemical weapons in Afghanistan and Kampuchea.

76. This year, as the result of the efforts of the medium-sized and small countries, the Committee on Disarmament at Geneva established an *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Chemical Weapons. The group carried out useful discussions but had to face obstruction by the Soviet Union. It is our hope that this working group will find ways to overcome the obstacles and begin at an early date the negotiation and the formulation of a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons.

77. Quite obviously, the Soviet proposal on the so-called preservation of nature is nothing other than deceptive propaganda aiming at covering up the Soviet Union's own arms expansion and war preparations and aggression and expansion. In view of the foregoing, the Chinese delegation will not participate in the vote on the draft resolution on this item and it will not be associated with the draft in any way.

78. Mr. BANZAR (Mongolia) (*interpretation from Russian*): In his statement in the general debate on 26 September this year the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Mongolian People's Republic lent full support to the new initiative taken by the Soviet Union on the historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations [*13th meeting, para. 127*].

79. In the present-day conditions of the scientific and technological revolution, which has an increasing impact on all aspects of social development, the interaction between man and nature and their close interdependence emerge today more clearly than ever before. The entire course of historical development clearly indicates that man's activities should be placed at the service of peace and progress, and this has a particularly resounding ring today when the enormous achievements of science and technology can be put to uses that are incompatible with the vital interests of peoples.

80. The primordial importance of the proposal submitted by the Soviet Union can be seen specifically in the fact that it establishes a close interconnexion between the preservation of the environment of our planet and the problem of halting the arms race, achieving disarmament and strengthening international peace and security. It is precisely the continually spiralling arms race and the ceaseless impact on it of military and technological progress that today faces mankind with a serious problem, on the solution of which depends to a large degree the peaceful and tranquil future not only of present but also of future generations.

81. Today, when nuclear-weapon tests still continue, especially in the atmosphere, as well as tests of other types of weapons of mass destruction, when the danger of the emergence of new and ever more disastrous and destructive means of annihilation of every living being on earth is becoming more real, the solution of the problem of preserving nature from the deleterious consequences of the uncontrolled arms race acquires ever greater urgency.

82. The adoption of specific practical measures to halt the arms race and achieve disarmament would help not only to reduce the adverse impact on the environment but also to solve a problem that is common to all mankind by carrying out global and regional programmes to protect our planet's environment.

83. As we all know, in recent years considerable progress in this direction has been made at various levels—bilateral, regional and global.

84. First and foremost, the Mongolian delegation would like to emphasize the great importance of the 1963 Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water. It is more urgently necessary than ever to increase the effectiveness of that important international legal instrument by making it truly universal in character in the light of the recent nuclear test carried out in the atmosphere by China, in violation of universally acknowledged norms of international law and the vital interests of all the peoples of the world.

85. In 1977 on the initiative of the socialist countries, the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, which prohibited the utilization of environmental modification techniques having long-lasting or severe effects, was signed. The strengthening of the effectiveness of that important international instrument is closely connected to the question being discussed at today's meeting of the General Assembly.

86. The Mongolian People's Republic, like other socialist countries guided by a consistent concern for

the health and well-being of man, is carrying out comprehensive measures to preserve and improve man's environment and to achieve the rational management of the natural resources of our country. The Constitution of the Mongolian People's Republic provides that the land and its subsoil, forests and waters and their wealth are the property of the State, that is to say, they are something that belongs to all the people. It is the duty of Mongolian citizens to preserve nature and to protect its wealth. That constitutional principle is further developed in laws enacted by the Great People's Khural of the Mongolian People's Republic on the utilization of the land and its subsoil, water resources, the animal and vegetable world, and other matters.

87. The question of the preservation of nature occupies an important place in bilateral agreements between socialist countries, as well as within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance [CMEA]. An especially important role in intensifying co-operation among socialist countries in preserving the environment and enhancing the level of co-ordination between them is played by the comprehensive programme for the strengthening and improvement of co-operation among and the development of socialist economic integration of members of CMEA adopted at the twenty-fifth session of CMEA.

88. The global character of the problem of preserving nature resulting from the increasing growth of the links between man and nature makes it ever more urgently necessary for all States without exception to pool their efforts and expand international co-operation. The urgent need for international co-operation derives from the fact that pollution of the environment has world-wide consequences which can be eliminated only by a common effort.

89. On that basis, our delegation believes that the most appropriate and authoritative forum in which to discuss this problem is that provided by the United Nations, which can make a further substantial contribution to the development of co-operation in preserving the environment. The United Nations already has to its credit considerable achievements. The Declaration on the environment was adopted in 1972.<sup>6</sup> UNEP, which has existed since then, undertakes studies on the preservation of the environment as well as exchanges of information and joint measures in this field.

90. Draft resolution A/35/L.7, submitted by the Soviet delegation, in our view fully reflects the problem under discussion: the growing interdependence of the problem of the preservation of nature and the need for strengthening international peace and security and for halting the arms race, achieving disarmament and expanding international co-operation in that field.

91. On the basis of the foregoing considerations, my delegation fully supports the draft resolution of the Soviet Union and has become a sponsor of that text.

92. It is in the same spirit that the Mongolian delegation views the proposal on a draft World Charter for

<sup>6</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on the Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A. 14 and corrigendum), chap. I.

Nature and considers its ideas to be positive and capable of promoting the efforts of States to ensure the preservation of man's environment.

93. Mr. HA VAN LAU (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Viet Nam welcomes the decision of the General Assembly to include in the agenda of this session as two separate items for consideration in plenary meeting the proposal of the Soviet Union entitled "Historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations" and that of Zaire entitled "Draft World Charter for Nature". This decision illustrates the growing interest with which the international community is considering the question of the preservation of nature as one of the important global tasks before us, the implementation of which presupposes sustained national efforts supported by multifaceted and effective international co-operation.

94. The process of development places before peoples increasingly complex environmental problems at the national and international levels. In present circumstances the task of protecting and preserving nature and improving the environment for human life can be successfully carried out only by the combined efforts of all States.

95. International co-operation in this field should be developed from the standpoint of the close relationship of population, resources, environment and development, so that the ecological balance can be maintained, adjusted and improved through the adoption of intelligent policies aimed at the rational and optimal utilization of natural resources for the economic and social progress of peoples, while preserving nature for the well-being of man.

96. Through the testing of new weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, the stockpiling of chemical weapons and weapons of mass destruction, the arms race pollutes the environment and threatens the daily life of people exposed to its pernicious effects. The world was gravely concerned at the nuclear weapon test just conducted by China in the atmosphere, because radioactive fall-out from such a nuclear test normally continues for a decade. The shock experienced by the population of Seveso, in Italy, in 1976 because of the accidental escape of dioxin from a factory has just been duplicated in the United States, at Niagara Falls, once again because of dioxin. The recent explosion of a nuclear-warhead-carrier in Arkansas calls to mind the image of the sword of Damocles for the populations in areas in the neighbourhood of stockpiles of armaments.

97. Moreover, the arms race, which by its nature is an obstacle to world co-operation, absorbs colossal material and intellectual resources. If a modest part of such resources could be released by disarmament, a considerable contribution would be made to development, including the carrying out of important programmes and projects for environmental protection. Therefore we can conclude that, if peoples and States are resolved to fulfil their historic responsibility concerning the preservation of nature for present and future generations, it is essential to struggle for peace and international détente, to put an end to the arms race and to bring about disarmament. Yet life has shown that in order to preserve nature and the achieve-

ments of human civilization a prerequisite is the elimination of war and related activities. The destruction caused by the Second World War and by wars of aggression since 1945, particularly in Viet Nam, has remained vivid in the memories of people and taught them to be watchful.

98. War not only destroys human life but also ravages nature through the use of Machiavellian techniques, the most sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. The world has not forgotten the sad destruction and the long-felt consequences caused by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and the chemical warfare carried out in South Viet Nam and other countries of Indo-China during the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s.

99. The deadly arsenal of nuclear weapons now available has the power to destroy many times over all human life in the world and put an end to civilization. There is now talk of neutron bombs, radiological weapons and environmental modification techniques for military purposes. The danger of a nuclear catastrophe for human life and for the environment is, moreover, aggravated by the unbridled arms race, instigated by international imperialist and reactionary forces throughout the world, which seek to create situations of tension in order to fish in troubled waters.

100. The destruction suffered by Viet Nam during the last decade is a living example of what wars of aggression can cause a people in terms of suffering, in terms of the devastation of nature and the destruction of its ecosystem. Their harsh consequences can be overcome only through the work of many successive generations.

101. A total of 14.5 million tons of bombs and shells, including BLU-82B super-bombs weighing up to 15,000 pounds; 100,000 tons of toxic chemicals, including Agent Orange, containing dioxin; B-52 super-bombers; environmental modification techniques—these are all used for the policy of "burn all, wipe out all, destroy all". In addition to losses of human life and immediate destruction, which are vast, the serious and long-term consequences of such destruction are incalculable. Forty-three per cent of cultivated land was exposed to the spreading of toxic chemicals, and 10 per cent of these areas have been seriously polluted, have become sterile and are being lateritized, thus worsening our food shortage; 44 per cent of forest areas were subjected to repeated spreading of toxic chemicals and 50 per cent to B-52 bombardments, causing the loss of 47 million cubic metres of wood and of the ability to retain the water and moisture indispensable to agriculture; 50 per cent of mangrove areas have been destroyed and it could take a century to regenerate them; 20 million bomb craters created, vast regions laid waste, countless hills left bare—that is the lunar landscape of many areas of our land.

102. In brief, the environment has been gravely damaged. The ecological balance has been upset in many regions, causing the disappearance of many types of flora and fauna. There have been changes in climate, and the jungle has been seriously damaged because of the pernicious effects of changes in the water cycle. Natural disasters, above all droughts and floods, suffered by my country in recent years,



and even this year, are the direct consequence of the acts of destruction I have outlined.

103. Moreover, the effects of dioxin on the human body have been manifested in cases of congenital malformation of children of contaminated individuals, who themselves continue to suffer the consequences.

104. Pending our own complete evaluation of the consequences of the war for the population and for nature in Viet Nam, I should like here to mention the opinions of certain United States politicians and scientists. In August 1970 Senator Gaylord Nelson said: "Never in the history of mankind has a country declared war against the environment of another country. None the less the United States launched itself into an ecological experiment that no other nation had so far dared to conduct." Professor Arthur Galstone, an American biologist, speaking before the members of the Congress and the public on 9 February 1977, estimated that "... the damages caused to Viet Nam and its environment, on which that entire civilization depends, have not yet been assessed with any certainty".

105. In order to provide a more complete picture of the destruction caused in my country by war, I should like to add that in their aggression against the six northern provinces of Viet Nam in February 1979, 600,000 Chinese soldiers also practised the sinister policy of "burn all, wipe out all, destroy all" by using toxic gases against certain sectors of the population and poisoning sources of drinking water in the areas that they infiltrated.

106. The situation I have just outlined justifies our dedication to the preservation of nature. Our efforts are geared to overcoming the consequences of war in order to bequeath to coming generations a sound, rich and beautiful habitat.

107. Immediately following its victory our people tackled the task of national reconstruction in order to bind the wounds of a ravished land. The removal of mines could not take place without loss of human life. Reforestation campaigns have been very successful. Our scientists are now conducting research to find proper responses to the problems caused by this great ecological upheaval. Yet a vast amount remains to be done, and that is why we appeal to the international community to support our national efforts, while affirming that the historical responsibility still rests fully on the shoulders of the wrongdoers.

108. On the basis of the present international situation, and on the basis of the experiences of Viet Nam, which has felt in its own flesh the harsh consequences of decades of wars of aggression, we consider the initiative of the Soviet Union in submitting draft resolution A/35/L.7 to be timely, realistic and highly important. It reflects the deep concern of the Soviet Union and the international community at the danger of war, above all nuclear war, and the consequences for man and his environment, the consequences of the arms race for the animal and vegetable world and the vast squandering of material and intellectual resources as a result of that arms race. Such resources should be utilized for economic development and for the improvement and protection of nature.

109. Draft resolution A/35/L.7 stresses the close link between international co-operation for the pre-

servation of nature and the environment and measures aimed at putting an end to the arms race and deepening détente. It is clear that the Soviet initiative constitutes a valuable contribution to the shared struggle of mankind to build lasting peace, to prevent another world war and to preserve nature and the environment and transfer them unharmed and unpolluted to future generations.

110. It is with those considerations in mind that the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is pleased to express its full support for draft resolution A/35/L.7, submitted by the delegation of the Soviet Union for adoption by the General Assembly. We are pleased to become a sponsor of that text.

111. The General Assembly also has before it draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1 under agenda item 113. On the basis of the views that we have just outlined concerning the protection of nature, we are pleased by any initiative taken by a Member of the United Nations to strengthen international co-operation in the field of protecting mankind, nature and the environment, and in that spirit we support draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, entitled "Draft World Charter for Nature".

112. Mr. THIOUNN PRASITH (Democratic Kampuchea) (*interpretation from French*): The problem of the environment is of concern to all nations that wish to preserve and develop the well-being of future generations. My delegation welcomes the initiative of the Government of Zaire in bringing this problem to the attention of the General Assembly. We hope that draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, entitled "Draft World Charter for Nature", will be adopted by consensus.

113. But, since this morning, when the Assembly with great interest began consideration of this draft resolution, the representatives of the expansionists have, as is their custom, used the rostrum of the General Assembly to try to divert the attention of the international community from the wars of aggression, expansion and genocide which they have launched throughout the world and in particular in Kampuchea and Afghanistan and to transpose the debate in the First Committee to the General Assembly. The representative of the Vietnamese regional expansionists has just spewed forth the same calumnies and shed the same crocodile tears in order to camouflage the monstrous crimes that have been committed by the Hanoi authorities in Kampuchea for almost two years now.

114. Before the Vietnamese invasion Kampuchea was a flourishing country in all seasons. It had many hydraulic dams, reservoirs, irrigation canals, enormous expanses of rice paddies and industrial and agricultural establishments. After three and a half years of effort on the part of all the people of Kampuchea, nature had regained its former splendour in Kampuchea. And now, after the Vietnamese hordes have passed through, it has become a country of desolation and aridity. Entire towns, administrative centres, thousands of villages and schools, scientific and technical training institutes, factories and hospitals, dams and reservoirs, thousands of kilometres of irrigation canals, thousands of hectares of food and industrial plantations—including rubber plantations—and more than a million hectares of rice paddies and fields have

been systematically destroyed by the Vietnamese invaders. Moreover, it is with the assistance of the great-Power expansionist whose representative was this morning cynical enough to introduce draft resolution A/35/L.7 that the Hanoi authorities have been able to perpetrate and continue to perpetrate these monstrous crimes.

115. In 1979 that expansionist major Power sent to Viet Nam more than 3 million tons of armaments and military equipment. It is with those arms that the Vietnamese expansionists have sown in my country destruction and death and have already massacred more than 3 million inhabitants by famine, conventional weapons and chemical weapons. Kampuchea is at present a testing ground for chemical weapons although they were banned by the Geneva Protocol of 1925.<sup>7</sup>

116. The range includes various chemical products and lethal or incapacitating toxic gases. Such products are often dissolved in the drinking water of wells or rivers. They are also dropped from planes or launched by heavy artillery. A Vietnamese artillery officer who deserted his unit, the 75th division, which was operating in the north-west of Kampuchea, revealed last April that almost all the types of artillery used in Kampuchea are provided with toxic gas shells the use of which is authorized within the regiment and which are in fact used on a massive scale in Kampuchea. He also said that toxic gas of Soviet manufacture called HZ was often used. Many tens of thousands of Kampuchean civilians, particularly women and children, have been killed or gravely poisoned by those chemical weapons. The weapons dropped from planes are deadly aerosol canisters which kill the population and destroy the vegetation. Launched by heavy artillery, toxic gas causes death within a range of 200 metres. Some types of gas give rise to nausea and haemorrhage, others lead to asphyxiation after paralysis of the facial muscles and the respiratory tract, while still others cause foaming at the mouth, hysteria, swelling and gangrene. As secondary effects, they create impotence in men and the development of abnormal fetuses in women. All this represents a systematic attempt to annihilate an entire people, an entire nation.

117. On 16 April 1980 Radio Hanoi broadcast an award ceremony at which the Order of Ho Chi Minh, third class, was given to the chemical weapons branch of the people's army. During that ceremony Lieutenant-General Le Trong Tan, Vice-Minister of Defence and member of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party,

“... highly praised the efforts made by the chemical weapons branch during the last 22 years to train and prepare for combat. Its officers and troops have actively studied and mastered science and technology and have been courageous, resourceful and creative in combat and in providing troop support. ... To carry out their task in the new situation, our officers and men in the chemical weapons branch must engage in scientific and technological research to train for the effective utilization of the weapons and material provided to them.”

<sup>7</sup> Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925 (League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XCIV (1929), No. 2138, p. 65).

118. All this needs no comment and explains why my delegation will not participate in the vote on draft resolution A/35/L.7, which is simply one more Soviet masquerade.

119. Mr. SOUTHICHAK (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): First of all I should like to add my voice to those of the speakers who preceded me at this rostrum in expressing, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, my great appreciation of the praiseworthy initiative of the delegation of the Soviet Union in submitting for consideration by the General Assembly an item of great topicality which cannot fail to give rise to great interest on the part of all the developing countries for which nature represents, at the present time, the primary, if not the sole source of their existence and well-being.

120. Consideration of the item entitled “Historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations” comes at precisely the right time because it is taking place when the arms race, far from slowing down, is continuing at break-neck speed, thus constituting a grave danger not only to the natural environment but to the survival of all mankind.

121. By its most timely initiative the Soviet Union, which more than any other country suffered the devastation and loss of human life brought about by the Second World War, has once again given evidence of its indefatigable commitment to the cause of peace and of the security both of mankind and of nature.

122. That attitude of the Soviet Union is quite consistent with its position as a responsible great Power which, in view of the intolerable stockpiling of weapons of destruction and death, is seeking by all possible means to eliminate that danger. The same cannot be said of other major Powers, in particular the one which currently has in its military arsenals a quantity of nuclear and thermonuclear bombs, guided missiles and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons and large stockpiles of napalm, sufficient to destroy several times over all life on earth.

123. That major Power, which in the recent past committed monstrous crimes against nature and the lives of the peoples of the three countries of Indo-China, is continuing with its allies old and new, including the hegemonists and expansionists of a major Asian Power, to block every effort by the international community to promote effective disarmament measures and the lasting security for nature and mankind that would ensue.

124. The Lao people, which numbers barely 3.5 million, attaches great importance to the preservation of its natural environment, which was viciously devastated during the imperialist war of aggression against our country. During that period the three countries of Indo-China, namely Laos, Viet Nam and Kampuchea, were, at the will of the aggressor, transformed into testing grounds for all types of weapons, with the exception of nuclear weapons.

125. Subjected to intensive bombardment, whole regions of my country, particularly the southern part, crossed by the trail which the aggressor called the

Ho Chi Minh trail, and areas in the north, were transformed into barren land devoid of any vegetation or life. Those regions remain today riddled with bomb craters, some more than 10 metres deep and 20 metres in diameter.

126. There is no need to state that the ecological consequences of those bombs and the massive use of chemicals such as those called in the military jargon Agents Orange, White and Blue, are immeasurable. They take the form of the erosion of arable land, the loss of fertility of those lands, alteration of the biological structures of fauna and flora, the disruption of the drainage system, and so on.

127. Even more inhuman is on the one hand the use of CS, SC1 and CS2, agents, which produce effects of asphyxiation and toxicity and make the affected areas inhabitable for several days, and on the other hand the modification of weather patterns with a view to bringing about torrential rainstorms, which bring in their wake the erosion of our plains and mountains. Since that modification of the weather was practised in a tropical country, it led to the rapid development of various insects and illnesses which are very dangerous for vegetal, animal and human life.

128. Furthermore, I should like to emphasize that, of the 20 million bombs of various sizes that were dropped and the approximately 230 million shells that were fired by United States artillery and naval forces during the second Indo-Chinese war, more than 400,000 bombs and more than 2 million shells are still buried in the ground of the Indo-Chinese countries—including thousands of bombs in Lao territory, not to speak of shells and weapons such as anti-vehicle and anti-personnel mines. Today, these unexploded bombs continue to produce extensive damage among our peoples and our livestock. Indeed, all the Western journalists who have visited our country have noted with indignation that our villagers can no longer plant anything in their fields, which are dotted with bombs; they cannot even allow their children to play in the fields.

129. I have recalled those facts in order to make the international community give some thought to the responsibility that States and mankind have for the careful preservation of nature for present and future generations. For the means of destruction available to man are becoming more and more terrifying; there are more than enough of them to destroy the world several times over.

130. Now more than ever it is imperative for the international community to work resolutely towards co-operation for the preservation of nature for present and future generations. The best way to do that is to intensify our efforts to halt the arms race, to reverse the present trend, to reduce and finally to eliminate existing stocks completely, and to attenuate or avoid all situations of tension and confrontation that could lead to a conflagration that, whatever its scope, would certainly destroy the heritage of present and future generations. There is every reason to forgo any idea of the possible use—even the limited use—of the most sophisticated weapons that man possesses; there is every reason to halt all nuclear tests in the atmosphere, since they pose the greatest danger to human beings and nature.

131. Science and technology are more perfected now than ever before. We must master science and technology so that they will truly serve the interests of mankind. Nature can be preserved, in all its beauty and all its wealth, if man renounces its destruction.

132. It is in that context that my delegation views the praiseworthy initiative by the Soviet Union and expresses its support for draft resolution A/35/L.7. We support also draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1 on the draft World Charter for Nature, introduced this morning by the representative of the Republic of Zaire.

133. Mr. GARCÍA ROBLES (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As a result of our thorough study of draft resolutions A/35/L.7 and A/35/L.8/Rev.1 submitted, respectively, by the Soviet Union and 39 members of the Group of 77, the delegation of Mexico has reached the conclusion that, far from being incompatible, the two texts can quite correctly be regarded as complementary. They are both, in fact, based on similar ideals and pursue similar goals.

134. Under the provisions of draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, the General Assembly would state that it is "Conscious that life on earth is part of nature and depends on the uninterrupted functioning of natural systems", and at the same time, deplors "the destruction or alteration of natural systems, resulting, *inter alia*, from excessive consumption and abuse of natural resources, from conflicts and from wars".

135. Under the provisions of draft resolution A/35/L.7, the Assembly would proclaim "the historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations" and would express its determination "to preserve nature as a prerequisite for the normal life of man".

136. The two draft resolutions are also identical in regard to the procedure that their respective sponsors deem most appropriate for the long-term attainment of their shared objectives. The Soviet text envisages the preparation of a report by the Secretary-General, with the assistance of UNEP, and requests the Secretary-General to solicit the views of States in that respect. In the draft resolution originally submitted by 39 countries, the Secretary-General is requested to gather the views and observations of Member States on the draft World Charter for Nature, which is contained in annex II to document A/35/141, and, on the basis of the replies received and in co-operation with UNEP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, to formulate "appropriate recommendations with a view to the adoption of a world charter for nature".

137. Thus, the greatest difference between the two draft resolutions perhaps resides not in their nature but, rather, in the emphasis they place on the effects of a possible nuclear conflagration, and even on the effects of the arms race afflicting the world.

138. In that respect, it should be pointed out that paragraph 20 of the draft World Charter contains such precise provisions as the following:

"20. Military activity damaging to nature shall be avoided, and in particular:

"(a) Further development, testing and use of nuclear, biological, chemical or environmental

modification methods of warfare shall be prohibited; and

“(b) Protected areas, the Antarctic region and outer space shall be free of military activity.”

139. However, there can be no doubt that draft resolution A/35/L.7, tends to place much greater emphasis than does draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1 on this aspect of the question, since what are termed in it the “disastrous consequences” for mankind and the environment of “a war involving the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”, as well as “the pernicious effects” of the arms race on the environment, should no doubt be considered the *raison d'être* of that draft resolution.

140. We believe that such considerations only confirm what was stated by the General Assembly in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, its first special session devoted to disarmament, when, *inter alia*, it affirmed that “the most acute and urgent task of the present day” is to eliminate the threat of nuclear war. As regards the “pernicious effects” of the arms race mentioned in the Soviet draft resolution, my delegation interprets this as something which would cover, first of all, nuclear-weapon tests, whether in the atmosphere or under water, for reasons which need no explanation, and, secondly, underground tests, because the enormous damage that can result from them is so real that the Moscow Treaty of 1963 itself specifically prohibited such tests whenever they might cause radioactive debris to be present outside the territorial limits of the State under whose jurisdiction or control such explosion is conducted.

141. But it is not only those tests that should be considered as deeply harmful effects of the arms race. Account must also be taken of tests of other weapons of mass destruction such as chemical weapons, and of the fact that weapons production, in addition to squandering non-renewable resources, is one of the industries most responsible for the pollution of the atmosphere, water and the subsoil. The resultant toxic wastes represent a grave danger to nature and therefore for the health of mankind.

142. In both draft resolutions recognition is quite rightly given to the fact that in order to safeguard the balance and the quality of nature, as well as to preserve it, both national and international measures must be taken. Mexico is well aware of this. We feel that we can justly take pride in having demonstrated that conviction by our deeds—at the international level, for example, by having initiated and successfully concluded, with the co-operation of the other countries of Latin America, Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco),<sup>8</sup> based on a system which is completely free of nuclear weapons and therefore a complete absence of nuclear-weapon tests, and at the national level, by having prepared and enforced some of the most complete legislation in existence for the protection of the environment.

143. We believe that these considerations are sufficient explanation of the pleasure the delegation of Mexico would take in the adoption of draft resolution A/35/L.7 and A/35/L.8/Rev.1. We are confident

that they will in the near future become translated into reality which would demonstrate, *inter alia*, that the most industrialized States, and especially those that are among the major arms producers, can act in a way that demonstrates their awareness of the special responsibility they have to contribute effectively to what has very aptly been called “the preservation of nature for present and future generations”.

144. The PRESIDENT: In connexion with agenda item 113, entitled “Draft World Charter for Nature”, I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes before the vote.

145. Mr. BELTRAMINO (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In connexion with draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1 entitled “Draft World Charter for Nature”, my delegation would like to state that it values the efforts made by the delegation of Zaire and the other delegations that are sponsoring it to present an ambitious initiative which is undoubtedly of great interest in view of the problems involved in preserving the natural environment. This has been the subject of numerous studies in the past and even of important decisions in the United Nations.

146. This question is of the greatest importance because of the principle of sovereignty of States, which is at stake, and the principles which should govern international co-operation.

147. We should like to make it clear that we are concerned by the very term “nature”, which is so broad that it would require some further elucidation so that it could seriously become the subject of norms.

148. If the concept of nature can be taken to include natural resources, we have serious objections, since natural resources are themselves governed by the fundamental principle of the full and permanent sovereignty of States over the resources of their territories, a principle which bears no limitation and has been solemnly proclaimed, in the Declaration on the Establishment of the New International Economic Order [*resolution 3201 (S-VI)*].

149. Despite the reference in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, a broad interpretation can be given to the term “nature” under paragraph 1. We hope that at some time it may be possible to provide a careful clarification of the links between nature, natural resources and environment, because otherwise greater problems might arise than those we are attempting to prevent. Even the rights of States might be called into question, rights which the sponsors of the text have undoubtedly attempted to safeguard and protect.

150. If the draft resolution is adopted, we shall in due course, as requested, submit our views, but we wish to repeat that with the best will in the world we are perhaps embarking on a course that really needs more time for reflection and consideration.

151. The PRESIDENT: May I now take it that the Assembly adopts draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1?

*The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 35/7).*

152. The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Brazil to explain his vote.

153. Mr. CORRÊA da COSTA (Brazil): On behalf of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suri-

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 634, No. 9068.

name, Venezuela and Brazil, I have the honour to state that the eight member States of the Treaty for Amazonian Co-operation did not oppose the consensus reached on the revised draft resolution contained in document A/35/L.8/Rev.1 on the explicit understanding that the sole aim of the text is to open a process of consultations to be undertaken by the Secretary-General on the basis of which the General Assembly may be called upon at a later stage to take a decision on the matter.

154. The countries on whose behalf I have the honour to speak therefore wish to place on record that in their activities in matters related directly or indirectly to the subjects addressed by the draft World Charter for Nature they will continue to be guided at the national, regional, subregional and international levels by the commitments which they have formally accepted, among which is the Treaty for Amazonian Co-operation. Their acceptance of the draft resolution can only be interpreted, therefore, as willingness on their part to join in the process of consultations, without any commitment whatsoever either as to the contents of the draft resolution itself or as to the outcome of the process of consultations which it launches.

155. The PRESIDENT: We turn now to agenda item 120, entitled "Historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations". Statements will be limited to explanations of votes on draft resolution A/35/L.7.

156. Mr. BELTRAMINO (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Argentine delegation has studied draft resolution A/35/L.7 very thoroughly and we feel that although it is aimed at the preservation of nature, as it states, at the same time it relates the item to the question of the arms race, from which it really should be separated.

157. My country has demonstrated in its policy a clear position in favour of environmental preservation and it could not oppose any efforts to achieve that goal. The initiatives we have taken in different international bodies in this connexion are well known. None the less, we do have some doubts about a certain imbalance that we see as regards the double standard established in the draft resolution. On the one hand it talks of the arms race as something which should be avoided, as the shared responsibility of all States. We agree, but it is well known that the arms race is conducted precisely by the big Powers. It is also well known that the major impact on the environment is caused by those countries and they are the ones in a position to worsen that impact in the future.

158. In our statement in the First Committee,<sup>9</sup> we stressed the primary responsibility of the big Powers as regards the maintenance of peace and disarmament. And it is precisely for that reason that those Powers have primary responsibility for the consequences of all types of nuclear-weapon tests and the use of weapons. We feel that this is an undeniable objective fact.

159. We would have preferred that operative paragraph 1 clearly proclaim the responsibility of States

and particularly of the major Powers, not for the past, not for history, but for the present and the future.

160. We also feel that what we stated in our explanation of vote on draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1 [*see paras. 145-150 above*] applied to this draft resolution. If it is the intention of the General Assembly to adopt this draft resolution by consensus, then we shall not object. But we do clearly wish to record our observations and reservations. If it is put to a vote, then our delegation will abstain.

161. Mr. CORRÊA da COSTA (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil regrets that a decision is to be taken on draft resolution A/35/L.7 this afternoon. We consider it essential to have a thorough debate on this text and that, before voting on it, delegations should be given time to clarify a number of issues with its sponsors.

162. From our point of view, the Soviet initiative has many positive points. It is, however, a two-fold draft resolution, or, to be more precise, it contains two distinct draft resolutions in one. The first one, of a very general nature, relates to the question of the responsibility of States for the preservation of nature and is, by definition, non-controversial. It seeks nothing more than to ascertain the views of States on ways and means of developing international co-operation to preserve the natural environment. To its detriment, however, it fails even to mention the necessity of taking into account the question of the permanent sovereignty of States over their own natural resources. Nor does it place any emphasis, unfortunately, on the need to safeguard, in any environmental activity, the rights of developing countries to economic and social development.

163. The rest of the draft resolution, which we consider another matter entirely, and therefore worthy of being a second draft resolution, is much more complex. It refers to the detrimental effects of the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race, with its accumulation of toxic chemicals, on the human environment, damaging the vegetable and animal world. It stresses that resources are being diverted from the solution of the problem of preserving nature and, in order to combat this deleterious leaching away, it proposes the strengthening of international "détente" and the creation of conditions for banishing war from the life of mankind. Finally, it seeks the assistance of UNEP through the preparation of a report on the pernicious effects of the arms race on nature.

164. It is evident, therefore, that the two aspects of the draft resolution aim at completely different objectives and are based on completely different premises and realities. We endorse both these aspects, separately. It could not be otherwise. But we cannot accept the same umbrella being used for all States, proclaiming them all responsible for the preservation of nature without qualification. Those responsible for the arms race have a very specific responsibility with respect to the preservation of the environment, a responsibility that cannot be shared by all. Operative paragraph 1 is, in itself, sane and non-controversial. In the context of this draft resolution, however, it fails to draw the necessary distinction between the two categories of States so as to make it clear that, from the point of view of the detrimental effects on nature

<sup>9</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, First Committee, 8th meeting, and ibid., Sessional Fascicle, corrigendum.*



arising from military activities, only a few can be held responsible.

165. We do not understand the reasons for the Soviet delegation's reluctance to submit two separate draft resolutions whereby the two very relevant issues I have referred to would receive much better consideration. It would have given us the greatest pleasure to support them.

166. In the present circumstances, so contrary to what we feel would have been proper, we have no choice but, regretfully, to abstain.

167. The PRESIDENT: We shall now proceed to vote on the draft resolution. A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:* Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cape Verde, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Against:* None.

*Abstaining:* Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malawi, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Upper Volta, Zaire.

*Draft resolution A/35/L.7 was adopted by 68 votes to none, with 47 abstentions (resolution 35/8).<sup>10</sup>*

168. The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who had expressed the wish to explain their votes after the voting.

169. Mr. GHIKAS (Greece): In abstaining on draft resolution A/35/L.7, the Greek delegation did not want in any way to dissociate itself from the effort to preserve nature and natural resources, a task of primordial importance for present and future generations. Our abstention was motivated by the following considerations.

170. The General Assembly has just adopted by consensus draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, which

addresses this very problem and lays the foundation for its study and the eventual approval of a world charter for nature. By adopting that draft resolution, Member States undertake, *inter alia*, "to conduct their activities in full recognition of the supreme importance of protecting natural systems, maintaining the balance and quality of nature and conserving natural resources". It is consequently the view of my delegation that we should have avoided adopting a second draft resolution which, in its main points, duplicates the previous one.

171. Furthermore, the Soviet text seems to imply that the sole or principal danger to natural resources is the arms race. This is certainly not the case. On the other hand, the very serious problem of the limitation of armaments is being examined in a number of international forums, where it is dealt with in all its aspects. It is a complex and many-sided problem, which should be kept in perspective and not become the object of deliberations in a variety of extraneous contexts, which might divert the attention of world public opinion from its specific political, economic and other implications.

172. Mr. DIDIER (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the nine member States of the European Community, I have the honour of presenting the following considerations with regard to our vote on draft resolution A/35/L.7.

173. We have every sympathy with the appeal to nations to take the necessary measures for the preservation of nature. However, such an invitation can be effective only if it is made in unison with efforts already under way and within the broader context of co-operation in international activities aimed at protecting and preserving nature.

174. By limiting ourselves merely to the effects of the arms race and disregarding the other major causes of the destruction and deterioration of the environment—and I will only mention desertification and tropical deforestation among the many other threats, both physical and social, to the environment—we run the risk of adopting a simplistic attitude to environmental problems and consequently of making the exercise fragmentary.

175. With regard to operative paragraph 4, on the preparation of a report on the effects of the arms race on nature and the request for solicitation of the views of Member States on measures to be taken at the international level to preserve the environment, the nine members of the Community believe that this is superfluous. The report on the state of the environment in 1980 after an in-depth discussion at the eighth session of the Governing Council of UNEP [*see A/35/25*] did not give rise to any requests that the inquiries be continued. On that occasion it appeared clear that UNEP was not the appropriate body to study questions relating to the effects of the arms race.

176. It is for all these considerations that the nine member States of the European Community abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/35/L.7.

177. Mr. ATKINS (United States of America): There are several general statements in the draft resolution submitted by the Soviet Union which contain principles we can all support and on which there is little

<sup>10</sup> The delegations of Iran and Nicaragua subsequently informed the Secretariat that they wished to have their votes recorded as having been in favour of the draft resolution.

or no disagreement among States. The United States does not believe, however, that this draft resolution offers much that is new, creative or not already adequately addressed elsewhere.

178. We are particularly concerned that in operative paragraph 4 in the Soviet text a study is proposed that has in fact already been completed and submitted at the eighth session of the Governing Council of UNEP in March 1980. That study was also done at the Soviet Union's request. It is our view that UNEP can ill afford to expend scarce resources on repetitive studies.

179. A second concern is the obvious disarmament-oriented character of this draft resolution. It would be more appropriate to discuss these issues in the relevant Committee, where there might be an opportunity to address seriously more specific and useful disarmament proposals, rather than engage in what has been clearly a propaganda exercise.

180. We have, therefore, decided to abstain on this draft resolution.

181. Mr. ELMÉR (Sweden): The Swedish Government firmly holds that the arms race poses serious threats to the environment. It is, therefore, welcome when one of the major participants in the arms race gives expression to its concern in this regard. The international community should indeed pay close attention to the dangers from an environmental point of view associated with nuclear-weapon testing, particularly in the atmosphere, with large stockpiles of nuclear weapons and chemical weapons or with the wastes from industries producing nuclear weapons—to name just a few examples that come to mind.

182. Nevertheless, my delegation has not found it appropriate to support the draft resolution entitled "Historical responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations". The reason for this attitude is that, in our view, the text seems to suffer from a certain lack of specificity and that in its present form it does not appear capable of achieving any tangible results that would go beyond the work already carried out in this area by UNEP.

183. It is with these considerations in mind that my delegation has abstained in the voting on that draft resolution.

184. Mr. ORTIZ SANZ (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Bolivian delegation would have liked to support with its vote the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of the Soviet Union under agenda item 120, as it meets two of the greatest aspirations of peoples, the preservation of nature and universal disarmament.

185. But we did not have enough time for in-depth consideration of certain aspects of the issues that are not clear in the draft resolution. For example, there is no mention of the permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources—sovereignty which is enshrined in other resolutions of this very General Assembly. Nor is any distinction whatsoever drawn concerning the disarmament responsibility of those that produce weapons and the countless small States which are merely victims of wars unleashed by others. The delegation of Bolivia, since it has not

been able to express its views on those points, felt compelled to abstain from voting on this draft resolution.

186. Mr. KAMIL (Indonesia): The vote of the Indonesian delegation in favour of draft resolution A/35/L.7 is meant as my delegation's affirmation of the responsibility of each of us for the preservation of nature for our benefit at present and for future generations that follow us. As has also been shown by my delegation's sponsorship of draft resolution A/35/L.8/Rev.1, which the Assembly has adopted by consensus, this vote should in no way be interpreted in this instance as being for or against the allusions to the issue of the arms race and its ramifications made by various speakers in their statements. The question of the arms race belongs to the First Committee, and the position of my Government on it is fully reflected in our statements and votes in that Committee, which deals with all questions of disarmament.

187. Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Ecuador abstained in the vote on the draft resolution, although we recognize in the commendable initiative of the Soviet delegation the fundamental importance of the principle of preserving nature for mankind, and although we certainly oppose the adverse effects of the arms race, as has been demonstrated by Ecuador's support for all disarmament negotiations.

188. My delegation would have wished to see separate treatment of the preservation of nature and disarmament, and we would have liked to see a clear distinction drawn between the responsibility of the great Powers in this field and the responsibility of the developing countries. We are all aware of the overriding responsibility of the great Powers in the arms race, which, in cases in which territories are occupied by force, transfers the use of weapons of mass destruction and chemical weapons and contaminants from developed to developing countries.

189. It is impossible to attribute equal responsibility to the great Powers and the small countries. We, for example, who have prohibited nuclear weapons in our Latin American region, none the less suffer the consequences of nuclear tests carried out in the Pacific Ocean, while we endeavour to protect in our continent, in our Amazonian region and in our islands all species of land flora and fauna, as well as marine life in all its variety, from whales to migratory species and animal and vegetable plankton, which we protect within the sovereignty of our 200-mile territorial sea.

190. But it is the exclusive responsibility of the great Powers to curb the arms race—first to permit the survival of civilization in our world, and then to provide an adequate ecological balance for the proper development of human life.

191. Mr. VIDAL (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Dominican Republic abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/35/L.7, although we do support the individual principles contained in the text—the preservation of nature and the environment, and control of the arms race.

192. None the less those are matters that are subjects of resolutions that should be considered separately, because their being combined can distort them. More-

over, when the blame is attributed, the States that have never participated in the so-called arms race cannot be held responsible.

193. We commend the initiative, but we feel that a concept that is excessively restrictive has been used in developing it. The problem is very complex, and we cannot support an exaggerated over-simplification that could lead to serious mistakes.

194. Of course, the Dominican Republic supports any effort aimed at preserving nature and any attempt by the major Powers to curb their arms race.

195. Miss ZANABRIA (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Peru abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/35/L.7, submitted by the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We consider it to be an important initiative involving the historical responsibility of States for the preservation of the human environment and for keeping it free from any imbalance. We feel that this should be considered and analysed in a broad context, including all processes compatible with the establishment of peace and international security, among them the establishment of the new international economic order and détente.

196. The text submitted by the Soviet delegation should not be considered in isolation, because that would detract from the indivisibility of the process of development and the furthering of peace, which involves solution of the problems of poverty, hunger and industrial development, among others. The achievement of all these would lead to progress and development for mankind in conditions of respect for the rights and duties of States for the preservation of human life. Similarly, my delegation believes that the historical responsibilities referred to in the draft resolution cannot be placed equally on the shoulders of the developed and the developing countries.

197. The PRESIDENT: I shall now call upon those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

198. Mr. SHI Jinkun (China) (*translation from Chinese*): Just now, the representative of Viet Nam in his statement made an unreasonable attack against China. He engaged in fabrication and slander. This is nothing strange.

199. As we all know, it is none other than the Vietnamese authorities that with Soviet support are pursuing a policy of regional hegemonism in Indo-China and have dispatched more than 200,000 aggressor troops for the military occupation of Kampuchea.

Viet Nam has been engaged in large-scale destruction of agricultural products and has caused great loss of life and property, leaving innocent inhabitants by the millions desolate and homeless and beset by poverty and disease, lacking food and clothing.

200. In short, it is guilty of the most brutal and inhuman crimes. Its acts have not only damaged nature and the ecology; they have also violated the most basic humanitarian principles, bringing serious political, economic and social problems to the international community, and particularly to the neighbouring countries and the surrounding area.

201. Not long ago, in this very hall, by an overwhelming majority the General Assembly adopted a resolution reiterating the demand for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea [*resolution 35/6*]. However, today Viet Nam has seen fit to come here and, speaking on the item on the preservation of nature, to slander China, saying that it has caused damage to the ecology of Viet Nam. Its aim is obviously to evade the pressure exerted on it by the General Assembly resolution and to divert the attention of the international community. That is, of course, completely futile.

202. Mr. HA VAN LAU (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): The representative of China continues to repeat allegations against my country that are mendacious and slanderous, allegations that are but the sound of a cracked bell. We categorically reject the allegations made by the representative of China, and explicitly we call on China to refrain from any policy of hegemony and expansion against the three countries of Indo-China and South-East Asia.

203. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): Since Mauritius was one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/35/L.7, which has just been adopted unanimously, I cannot of course explain my vote after the vote.

204. However, I can speak on a point of clarification. Had Mauritius considered the text in question simply propagandistic, Mauritius would certainly not have become one of its sponsors. It would perhaps even have abstained in the vote.

205. I regret and, indeed, I am surprised that one delegation has considered it fitting to qualify the draft resolution as propagandistic. That is a question of appreciation and, in any case, I do not believe that the intelligence of delegations can be measured by the size, power or wealth of their respective countries.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*