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Fifty-first session

First Committee

18th Meeting

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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Sychou (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda items 60, 61 and 63-81 (continued)

Action on draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: In accordance with its programme of work and timetable, this morning the Committee will embark on the fourth phase of its work, namely, action on draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items (items 60, 61 and 63 to 81). However, before the Committee begins to take action on these draft resolutions, I should like to inform members of the procedure that the Committee will observe at this stage of its work.

At the outset of this meeting, delegations will have an opportunity to introduce the remaining draft resolutions. Thereafter, the procedure will be as follows. Before the Committee takes action on each cluster of draft resolutions, I will call on those delegations wishing to make general statements other than in explanation of their positions or votes on the draft resolutions in that particular cluster. After that, delegations will have an opportunity to explain their positions or votes before action is taken on any or all draft resolutions before a decision is taken.

After the Committee has taken a decision on the draft resolutions in a given cluster, those delegations wishing to explain their positions or votes on any or all draft resolutions will be given an opportunity to do so. In this connection, I would like to urge delegations kindly to make consolidated statements on the draft resolutions in a

particular cluster, either before or after action has been taken with respect to the statements and explanations of position or vote.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I would like to urge members of the Committee who wish to request a recorded vote on any particular draft resolution kindly to inform the Secretariat of their intention before the Committee begins taking action on any individual cluster.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that two documents that were requested on Friday have already been circulated. The first is A/C.1/51/INF/2, an information note that is a consolidated corrigendum for draft resolutions or decisions. The second document is A/C.1/51/INF/3, an information note giving additional sponsors of draft resolutions or decisions.

Ms. Ghose (India): I would like to go back to the matter of procedure. Before I do that, may I thank the Secretariat for giving us the information in documents A/C.1/51/INF/2 and A/C.1/51/INF/3. It has been extremely helpful to us to have this in writing.

On the procedure, as I understood it from you, Sir — and I would like this to be very clearly understood — after delegations have introduced the remaining draft resolutions, there will be an opportunity for us to make general statements on each cluster. After that, once each resolution is taken up, there will be an opportunity to give an explanation of vote either before or after the vote on each draft resolution.

We are unable to cluster explanations of votes because we are voting on separate draft resolutions and it is not going to be possible to give one consolidated explanation of vote on eight draft resolutions when we may be voting only on one or two. So we would like to give an explanation of vote on those draft resolutions on which we vote.

Therefore, we need clarification regarding explanations of vote, both before or after the voting. My delegation would like to be able to give an explanation of vote before or after action is taken on a particular draft resolution, and not on the cluster. I would be grateful for some clarification.

The Chairman: I would like to explain that the procedure was established by the Committee. As member know, after the general statements, delegations will have an opportunity to explain their position or vote on any or all draft resolutions before a decision is taken. In other words, a member will have the opportunity to explain its position on any draft resolution.

But it was agreed that action on all the draft resolutions in a cluster will proceed uninterrupted. Members will have the possibility to explain their position or vote on any or all draft resolutions after the decisions are taken.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation apologizes for asking to speak on this matter today, but something is not quite clear. Today we will be taking up cluster 1 — nuclear weapons — but will not take up all the draft resolutions in that cluster. Therefore, if there are delegations that wish in their general statements to refer to draft resolutions that are not going to be acted upon today for various reasons, it is not at all clear how we will proceed under the option proposed to make a consolidated statement in explanation of vote. Today we are taking decisions on draft resolutions about which some delegations might wish to make explanations of vote, but they will not be able to do so in a consolidated fashion because they might also wish to give explanations of vote on draft resolutions that will be considered not today but at some later stage. This poses a practical problem for the delegations.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Russian*): I would like to explain that at this stage delegations may comment and make statements only on those draft resolutions that are going to be considered in the course of a particular meeting, that is, on those draft resolutions on which a decision is to be taken. On draft resolutions on which no decision is to be taken, general comments may be made at a later stage,

namely, when decisions are being taken on those draft resolutions.

Ms. Ghose (India): I do not think a decision was taken on this question by the Committee. Several delegations, including my own, asked for clarification at the time, but we did not obtain that clarification, except informally. The issue is that we are being asked to cluster our explanations of vote without really knowing which of the draft resolutions that are listed will be deferred from today. Some will be deferred until tomorrow; some will be deferred until later in the week.

What we are submitting now to the Chairman — and to the Bureau, because we have already spoken about this to the Ambassador of Colombia as Vice-Chairman in the Bureau — is that on each draft resolution, as we did last year, we should be given the opportunity to explain our vote before or after the vote. That is one entire action. It is not just the voting that is action. The explanation of the vote which goes down on record is part of the action.

We feel very strongly that each draft resolution needs to be taken up separately for action and that we should be given permission to give an explanation of vote should we wish to do so. I do not think it makes very much sense to cluster the explanations of vote, because they are part of the record, and we would like things to stay like that.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): My delegation would like to support the proposals and the thrust of the arguments put forward by the representative of India. We also think that the process of consolidating or clustering explanations of vote either before or after the vote on the cluster of draft resolutions would disperse the explanations of vote that we are trying to give on particular draft resolutions, and we too would prefer to go back to the procedure followed in previous years whereby explanations of vote can be given before each and after each vote on a draft resolution.

Mr. de Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico is flexible and can adopt the method of work that you, Sir, and the Bureau are proposing. However, my delegation would not be in a position to offer explanations of vote on draft resolutions in this cluster as we know that some are still being negotiated. It would be impossible for me to give an explanation of vote before the vote in respect of a draft when I have not seen the final version. So, I would agree that we should proceed today as you have suggested, but I would reserve the right to give an explanation of vote prior to the adoption of draft resolutions in this cluster which are not going to be put to a vote today.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I would simply like to say that my delegation would also like to join previous speakers and express the hope that the method we have used until this session can also be used at the fifty-first session. I have already said this in discussions in the First Committee and my delegation would like to repeat the same request at today's meeting.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation thanks the Secretariat for its work, and would like to express its full support for the point of view put forward by India, South Africa and in a somewhat modified form by Mexico and Algeria. It is our very earnest wish that we be allowed to give explanations of vote both before and after each draft resolution. That is part of the normal procedure followed last year, and I think that to try to group our explanations together all at the same time could give the impression that there is a link between each draft resolution, which is not the case. We have to take great care not to give the impression that the vote on one draft resolution is linked to the vote on another, and I am a little uneasy about this procedure because it does give that impression. At any rate, my delegation reserves the right to give an explanation of vote whenever we feel it would be useful to do so.

Mrs. Kurokochi (Japan): I have no intention of prolonging this debate, but I am sure that there are a number of delegations, including my own, that have already made preparations for consolidating their explanations of vote as suggested by the Chairman last week. Thus my delegation is entirely flexible on this matter. However, it should be possible for delegations, if they so choose, to give a consolidated explanation of vote or for delegations that insist on giving an explanation after the adoption of each draft resolution to do so. I think this kind of flexible approach might be possible.

As I have the floor, I would like to seek clarification. Several delegations referred to the possible extension of action on certain draft resolutions but my delegation is not aware of such a decision as yet. So I would like to have clarification on this point.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China): Let me speak in English. My delegation fully respects whatever arrangement you, Sir, propose for us. Since I have the floor, let me give you my delegation's opinion. My delegation fully supports the views expressed by India and South Africa, along with others. We would be happy to see the voting conducted on each draft resolution one by one. I am sure that it will be done this way, and that explanations of vote will also be given on the

draft resolutions one by one. This would help to avoid any confusion caused by what you referred to as consolidated explanations of vote. However, as I said at the beginning, my delegation will abide by whatever arrangement you propose for us.

The Chairman: I would like to remind the Committee that we are following previous practice and the same procedure as last year. However, if a particular delegation wishes to alter that procedure, the Chair is flexible, and we could agree to the proposal to give the right to delegations to explain their position or vote on each draft resolution one at a time.

With the Committee's agreement, we will follow the procedure I have just outlined.

In accordance with that procedure, I will call upon those members wishing to introduce draft resolutions.

I now call on the representative of Myanmar, who will introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.39.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/51/L.39, on behalf of 40 sponsors. The sponsors of this draft resolution are: Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and my own country.

This draft resolution is a follow-up to resolution 50/70 P entitled "Nuclear disarmament", which was adopted by the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly last year with the overwhelming support of Member States.

Since the adoption of resolution 50/70 P, a number of positive developments have taken place that are supportive of international efforts for nuclear disarmament.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is generally considered to be an initial step, among several other measures, towards the achievement of nuclear disarmament, has been concluded. We must now move on to further concrete steps in the process of nuclear disarmament.

The historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, dated 8 July 1996, gave further impetus to the international clamour for nuclear disarmament. All judges of the Court reaffirmed by a unanimous decision that there exists an obligation for all States to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under safe and effective international control.

Moreover, there has been a ground swell of interest and support for nuclear disarmament worldwide. The number of nuclear-weapon-free zones and proposals for the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones is on the increase.

The past year has also witnessed sustained and serious discussions and deliberations on the subject. Significant concrete proposals have been put forward for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament. The most significant concrete proposal was that of 28 delegations to the Conference on Disarmament that are members of the Group of 21 for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, contained in document A/C.1/51/12 of 24 October 1996.

The report of the Canberra Commission of August 1996 also included a significant concrete proposal for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The growing interest in this subject has also found expression in the statements and discussions of delegations here in this Committee. Some years ago, very few delegations talked about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Now, a majority of delegations have joined the international clamour for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Many delegations have referred to a phased programme of nuclear disarmament. A nuclear weapons convention has also become a familiar phrase, frequently used by delegations.

All these are encouraging trends, which we warmly welcome. It is therefore only logical, appropriate and timely that the Conference on Disarmament should establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations early in 1997 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework through a nuclear weapons convention. This point is reflected in operative paragraph 5, and indeed constitutes the main thrust of the draft resolution.

In the sixteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would take note of the proposal of the 28 delegations, express its conviction that this proposal will contribute to negotiations on this question in the Conference on Disarmament, and urge the Conference on Disarmament to take into account the proposal of the 28 delegations in this regard.

In operative paragraph 4, the General Assembly would call upon the nuclear-weapon States to undertake a step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat and a phased programme of progressive and balanced deep reductions of nuclear weapons, and to carry out effective nuclear disarmament measures with a view to the total elimination of these weapons within a time-bound framework.

In view of the importance of this draft resolution, we hope that the Committee will adopt it with the overwhelming support of Member States.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to make a few brief remarks with regard to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.39, which has just been introduced by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of a large number of sponsors.

I have asked to speak because my delegation believes that that draft resolution is one of the most important before us in this Committee. The proposals contained in the draft resolution are an essential corollary to the consensus of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) leaders at Cartagena. Last year the United Nations General Assembly upheld that consensus of the Non-Aligned Movement countries by a wide majority. Unfortunately, the Conference on Disarmament was unable to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament during the current year. During this year, however, several important developments have taken place, such as the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, and the proposal of 28 countries for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

In the informal discussions that we have held on the subject of nuclear disarmament, my delegation has noted with satisfaction that the nuclear-weapon States have confirmed that they too are committed to the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. That being so, we believe that agreement can be achieved on a course of action to promote negotiations on nuclear disarmament, especially in the Conference on Disarmament. The

negotiations that we envisage, as we have explained in the informal meetings, are designed to identify those measures that can be included in the phased programme for nuclear disarmament, with the negotiations on specific measures taking place in the appropriate mechanisms and forums.

I hope that, in the context of our desire to promote an agreed approach towards nuclear disarmament, this draft resolution will receive the widest possible support.

Mr. Ledogar (United States of America): I hope this is the appropriate time to make an explanation of the United States vote on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39, on nuclear disarmament; that seems to be the one we are talking about. It will come as no surprise, I am sure, to any of the representatives in this chamber that the United States will be voting "no" on this draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Russian*): I apologize, but at this stage we are considering only the matter of the introduction of the draft resolutions. We have not yet gone to the next stage of our work. Therefore, may I request the representative of the United States to speak somewhat later. For the moment we are dealing just with the introduction of draft resolutions.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): Please permit me to speak briefly on the draft resolution of nuclear disarmament, introduced by the delegation of Myanmar, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.39.

Because of their inherent nature, weapons of mass destruction have been the focus of attention of the international community for many decades.

The Chairman: If I may interrupt you, are you going to comment on the draft resolution or are you going to make a general statement on the nuclear disarmament cluster?

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): What I am going to do is what was just done by the representative of Pakistan, that is, comment on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39. Is that all right?

The Chairman: You know that this is the stage for the introduction of draft resolutions, and we are not in a stage of general statements. When we finish, you will have the possibility to speak.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I am sorry to ask to speak, but I think that after the introduction of a draft resolution any

delegation is free to make a comment on it, including the sponsors of that draft resolution. It is under that procedure that I asked to speak and made a statement. I believe the representative of Sri Lanka indeed has the possibility to make a statement, and I would go further and say that if a delegation wishes to explain its vote at this time, it is also free to do so. Our procedures are very flexible and I believe that we should proceed as flexibly as possible.

The Chairman: I would like to remind the Committee that we are now at the stage of introducing draft resolutions. If any delegations wish to comment on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39, I would like to give them the floor.

Does any delegation wish to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39?

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): Let me continue from where I stopped a little while ago, before I was interrupted. Because of their inherent nature, weapons of mass destruction have been the focus of attention of the international community for many decades. Consequently, for many years the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly have devoted considerable time and resources to grappling with the problems relating to such weapons. In the recent past, the Conference on Disarmament has engaged in multilateral negotiations which resulted in producing treaty texts in the form of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1992 and, more recently, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), completed two months ago. Another milestone was the successful conclusion in May 1995 of the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which resulted, *inter alia*, in the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

Work in this particular field was not limited only to multilateral negotiations. We are all aware of the success achieved in the field of production of nuclear weapons through bilateral negotiations. It was the gradual receding of mutual suspicion and hostility, coupled with confidence-building, which helped to create an atmosphere conducive to commencing such bilateral and multilateral negotiations and concluding them successfully. Such mutual accommodation was not even imaginable only a few years ago. The momentum which we have witnessed in this sphere of activity should not be lost or retarded. Indeed, everything possible must be done by the international community to encourage bilateral negotiations aimed at further reduction of these dreaded weapons of mass destruction. Meanwhile, the international community should also take steps multilaterally with a view to eliminating

nuclear weapons from the face of the world as soon as possible.

Sri Lanka firmly believes that while the nuclear-weapon States are engaged in a phased approach to reducing their nuclear arsenals, the international community as a whole has the responsibility of swiftly engaging in multilateral negotiations towards eliminating the existing nuclear weapons and ensuring that no country will ever be permitted to manufacture, stockpile or use such weapons in the future. Nuclear weapons threaten the security of all, including the possessors of such weapons. Furthermore, they threaten the existence of mankind and of everything else in this fragile environment. Hence, Sri Lanka does not agree with the view expressed by some speakers in this forum that negotiations for the reduction or, for that matter, the elimination of nuclear weapons should be undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States among themselves.

There is more than one reason to argue our case for undertaking multilateral negotiations for nuclear disarmament, particularly in the context of the Conference on Disarmament. First, the Conference on Disarmament has been entrusted with the responsibility for negotiating treaties on weapons of mass destruction not once, but twice, in the recent past. On each of these occasions, the Conference on Disarmament was able to produce treaty texts acceptable to the international community. The first — the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was opened for signature in 1993 — entered into force on 31 October 1996. Some 130 States have so far committed themselves to the second Treaty — the CTBT — which was negotiated by the Conference on Disarmament. With such a positive track record, the Conference on Disarmament, being the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament matters, is most definitely the logical place to undertake negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

The second reason relates to decision 2, adopted last year by the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, in which the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their commitment to pursuing negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. One and a half years have passed since it was made, yet we do not have much to show for that commitment, which was first made in 1968 and reaffirmed in 1995.

The third reason is the clear and unambiguous Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. In its landmark Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996, the Court unanimously agreed that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading

to nuclear disarmament. The Court held that such negotiations should be undertaken under effective international control, and not by the nuclear-weapon States themselves.

It was against that background that Sri Lanka decided, together with 27 other members of the Conference on Disarmament belonging to the Group of 21, to call for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Our commitment to nuclear disarmament prompted us to co-sponsor the relevant draft resolution which was so ably negotiated and presented to the General Assembly last year by the delegation of Myanmar. My delegation fully endorses the call made on the nuclear-weapon States in paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39, to undertake step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat and a phased programme of progressive and balanced deep reductions of nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka also fully supports the call made on the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations early in 1997.

Finally, Sri Lanka is cognizant of the fact that negotiations for nuclear disarmament are going to be neither easy nor concluded within a short time. All major accomplishments start with the first step in the right direction. In our opinion, we could begin by negotiating the scope of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. If there is a spirit of cooperation and goodwill involving all members of the Conference, it will be able to make a modest beginning early in 1997 by negotiating an appropriate and realistic scope for the ad hoc committee. If the Conference is permitted to make such a beginning, it would be a positive contribution to achieving our common goal of eliminating nuclear weapons in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Ledogar (United States of America): I will try not to tip my hand as to how I intend to vote. I wish simply to make a comment about draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39 and I would like to make it now because of the series of remarks that we have heard following its introduction.

It should come as no surprise to any representative in this room that the United States does not like this resolution. It should be no surprise, because it was no doubt the objective of the drafters to ensure that the United States would not like the draft resolution and would probably vote accordingly. This draft resolution does not even try to capture consensus on how to make progress in the nuclear disarmament area. The route to such consensus, does, of

course, exist. It was found most recently in the context of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The past year has witnessed several important benchmarks in nuclear disarmament: the signature by all nuclear-weapon States of the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga; the signing of the Treaty of Pelindaba, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa; concomitant signatures by most of the nuclear-weapon States in the relevant Protocols; and the signature of the historic ban on all nuclear-weapon-test explosions and all other nuclear explosions. In addition, the United States Senate provided its advice on and consent to the Treaty on strategic arms reduction.

I admit that the preambular part of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39 begrudgingly throws a few bones in the direction of acknowledging some progress in nuclear disarmament. It notes, rather than welcomes, one of the year's great achievements: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The operative section of the draft resolution makes not even a passing reference to progress already achieved, nor does it call for the Conference on Disarmament to get down to negotiations on a nuclear issue it agreed to almost two years ago — a fissile material cut-off agreement. Instead, the draft resolution unrealistically insists that nuclear reductions, up to total elimination, be undertaken within a time-bound framework, in the Conference on Disarmament, through a multilaterally negotiated nuclear-weapons convention. This is a recipe for stalemate. Rather than attempt to impose a time-frame for everything at once, we should follow up on the concrete negotiations that have been achieved in the Conference on Disarmament. We should make progress where we can.

My Government has made clear its commitment to continuing progress in the nuclear-arms reduction and disarmament contexts, but not according to arbitrary dictates regarding substance, form and timing and not before all five nuclear-weapon States are prepared to negotiate reductions among themselves. I hope that those who share United States concerns about distortions of the truth and the need for fulfilment of obligations already undertaken will join with us in taking this attitude towards the draft resolution.

If the proponents of an early special session on disarmament are concerned about understanding why their sense of urgency is not shared by all, they simply need to read this draft resolution.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): I had originally planned to include my comments on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39 in a combined statement, but in view of the fact that everybody is speaking now, I would rather make my comments at this stage.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39, on the question of nuclear disarmament, and in particular its last preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 6, are of great importance to my delegation. These two paragraphs include specific references to the proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons presented to the Conference on Disarmament by 28 delegations that are members of the Group of 21, contained in Conference on Disarmament document CD/1419 and annexed to First Committee document A/C.1/51/12.

The position of the sponsors with respect to the question of nuclear disarmament and the utmost priority which must be attributed to this issue within the Conference on Disarmament has just been outlined in the statement introducing the draft resolution. It is well known and does not need further elaboration. Let me just state that the issue of nuclear disarmament must remain at the forefront of the priorities of the international disarmament agenda, in accordance with the decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, until we rid our planet of the nuclear threat posed by the mere existence of nuclear weapons, thereby turning it into a nuclear-weapon-free world. Progress on non-proliferation should be coupled with similar progress in respect of nuclear disarmament.

The proposed programme of action recognizes that there is a requirement for active multilateral efforts to identify, negotiate and implement specific step-by-step measures for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and contains proposals for concrete measures to be carried out by an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in three phases, the last of which would take us to the year 2020. The list of measures proposed is not exhaustive, but it is understood that in any programme of nuclear disarmament all measures are inextricably bound up with one another.

It is our sincere hope that after the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, as called for in paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, that committee will commence negotiations early in 1997 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and on the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework through a

nuclear weapons convention, taking into account the proposed measures contained in the programme of action. In view of this, I highly recommend to all members of the Committee that they vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. de Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Like the representative of Egypt, I had intended to comment on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39 in a general statement, but given the obvious popularity of this draft resolution, I will take the liberty of commenting on it now.

My delegation attaches special importance to draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39, introduced today by the delegation of Myanmar. As the Committee will recall, this replaces and improves on the resolution submitted by Mexico in 1994 entitled "Step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat". The earlier text had aimed to offer the international community a mechanism that would enable all, but in particular nuclear-weapon States, systematically, rationally, gradually and progressively to work towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. With the same intention, 28 delegations to the Conference on Disarmament that are members of the Group of 21 this year submitted a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons in three stages. All States, even nuclear-weapon States, committed themselves to the ultimate objective of the total elimination of these weapons, as we have heard in the debate in the First Committee this year.

We think that current international circumstances are conducive to the systematic and gradual attainment of this objective, which will require bilateral measures, measures involving various States and multilateral measures. The Conference on Disarmament should begin negotiations on a phased programme with specific time-frames that could give impetus to concrete negotiations on specific measures, provide a framework and put them on track towards the consolidation of a world free of nuclear weapons, which we think can be achieved by the year 2020.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39 takes note of the proposal made by the 28 delegations and expresses the conviction of the General Assembly that this proposal will be an important input to negotiations on this question in the Conference on Disarmament.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39 certainly does not seek to displease any delegation, to try to pander to any particular delegation. Its objective is to heed the appeal of the international community for the elimination of nuclear weapons and help States comply with their obligation, recalled by the International Court of Justice, to pursue and

bring to a conclusion negotiations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We hope that in 1997 the Conference on Disarmament will establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, for which the Group of 21 has repeatedly and systematically called, to deal with this issue. No other issue can have higher priority than that of freeing humankind of the nightmare of a nuclear holocaust. My delegation therefore urges all delegations that are committed to the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): Like representatives who have spoken before me, I would like to make a few comments on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39.

My delegation would like to express its support for the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament" by becoming one of the sponsors of this initiative, particularly to support efforts to achieve the laudable objective of nuclear disarmament.

In this draft resolution, these countries, including my own, reiterate their commitment to nuclear disarmament through the elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. This is precisely why on 15 October 1996, during the general debate in the First Committee, my delegation called for in-depth consideration of the programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons proposed by the group of 28 countries at the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva.

In May 1995, our countries indefinitely extended the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). More recently, in September 1996, the General Assembly adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has already been signed by 130 States despite all the criticisms which this disarmament instrument aroused and continues to arouse because of its shortcomings. My delegation regards the Treaty as a first stage towards substantive negotiations on nuclear disarmament that is universal in its scope and non-discriminatory in its effect. Our appeal has received further backing from the most prestigious international judicial institution, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which in its advisory opinion of 8 July 1996 called on all States to pursue in good faith negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective control.

Our cosponsorship of this draft resolution must be seen in this light, because nuclear disarmament, in our view, must be considered a milestone in the process of the establishment of a collective security that is global in concept, universally based and non-discriminatory in its effects, so that we may finally achieve a world free from all nuclear weapons, as was the case before 1945.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to take the opportunity of these general statements on the draft resolution to make its own comments.

In our view, nuclear disarmament is still the highest-priority task on the disarmament agenda. As we approach the end of the decade, we must work tirelessly to achieve our goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the creation of a nuclear-free world, so that by the dawn of the twenty-first century, we will have achieved what the international community has so tirelessly been striving for: the total elimination of nuclear weapons for all time.

The 28 delegations of non-aligned and other countries that compose the Group of 21 in the Conference on Disarmament submitted, in that forum, a proposed phased programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that this proposal would constitute a good basis for our work and for the consideration of the negotiating committee to be established in 1997.

My delegation, which subscribed to this very important proposal in Geneva, is among those that circulated that document in our Committee, as we considered it indispensable to our work. We are pleased that several references have been made to it during the course of our work. It is gaining more support from the international community daily, which suggests that there should be a convention banning nuclear weapons.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued this year, and in particular the idea that all States have an obligation to conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, gives even greater relevance and urgency to this issue.

The delegation of Cuba therefore believes that of the cluster I draft resolutions dealing with nuclear weapons, the most important one is that contained in document A/C.1/51/L.39, entitled "Nuclear disarmament". For that

reason, we were pleased to cosponsor it this year once again, together with a large number of delegations.

Mr. Nsanze (Burundi) (*interpretation from French*): First, my delegation would like to announce that it has decided to become a cosponsor of the draft resolution now under discussion, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.39.

In view of the paramount importance of the denuclearization of our planet, my delegation is strongly committed to general and complete disarmament. We regret, however, that the efforts that have been made to this end are reminiscent of the movement of a turtle. Progress towards the ultimate objective has been too slow, halting and hamstrung.

The importance my country attaches to general and complete nuclear disarmament was evidenced by its determination to work towards the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which we were among the first to sign on 24 September last.

In view of our position on the need for complete nuclear disarmament, we believe that it is in the interest of the United Nations and all its Member States to work to intensify and accelerate a global process to bring about a world free of this nuclear nightmare.

Mr. Moradi (Iran): I should like to make a brief statement on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.39, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", introduced today by the delegation of Myanmar.

We associate ourselves with the words of support expressed by previous speakers for this particular draft resolution. In the considered view of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Myanmar draft is a timely initiative that addresses in a succinct manner the highest-priority issue on the disarmament agenda, namely nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear weapons constitute a serious threat to international peace and security. Their irrelevance has given added momentum and a sense of urgency to the process of their elimination, in the light of the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in 1996.

This landmark draft resolution, initiated for the first time by Myanmar and other sponsors during the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, provides a clear path for abolishing these horrendous weapons. We earnestly hope that the members of the Conference on Disarmament, at its 1997 session, will respond constructively to the calls

contained in this draft resolution and establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, taking into account relevant proposals, *inter alia*, the 1996 proposal of 28 members of the Conference on Disarmament for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. This draft resolution enjoys the support of a majority of Member States, and we therefore commend it to the First Committee.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolutions contained in cluster 1 of the Chairman's suggested programme, "Nuclear Weapons" — namely, draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.3, L.4/Rev.1, L.6, L.9, L.17, L.19/Rev.1, L.21, L.23, L.27, L.28, L.29, L.30, L.37, L.39 and L.45. If time permits, the Committee will then take action on draft resolutions contained in cluster 2, "Other weapons of mass destruction", namely, draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.2, L.24, L.36, L.41, L.48 and L.49.

I have been given to understand, however, that the sponsors of draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.4, L.27, L.28 and L.37 would like to postpone action owing to ongoing consultations among interested delegations.

I will now call on those delegations wishing to make general statements, other than explanations of their position or vote, on draft resolutions contained in cluster 1.

Ms. Ghose (India): I should like to make some general comments on some of the draft resolutions that are being considered for action under cluster 1. It is not surprising that most of the draft resolutions introduced in this Committee relate to this cluster. The continued existence of nuclear weapons clearly remains the concern of the international community. In our view, there are three mutually supportive resolutions, which are among the most important resolutions being considered today. Logically, they form a coherent whole, centred as they are around the need, following the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), to commence and conclude negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

The resolution on the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ in document A/C.1/51/L.37 calls upon all States immediately to commence negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons. We believe that to be the task ahead in this crucial area of disarmament. That is the objective to which we are committed — so much so that we have joined in sponsoring this draft resolution in spite of our only too well-known views on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is

quoted in two preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution. This does not signal any change in our position on the NPT itself, which we still consider to be an unequal Treaty. But it indicates our commitment to supporting all efforts, wherever they may take place and in whatever forum, towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We will, of course, oppose any other attempts to incorporate NPT theology in other draft resolutions, unless it is in a similar context.

The draft resolution in document A/C.1/51/L.39 proposes a mechanism and methodology towards that end. It calls on the Conference on Disarmament to take urgent action on what may prove to be its greatest achievement or its greatest failure: the establishment, on a priority basis, of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations in 1997 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework through a nuclear weapons convention.

To emphasize the seriousness of the sponsors, this draft resolution calls the attention of the General Assembly to the 28-nation proposal for a time-bound programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and urges the Conference on Disarmament to use this programme of action and other input in its consideration of the subject in the ad hoc committee.

The third draft resolution in this sub-cluster (A/C.1/51/L.19/Rev.1) proposes a convention prohibiting the threat or use of nuclear weapons — a major step, we believe, towards the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. This idea — working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons — is one whose time has come. Governments, non-governmental organizations and even some think-tanks closely associated with establishments in nuclear-weapon States are questioning the relevance of nuclear weapons today. The call for the elimination of nuclear weapons is now almost universal. Thinking with regard to the security requirements of States in a nuclear-weapon-free world has already started. If the Conference on Disarmament cannot, and the nuclear-weapon States and their allies will not, respond to this truly overwhelming call, international security will remain fragile, and agreements of partial or unequal steps will remain tenuous. This applies not only to the NPT, as we have heard from some NPT members in debate in the First Committee, but to the steps that some NPT States have taken to shelter from the wrath of nuclear weapons by, for example, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and calls for security assurances. In our view, both these concepts flow from an acceptance of an unequal nuclear regime. The world is a nuclear-weapon zone for the five

nuclear-weapon States and their allies; the rest are to seek protection from these countries, hoping that the national security interests of the nuclear-weapon Powers will not, on some occasion, encourage them to use their dreadful weapons against countries that do not have them.

India has no objection to groups of countries freely deciding among themselves to abjure nuclear weapons if they believe that it is in their security interests to do so. But we do not believe in such assurances, even if given in a legal form, as long as the weapons themselves continue to exist. We do not see nuclear-weapon-free zones as an answer to the threat posed by nuclear weapons. Given the global reach and deployment of these weapons, such zones can provide, at best, an illusion of security against weapons whose effects do not respect territorial or regional boundaries.

India, however, as I have stated, respects the arrangements that have been freely arrived at by countries of a particular region, in keeping with guidelines endorsed by the United Nations, and hence will not oppose draft resolutions that reflect the situation. On the other hand, we will not support the imposition of this solution, since we do not believe in it. Our votes on the various draft resolutions on this subject will reflect this position.

There is one specific draft resolution of which I need to make mention in my general comments, and this is a draft resolution in this sub-cluster that we reject totally. In addition to our general reservations on the subject of nuclear-weapon-free zones, this draft resolution is aimed specifically at one country, India. This was evident in the introductory comments of the lead co-sponsor in the First Committee. It is garbed in language purporting to address a so-called regional concern, but, in reality, it is an expression of unfortunately unsatisfactory bilateral relations. India has never accepted and does not accept that its security, particularly insofar as nuclear weapons are concerned, is restricted to a geographical subregion. India's strategic and political interests and concerns go beyond its immediate neighbourhood.

This draft resolution has been repeatedly submitted for several years, and India has consistently opposed it for these reasons. We do not see South Asia as a region in the context of disarmament or international security. Therefore, any draft resolution that refers to South Asia as a region in this context does not and will not have our support.

May I add that the support of the concept by some countries in their responses to the Secretary-General is being carefully studied by my Government. We will have

more specific comments to make when the draft resolution is taken up for action.

Finally, in this cluster there are three draft resolutions that use the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as their central platform. These are draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.3, L.17 and L.27. I believe that action on the last draft resolution has been deferred. Our position on these draft resolutions will naturally be influenced by our views on the NPT, which I have noted earlier in this statement. Suffice it to say now that India will oppose any attempts that seek to give the legitimacy of customary international law to the NPT through General Assembly resolutions, and we will also oppose any calls on countries to adhere to this or any other unequal treaty, which, we believe, only serves to perpetuate and legitimize the retention of nuclear weapons by a handful of States in perpetuity.

Our goal, together with many Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other developing countries, is to work for the total elimination of these weapons, a goal which is promoted not by the control of countries that do not have weapons but by efforts directed at the weapons themselves. The draft resolutions in documents A/C.1/51/L.19/Rev.1, L.37 and L.39, therefore, we believe, address the real issue and will attract, we hope, the widest possible support.

Mrs. Arce (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico has promoted draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.9, regarding the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and is co-sponsoring four others in the cluster on "Nuclear weapons" now before the Committee, namely, draft resolution A/C.1/51.L.4/Rev.1, "The nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas", L.19/Rev.1, on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons, L.37, on the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, and L.39, "Nuclear disarmament".

As an observer of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and a member of the Group of 21, Mexico also endorses the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Colombia on behalf of the United Nations Member States that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, namely, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.21, "Bilateral nuclear-arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament".

With regard to the draft resolution on the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we have already had an opportunity to introduce it, and we would request the support of delegations so that it can be adopted without a vote.

The delegation of Mexico has already spoken with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.4/Rev.1 on the gradual consolidation of the nuclear-weapon-free Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas.

In draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37, we propose that the General Assembly express its appreciation to the International Court of Justice for responding to the request made by the Assembly at its forty-ninth session to render an advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and that it take note of the Advisory Opinion issued by the Court on 8 July 1996.

We have been particularly careful not to include in this draft resolution any judgement or appreciation of the Opinion of the Court regarding the illegality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Court's Opinion stands on its own in terms of legal validity and is in no way affected by support or lack thereof for draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37. The intent of the draft resolution is to urge all States to fulfil their obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to a nuclear weapons convention that would lead to their complete elimination. That obligation is contained in binding legal instruments noted by the Court.

As in previous years, we are acting as sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.19/Rev.1 on the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons. The illegality of the use of such weapons was the subject of the Court's Advisory Opinion. However, we believe that a legally binding instrument would be an important step in a phased programme towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): I would like to refer to draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.23, "The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba)". The signing ceremony held at Cairo on 11 April 1996 marked the culmination of tireless African efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, embodied in the Treaty of Pelindaba. That truly historic event represents a successful formalization of the commitment undertaken over 32 years ago when, in July 1964, the leaders of Africa adopted at Cairo the pioneering resolution of the first regular session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) — its declaration on the denuclearization of Africa.

Once again, we congratulate ourselves on this historic event and hope that such genuine regional successes will induce other regions to work sincerely towards the same end. In this vein, we recall that the Cairo Declaration

adopted on 11 April 1996 emphasized that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in regions of tension, such as the Middle East, enhance global and regional peace and security. Our strong determination to strive towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has been strengthened even further by this important achievement in the African continent. A nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would not only provide an important confidence-building measure among States in the region but would enhance the security of Africa and the viability of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Therefore, my delegation, in an attempt to maintain consensus on the draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, has submitted further revisions to that draft resolution, which will be reissued as document A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2. We continue to hope that the adoption of this draft resolution by consensus will help in the establishment of such a zone in the near future.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to make a few brief general remarks on the draft resolutions on which we are to take action this morning. I have already spoken about draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39, the Myanmar draft resolution on nuclear disarmament.

We believe that nuclear disarmament is the most important objective in the field of disarmament. Therefore, despite our reservations on some of the provisions of another draft resolution purportedly dealing with nuclear disarmament, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17, Pakistan has decided to support that draft resolution as well. We will, however, explain our reservations in an explanation of vote.

Similarly, Pakistan will support draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.21 and L.45, dealing with bilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, despite our reservations with regard to some provisions on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.45, on which we shall elaborate in an explanation of vote.

In a similar vein, Pakistan, although not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), will support draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.3, introduced by Sri Lanka, because we consider that the NPT, despite its inequity, is a factor for stability in international relations.

Pakistan strongly supports the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. We believe that the international community should adopt a consistent and non-discriminatory approach in the promotion of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. Pakistan has for 22 years sponsored the proposal for a

nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. This proposal is now contained in draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.6. We believe that this objective remains relevant and important to the global goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

We would like to make it clear that this draft resolution is not aimed against any single country. It is aimed at capturing the commitments that have already been made unilaterally by all the States of South Asia to the goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. If those commitments have been made sincerely by all the States concerned, we feel that there should be no difficulty in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. For certain countries to argue that their security interests go beyond South Asia and that the positions of the nuclear-weapon States impinge on their position with regard to non-proliferation is, we believe, a basis for justifying the proliferation of nuclear weapons. That is certainly not a position that my delegation can support with regard to South Asia, and therefore we hope that the world community will once again, for the twenty-second time, uphold the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia and urge the one State that has decided to oppose this concept to come on board.

Mr. García (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Colombia's statement is on behalf of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and will deal with draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.21, "Bilateral nuclear-arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament". Other delegations members of the Non-Aligned Movement have already referred to this draft resolution, and I shall therefore confine myself to appealing to delegations to support it.

I should like to take this opportunity to draw attention to a revision of the text. The tenth preambular paragraph should begin as follows: "Welcoming the declared reductions".

The Chairman: The Secretariat will take note of the revision read out by the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Pouhe (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the group of African States, I would like to make a technical revision to the third preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.23, in which the words "and regional" have been omitted. The paragraph should read:

(*spoke in English*)

"Recalling the Cairo Declaration adopted on that occasion which emphasized that nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in regions of tension, such as the

Middle East, enhance global and regional peace and security".

The Chairman: The Secretariat will take note of the revision made by the representative of Cameroon.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): In your statement before we began hearing statements on this cluster, Mr. Chairman, you included draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37 among those on which action has been postponed. To my knowledge, neither Malaysia, the initiator of that draft resolution, nor the other sponsors, has asked for a postponement. I seek clarification on this matter.

The Chairman: The postponement was requested by the representative of Ireland, the Chairman of the European Union.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): As the representative of the sponsors, of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37, I would have liked the Committee to seek their views before deciding to postpone it; the draft resolution has been in circulation for some time, and I think there has been sufficient time for consultation between delegations and Governments.

Speaking as the representative of Malaysia, I would not want to delay the work of the Committee. I am in the hands of the other sponsors.

Mr. O'Rourke (Ireland): I speak on a point of clarification. I requested this postponement not on behalf of the European Union, but on behalf of my own country. We do not have firm instructions on this agenda item at this time, and for that reason I would appreciate it if the sponsors would agree to a postponement.

Ms. Ghose (India): The Committee normally accedes when a delegation asks for some time on a draft resolution. I am now speaking only as one sponsor of this extremely important draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.37. My delegation would not have any problem in accepting a short deferral.

This draft resolution, as our lead sponsor mentioned, has now been on the table for a long time. We have been able to get our instructions, though India is much further away. If we could take up this draft resolution tomorrow my delegation would have no objection to acceding to the request for a one-day postponement.

Mr. de Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to note that draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37 was circulated 12 days ago, on 29 October.

As a sponsor, I have no difficulty with postponing the vote on this draft resolution to the afternoon meeting today. I stress “today”. But my delegation spoke on to this draft resolution this morning, and would need to speak again if action on the draft resolution were postponed to another day. My delegation does not agree to that.

I think that this matter has been adequately discussed. The draft resolution has been before members for 12 days, and there has been more than enough time for delegations to consult and receive instructions. The most that my delegation could accept — if we are to be logical in our work — would be a deferment to this afternoon.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): What I wanted to say on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37 has already been basically stated by the representative of Mexico. It is the hope of my delegation that we will be able to take action on that draft resolution at this afternoon’s meeting.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): In connection with draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.29, entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Central Asian region”, I would like to recall that the sponsors of the draft resolution, having held consultations with other potential sponsors and other interested delegations, have agreed not to have any action taken on the draft resolution at this session.

Mr. Glauser (Canada): I appreciate the offer of postponement of action on the draft resolutions mentioned earlier in the meeting including A/C.1/51/L.21, and wish to note that my delegation is not in a position to take action on these resolutions today.

Mr. Rider (New Zealand): As our colleague from India pointed out, it is the convention in this Committee that, should it prove difficult for a delegation to take a decision on a particular draft resolution, requests for postponement should be met if possible. I have to say that while New Zealand’s support for the outcome of the case before the International Court of Justice is unquestioned, we have some difficulty in voting on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37 immediately because of a number of rather unique circumstances in my own country. I would therefore join those who have suggested that perhaps the vote could be held a little later, such as tomorrow.

Mr. García (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have heard the request from the delegation seeking postponement of action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.21 on bilateral negotiations. Bearing in mind that there are two resolutions on the same subject — A/C.1/51/L.21 and A/C.1/51/L.45 — my delegation states, on behalf of the non-aligned countries, that it would have no problem with

the postponement of action on A/C.1/51/L.21, provided that, at the same time, we postpone action on A/C.1/51/L.45.

The Chairman: I should like to ask the representative of Mexico if he insists on postponing action on this draft resolution until this afternoon — or perhaps we could postpone this question until tomorrow?

Mr. de Icaza (Mexico): I yield to the principal promoter, the representative of Malaysia, and I will support his decision.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): In the light of interventions by delegations and of the difficulty that a few members are having in terms of arriving at a decision, if there are no strong objections from the sponsors, then on their behalf I will agree to a short, one-day postponement, until tomorrow.

The Chairman: I should like to propose that we postpone action until tomorrow on the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/51/L.21, L.37 and L.45. I also was informed that, in view of pending financial implications, a decision will not be taken on A/C.1/51/L.3 until a later date.

Again, I should like to postpone taking action on the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/51/L.3, L.4/Rev.1, L.21, L.27, L.28/Rev.1, L.37 and L.45.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): So far as my delegation is concerned, A/C.1/51/L.3 should have no financial implications for the United Nations, because if it does, this will affect the States Parties. For that reason, I should like to know what is meant here by financial implications.

Mr. Davinic (Director, Centre for Disarmament Affairs): The representative of Sri Lanka is absolutely right: there are no financial implications for the regular budget of the United Nations in connection with the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, the Centre for Disarmament Affairs is not in a position to make this pronouncement. We have to await approval by the budget office, and that approval — a simple statement that there will be no implications for the regular budget — is still pending. We believe that this approval will be obtained in time for the Committee to take action on this draft resolution at tomorrow’s session.

The Chairman: May I take it that the Committee agrees to postpone action on the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/51/L.3, L.4/Rev.1, L.21, L.27, L.28/Rev.1, L.37 and L.45?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.6. I shall now call on those members of the Committee wishing to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on this draft resolution.

Ms. Ghose (India): The Committee will not be surprised that we have asked for a recorded vote on this draft resolution. I have already referred to our position on nuclear-weapon-free zones in general both in my general comments this morning and in earlier statements to the First Committee. I will therefore restrict my remarks to the draft resolution that we are considering at this moment.

The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.6 is not a new one. We believe it is politically motivated and aimed solely at India, for bilateral reasons. It seeks to give a bilateral issue the garb of international respectability as a regional issue. The reasons for our opposition are clear and have been repeatedly stated. I gladly take this opportunity to repeat them.

As I said this morning, India does not regard South Asia as a region or zone for purposes of disarmament or security. Given that our strategic and political interests and concerns extend beyond our immediate geographical neighbours, this draft resolution does not meet the requirement endorsed by the United Nations that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and indeed of all regional arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation, should be based on an appropriate definition of the region that takes into account the specific characteristics of the region and the full range of security concerns of the States of the region. According to the agreed criteria of the United Nations, such zones must be established on the basis of arrangements that have been arrived at freely by the States concerned.

The draft resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.6 does not fulfil any of the criteria endorsed by the United Nations. It does not apply to a region that has been specifically defined with the consent of the States of the area in question.

It does not take into account the full range of security concerns of all the States and it is not an arrangement that is likely to be freely arrived at among the States of this region. My delegation will therefore have no hesitation in voting against this draft resolution.

The Chairman: There being no other delegations that wish to explain their votes or positions before the voting,

the Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.6. A recorded vote has been requested. I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.6, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia", was introduced by the representative of Pakistan at the fourteenth meeting of the Committee on 4 November 1996. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in the document itself.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Bhutan, India, Mauritius

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Cuba, Cyprus, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Viet Nam

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.6 was adopted by 130 votes to 3, with 8 abstentions.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their votes.

Mr. Parnohadiningrat (Indonesia): My delegation has always maintained that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. This is in accordance with paragraphs 33 and 60 of the Final Document adopted by consensus at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) in 1978. Furthermore, paragraph 61 of that document stated that:

“The process of establishing such zones in different parts of the world should be encouraged...The States participating in such zones should undertake to comply fully with all the objective, purposes and principles of the agreements or arrangements.”
(*resolution S-10/2, para. 61*)

Although efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia have been under way, no agreement has been reached. My delegation therefore decided to abstain on the draft resolution.

Mr. Ledogar (United States of America): On draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.6, the United States attaches great importance to nuclear non-proliferation initiatives in South Asia. In this regard, and with particular reference to operative paragraph 2, we call on all States in the region to ensure that their policies and actions do not prejudice the objectives of the draft resolution. At the same time, I wish to note that the United States support for the draft resolution should not be interpreted as a blanket endorsement of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as might be inferred from the second preambular paragraph.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): I should like to explain my delegation's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.6 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia.

Israel voted in favour of the draft resolution in order to register its support for the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones. However, the zones should be tailored to each region according to its own characteristics, be freely negotiated by all States of the region, and include mutual verification regimes. The timing and characteristics of such zones should be agreed upon by all parties involved.

However, Israel would also like to emphasize the principle that regional arrangements, including the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, should originate from within the region through free and direct negotiations leading eventually to top-level agreements which would be accepted by all parties involved and should not be imposed from outside.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.6. The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.9. I shall first call on delegations wishing to explain their vote or position before the voting.

I see none. I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.9, entitled “Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (The Treaty of Tlatelolco)” was introduced by the representative of Mexico at the fourteenth meeting of the Committee on 4 November 1996. The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in the document itself. Additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/51/INF.3.

The Chairman: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.9 have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.9 was adopted.

The Chairman: I now call upon those representatives who wish to explain their position after the decision just taken.

I see none.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17.

I shall now call on those members of the Committee who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

Ms. Ghose (India): My delegation has called for a recorded vote on the seventh preambular paragraph, on operative paragraph 1, and on the draft resolution as a whole, as contained in document A/C.1/51/L.17.

Although this draft resolution is entitled “Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons”, in our view it should perhaps have been more appropriately entitled “Implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty”, since — as we pointed out last year — the draft resolution appears to seek to introduce into a General Assembly resolution language adopted by States parties to a particular treaty. When this draft resolution was presented last year, we voiced our objection on these very grounds. Since it is being repeated this year, we will have to maintain our position on the draft resolution, even though we support the elimination of nuclear weapons in whichever forum it is negotiated.

We do not happen to believe — and the experience of the international community until now supports this view — that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) route will in fact lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons. On the contrary, the indefinite extension of the Treaty appears to have further served only the interests of those States who do not want to move towards total elimination of nuclear weapons. Therefore, we cannot agree with a resolution which seeks to translate the inequality of the NPT into customary law, and which welcomes the indefinite extension of such a Treaty.

I now turn to the two paragraphs for which we have called for separate votes. With regard to the seventh preambular paragraph, which welcomes the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), our position on the adoption of this Treaty is known. We cannot support today the adoption of a text which we rejected only two months ago. The reasons for our position are still valid and do not need repetition. Our reasons for opposing operative paragraph 1 are also evident. India has not signed the NPT and has no intention of doing so. We will therefore vote against this particular paragraph.

Mr. Moradi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation supports the basic thrust of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17 entitled “Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons”, sponsored by the Japanese delegation. However, as last year, we are obliged to abstain on this draft resolution because its substance is not consistent with its title. The draft resolution purports to be a nuclear disarmament initiative; however, its elements focus solely on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and non-nuclear proliferation issues in general.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation has certain reservations on the contents of the draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17. Firstly, notwithstanding its title, the draft resolution relates more to non-proliferation than to nuclear

disarmament. We hope that the draft resolution’s sponsor will be able to strengthen the content on nuclear disarmament in the future.

Secondly, Pakistan is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The indefinite extension of the NPT has given rise to different interpretations. We therefore have certain reservations in welcoming its indefinite extension.

Thirdly, with regard to operative paragraph 1, which urges States to accede to the NPT, I would like to state my country’s position, which is that Pakistan cannot accede to the NPT unilaterally, but we are prepared to do so simultaneously with our neighbour, India. It is on the basis of this understanding — on the simultaneity of the call on States to accede to the NPT — that Pakistan would be prepared to support operative paragraph 1 of this draft resolution.

In view of our support for the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Pakistan has decided to support draft resolution in A/C.1/51/L.17 despite the reservations I have mentioned.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): During the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, Egypt abstained on all paragraphs welcoming the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the time, we presented lucid and unequivocal reasons which, from our point of view and for both substantive and conceptual reasons, remain valid today.

It was clear during the Review and Extension Conference in April and May 1995 that an imperative link existed between an adequate process for reviewing the Treaty, on the one hand, and its extension on the other. Therefore, the decision on how to extend the Treaty was dependent on the progress we achieved in the review process. Unfortunately, it appeared that some States had the sole and unilateral goal of indefinite extension in mind. Needless to say, the indefinite extension decision was taken on the grounds:

“that, as a majority exists among States party to the Treaty for its indefinite extension, in accordance with article X, paragraph 2, the Treaty shall continue in force indefinitely.”
(*NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), decision 3*)

That extension decision was taken regardless of the outcome of the review process, which we hope will be rectified in the enhanced review process destined to begin next year.

We are proceeding towards the next NPT review conference by the year 2000, and Egypt is a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.3 on the meeting of the Preparatory Committee from 7 to 18 April 1997, on which voting was postponed today. Accordingly, Egypt has decided to pursue a forthcoming attitude this year by voting in favour of these paragraphs in recognition of the need to adopt a more constructive approach and in order to work faithfully towards the conclusion of a successful and enhanced review conference.

The Chairman: In the absence of other speakers at this stage, we shall now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17. A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17, entitled "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons", was introduced by the representative of Japan at the 15th meeting of the Committee, on 6 November 1996. In addition to those sponsors listed in the draft resolution and to those which appear in document A/C.1/51/INF/3, it is also sponsored by the following countries: Canada and Malta.

Separate votes have been requested on the seventh preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 1.

The Committee will now proceed to vote on the seventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia,

Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

India

Abstaining:

Cuba, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Syrian Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe

The seventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17 was retained by 133 votes to 1, with 6 abstentions.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now vote on operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal,

Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

India, Israel

Abstaining:

Brazil, Cuba

Operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17 was retained by 138 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now vote on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo,

Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, Brazil, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nigeria

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17, as a whole, was adopted by 132 votes to 0, with 11 abstentions.

The Chairman: I now call on delegations wishing to explain their votes after the voting.

Mr. Zaluar (Brazil): I wish to explain Brazil's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17, entitled "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons".

Brazil fully shares the objective of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. It is therefore with some regret that we were forced to maintain our abstention on this draft resolution. The main reason for our abstention was that the draft resolution, in operative paragraph 1, still ignores the importance of regional agreements and treaties for the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation. A reference to regional agreements is essential to Brazil, as it is through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, bilateral agreements and international safeguards that we express our legally binding international commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

We hope that next year the text of operative paragraph 1 will be adjusted so as to allow us to vote in order of the draft resolution.

Mr. Pham Quang Vinh (Viet Nam): Viet Nam's position with regard to the question of nuclear weapons is all too clear. We firmly stand for the total elimination of these weapons, the sooner the better. Viet Nam, together with other countries, has therefore put forward the 28-State proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. To achieve this end, we support all efforts towards nuclear disarmament and the attainment of a world free from nuclear weapons.

In keeping with that line, Viet Nam voted in favour of the draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17 as a whole. We recognize some positive elements contained therein, such as

calling upon all States — in our view this means the nuclear-weapon States in particular — to implement fully their commitments. However, we would have preferred the content of the draft resolution to be more truly to the point, as its title implies.

The draft resolution should have reflected the legally binding obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in a more straightforward manner.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation regrets that it was unable to support draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17, which was before us today, for the following reasons.

First, my delegation considers that this draft resolution overlaps and even contradicts certain elements of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39, which we have already sponsored and which was adopted by this Committee. Furthermore, the title of the draft resolution does not seem exactly to reflect the contents, in contrast to draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39. We would nevertheless have liked efforts to have been made, as we requested last year, to merge these two proposals.

Secondly, some elements that were incorporated into the draft resolution are not in accordance with our own perception of nuclear disarmament, which is fully identified with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as appropriately stated at its summit at Cartagena, Colombia, in an international setting that favoured the promotion of practical measures for the final and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Finally, unlike draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.39, of which my delegation was a sponsor, the conceptual approach followed by the text contained in this document does not foresee nuclear disarmament through appropriate steps, within a precise framework and as a priority matter with the ultimate aim of the final elimination of these weapons.

For these reasons, therefore, my delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole, and hopes that at the next session efforts will be made to find common ground on this issue so that we have only one draft resolution to adopt.

Mr. Mugaviri (Zimbabwe): I wish to note for the record that my delegation abstained on the seventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17. We actually wanted to support the paragraph. I hope that the Committee's records will indicate our support for the paragraph.

The Chairman: The Secretariat will take note of your comment.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation wishes to state its position on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17, which we have just adopted.

A first significant element, in the view of our delegation, is the lack of balance between the aspirations and the objectives reflected in the title of the draft resolution and its substantive contents. Instead of having a text devoted mainly to the issues involved in nuclear disarmament — as would have been logical for us to expect given the title of the text — we have in front of us a text that almost exclusively emphasizes matters related to non-proliferation. Furthermore, it uses an approach which, in our opinion, is questionable.

In this context, it is particularly illustrative that, of four operative paragraphs of the draft resolution, two deal exclusively with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), while the other two limit themselves to calling on nuclear-weapon States to make their best efforts to bring about nuclear disarmament.

The focus of attention in the preambular part is clearly on issues related to the reduction of weapons and to non-proliferation. In this context, the question of nuclear disarmament is really relegated to the background. Reducing the question of nuclear disarmament to such a limited and selective approach is not only inappropriate, but could also have very negative repercussions for dealing with this issue.

As my country has expressed in various forums, the path towards nuclear disarmament, with a view to the definitive elimination of such weapons, is the responsibility of all States, and requires the cooperation of all. To try to make this topic the private domain of the nuclear Powers — thus excluding the vast majority of States from the multilateral negotiations necessary in order to attain nuclear disarmament in a time-bound framework and under strict international control — would only delay further the legitimate aspirations of mankind to live in a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The emphasis placed in the draft resolution on matters related to the NPT, even urging States that are not party to the Treaty to accede to it, only serves to contribute to undermining what should really be the purpose of any initiative in the field of nuclear disarmament. The very nature of the provisions contained in the NPT, and the way in which they have been applied from the very entry into force of that legal instrument, have kept Cuba from acceding to it. A non-proliferation regime that would

impose concrete obligations on non-nuclear weapon States, yet fail to do the same for States that do have such weapons, is clearly discriminatory and would have difficulty in being universally accepted.

We hope that, for the continuation of our work in future years, the text which we now have before us, and which has been adopted, will take into account the legitimate concerns of all delegations. For the reasons I have just outlined, Cuba abstained once again, as we did last year.

Ms. Lause-Ajayi (Nigeria): I should like to explain why my delegation abstained on this draft resolution. We abstained this year, as we did last year, because the text contains some contradictions to the draft resolution in document A/C.1/51/L.39, also on nuclear disarmament, of which my delegation is a sponsor.

The Chairman: Are there any other delegations wishing to explain their vote after the decision on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17?

I see none.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to inform you that the Committee will take a decision on the following draft resolutions contained in cluster I at its next meeting: A/C.1/51/L.19/Rev.1, A/C.1/51/L.23, A/C.1/51/L.30 and A/C.1/51/L.39.

We will then proceed to cluster II.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held this afternoon at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.