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### AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

#### SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 447th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 14 July 1999, at 3 p.m.

Temporary Chairman: Mr. DOS SANTOS (Mozambique)

Chairman: Mr. de SARAM (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Temporary Chairman declared the session open.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

2. Mr. de Saram (Sri Lanka) was elected Chairman by acclamation.
3. Mr. de Saram (Sri Lanka) took the Chair.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS

5. Ms. Moules (Australia) and Mr. Pohan (Indonesia) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.
6. The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Dos Santos would continue in his post as the third Vice-Chairman of the Committee.
7. Ms. Raholinirina (Madagascar) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 3 OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 52/44 OF 9 DECEMBER 1997

8. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, in its last report to the General Assembly (A/52/29), the Committee had acknowledged that a consensus on the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace had not been reached. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 52/44, reiterated its conviction that the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee was important and would greatly facilitate the development of a mutually beneficial dialogue to advance peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.
9. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 52/44, he had held consultations with members of the Committee, the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users. The consultations had led him to conclude that there was a general sense in the Committee that, although a number of difficulties were preventing the implementation of the 1971 Declaration, the objectives of the Declaration were still meaningful and that greater efforts and more time were required to develop a focused discussion on practical measures to ensure peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.
10. It had also become clear that the position of the three permanent members of the Security Council that did not participate in the Committee's work -

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France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America - had not changed, and they would not be rejoining the Committee.

11. Ms. XIANG Jiagu (China) said that China had always supported the efforts of the countries of the Indian Ocean region to maintain peace, security and stability in the region. The non-regional Powers should withdraw their military presence in the Indian Ocean and refrain from threats, interference or aggression. It was essential that the permanent members of the Security Council should take part in the Committee's work. The countries of the region should expand their relations and cooperation on the basis of mutual respect for the principles of sovereignty, non-interference and peaceful coexistence.

12. Developments in the past year had worked against those goals. One State in the region had flouted the purposes of the Committee by conducting nuclear tests. In another part of the world, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had shown the danger of seeking to achieve political objectives by force. China hoped that that trend would be reversed, and that Indian Ocean countries would refrain from seeking armaments beyond their reasonable defence requirements and would resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiation. The Committee should play a role in bringing that about, and China would support its search for new approaches to meet new challenges.

13. Mr. SMITH (Australia) said that his delegation commended the Chairman's approach to the Committee's work. That approach recognized that, although prospects for progress in the short term were not very promising, the Committee could in time become a useful forum for considering Indian Ocean security matters. Until developments in South Asia were more favourable, however, and until the Committee found a productive direction, it would not attract new interest from the broader United Nations membership.

14. As a littoral State, Australia hoped the Committee would in time be in a position to pursue constructive work. However, the time and resources devoted to the Committee should be limited until a work programme had been agreed and substantive work could begin. In the meantime, it would be more efficient for the Committee to meet in the margins of the First Committee to consider the General Assembly's resolution on the Indian Ocean than to hold its own meetings.

15. Mr. PAL (India) said that the original objectives of the Declaration remained valid, since there was still a military presence in the Indian Ocean. Although the Committee was hampered by the refusal of the three major maritime users to participate in its work, it should not for that reason, begin addressing peripheral issues or issues outside its mandate. New and alternative approaches did not mean new and alternative goals.

16. India had already explained the circumstances that had led it to conduct nuclear tests in 1998. The tests had not violated any of India's legal obligations, and the Government of India had declared that it would never be the first to use nuclear weapons. Thus, the question of any threat against non-nuclear-weapon States simply did not exist. His Government continued to press for global nuclear disarmament and in order to achieve that objective would be willing to give up the weapons it had reluctantly acquired.

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17. Mr. DOS SANTOS (Mozambique) said that he agreed with the Chairman that the Committee should focus on the objectives of the Declaration, which he hoped would be achieved sooner rather than later.

18. Mr. NAKKAWITA (Sri Lanka) said that Sri Lanka was committed to the objectives of the Declaration, which were still valid and which, with goodwill, could still be achieved despite the difficulties that stood in the way. He endorsed the Chairman's decision to continue consultations with members of the Committee and with the major maritime users and, once the three permanent members of the Security Council rejoined the Committee, to work actively to achieve the goals of the Declaration, including the convening of a conference.

19. Mr. DEGHANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his Government attached great importance to the work of the Committee. The objectives of the 1971 Declaration had gained in relevance with the passage of time, since the foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean had persisted even after the end of super-Power confrontation. The Committee could serve as a forum for countries of the region to develop cooperation in both the military and non-military fields. The Committee's multilateral character should be restored by ensuring the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council; however, progress on the issues at hand could be made even without their participation. His delegation would welcome a clear and concise report to the General Assembly on the Committee's activities.

20. Mr. MWAKAWAGO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace should be reviewed. In order to assist the Committee, the Bureau could request the Secretariat to prepare a report on the changes that had taken place in the situation in the Indian Ocean since the adoption of the Declaration. Countries of the region should begin to consult each other and take joint action in such areas as science and technology, communications and exploration, since a proactive approach by those countries might encourage the members that had withdrawn from the Committee to rejoin. Finally, the Committee should not be made an adjunct of any other body; the suggestion that it should meet "in the margins" of the First Committee would lead to its marginalization.

21. Mr. POHAN (Indonesia) said that there had been a number of positive developments in the Indian Ocean region, including dialogue among countries of the region and between them and the major maritime users, as well as cooperation in science and trade. His delegation hoped that those developments would be accompanied by progress in the security situation.

22. Mr. NEWOOR (Mauritius) said that the Committee's mandate remained as valid as ever. Little had changed in the Indian Ocean since 1971, and the legacy of super-Power rivalry persisted in the form of military bases throughout the region. Furthermore, the decolonization process had yet to be completed and the region was still prone to conflicts. It would therefore be irresponsible and potentially dangerous to claim that peace, stability and security had been achieved in the region and that the Committee was no longer needed.

23. The Committee would have difficulty in moving forward without the participation of some of the region's partners. In an interesting paradox, some

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Western countries claimed that their security depended on the maintenance of military bases in the region, yet they also claimed that the region was at peace and that the Committee no longer had a mandate. In the view of his delegation, the Committee should continue to function on its own merits.

24. Mr. MANUGO (Kenya) said that, as a littoral State of the Indian Ocean, Kenya supported the work of the Committee and was committed to the implementation of the Declaration. The points raised by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania were important and should be given consideration. The countries of the region must demonstrate that they were seriously committed to cooperation.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that it was his understanding that the general sense of the debate was that the Committee should continue in its current form. As to how the Committee should move forward, suggestions had been made that it should review the 1971 Declaration and that countries of the region should work together. Those objectives could be achieved through informal consultations, which he would personally conduct.

26. Mr. PAL (India) said that the Chairman's mandate should be clear. The informal consultations should deal with ways in which the countries of the region could promote the objectives of the Declaration. His delegation stressed that only the General Assembly had the authority to amend the Declaration.

27. Mr. MWAKAWAGO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that if the Committee found that it was necessary to amend the Declaration, it had the responsibility, as a specialized body established by the General Assembly, to make the appropriate recommendations to the Assembly.

28. Ms. XIANG Jiaqu (China) said that the Chairman had the authority to consult with the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean. In that capacity, the Chairman could promote a discussion on the implementation of the Declaration and on how the countries of the region could cooperate in its implementation.

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION (A/AC.159/L.129)

29. Ms. RAHOLINIRINA (Rapporteur), introducing the draft report of the Committee (A/AC.159/L.129), said that part I of the report contained elements derived from the mandate of the Committee pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/44. Part II dealt with both organizational and substantive matters, including the statement by the Chairman in accordance with the request contained in Assembly resolution 52/44 and the adoption of the Committee's report to the fifty-fourth session of the Assembly. In the past, the Committee's recommendations to the Assembly had usually been based on the discussions held during its sessions. However, owing to the Committee's limited mandate for its 1999 session, the draft report did not contain a separate section on recommendations.

30. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should adopt the report paragraph by paragraph.

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31. It was so decided.

Paragraphs 1 to 9

32. Paragraphs 1 to 9 were adopted.

Paragraph 10

33. The CHAIRMAN suggested that paragraph 10 should be amended to read: "At its 447th meeting on 14 July 1999, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee reported to the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 52/44 of 9 December 1997." The text of the Chairman's statement could then be inserted in a paragraph 10 bis.

34. Mr. PAL (India) proposed that the text of the Chairman's statement should be inserted in a paragraph 10 bis.

35. Paragraph 10, as orally amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 11

36. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the sentence "Statements were made by a number of delegations." should be inserted in paragraph 11. That paragraph should also indicate that the Committee had agreed that it should retain its current form as an independent body and continue to work under its current terms of reference.

37. Mr. PAL (India) said that he considered the current formulation of paragraph 11 to be adequate, since the General Assembly had not called into question the future of the Ad Hoc Committee.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that he agreed with the view of the representative of India.

39. Paragraph 11 was adopted.

Paragraph 12

40. Mr. PAL (India) said that, since the Committee had not heard the statements referred to in paragraph 12, that paragraph was not accurate and should be deleted.

41. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee wished to delete paragraph 12.

42. It was so decided.

Paragraphs 13 and 14

43. Mr. PAL (India) said that paragraph 13 dealt with certain concerns that had been expressed by the Committee while paragraph 14 contained agreed language that had been drawn from an earlier report of the Committee. Both paragraphs should therefore be retained.

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44. Paragraphs 13 and 14 were adopted.

Paragraph 15

45. Mr. PAL (India) said that there was no longer any need for paragraph 15, since the substance of that paragraph would now be covered by the proposed paragraph 10 bis.

46. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee wished to delete paragraph 15.

47. It was so decided.

Paragraph 16

48. Mr. PAL (India) proposed that paragraph 16 should be amended to read: "The Chairman was requested to continue informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session."

49. Paragraph 16, as orally amended, was adopted.

Paragraph 17

50. Paragraph 17 was adopted.

Paragraph 18

51. Mr. MWAKAWAGO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that paragraph 18 of the draft report was redundant and should be deleted.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee wished to delete paragraph 18.

53. It was so decided.

Paragraph 19

54. Paragraph 19 was adopted.

55. The draft report, as orally amended, was adopted.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.