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at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 45th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ROCHE (Canada)

CONTENTS

- QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA; GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

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

AGENDA ITEM 70 (continued)

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA; GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the representative of Zaire, who will make a statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. KIBIDI (Zaire) (interpretation from French): The debate on the question of Antarctica at the forty-third session of the General Assembly centres on draft resolutions A/C.1/43/L.82 and L.83, which deal with the participation of South Africa in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and with the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities adopted last June by the States Parties to that Treaty and opened for signature at Wellington, New Zealand, on 2 November.

The delegation of Zaire has the honour to speak today, on behalf of the Group of African States, to draw the attention of the international community to South Africa's anachronistic and unusual participation in the meetings of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, a matter dealt with in draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.83.

In bringing this item before the First Committee, the Group of African States was prompted by serious political concern, namely, the exclusion of South Africa from all international negotiations, beginning with its exclusion from participation in the work of the United Nations General Assembly, as a logical consequence of its continued insistence on implementing the policy of apartheid on its territory, a policy unanimously condemned as a crime against mankind.

Indeed, for years now, on every regional and international front, and especially within the United Nations, considerable efforts have been devoted to achieving the necessary social and political changes in South Africa, changes which,

(Mr. Kibidi, Zaire)

had they been achieved, would have led to the eradication of the abhorrent system of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic government based on the participation of all the country's inhabitants in the management of public affairs, whatever the colour of their skin, their religious beliefs and their philosophical or ideological convictions.

The revolting apartheid régime, which tortures, pillages, imprisons without trial and systematically massacres blacks and destabilizes the economies of the front-line countries, is not always condemned with the vigour and unswerving determination we might hope for. That is truly regrettable. Complicities of every kind, even in certain major industrialized countries, provide South Africa with grounds for pursuing its criminal activities.

In response to that situation, the African States are submitting, in conformity with the resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its forty-second session held at Addis Ababa from 10 to 17 July 1985, draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.83, which appeals unequivocally for the exclusion of South Africa from participation in the meetings of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

There is no scientific reason that can legitimize the participation of the supporters of apartheid in the meetings of the Consultative Parties to a treaty which, according to its signatories, has been highly successful in maintaining peace and concord in Antarctica for more than twenty-five years. There are no moral or legal grounds for such participation, considering that the Antarctic Treaty, by its very language, was designed to serve the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Antarctica is the common heritage of all mankind, and the supporters of apartheid, who have made racial hatred the philosophical basis of their policy, should have no place within the framework of that Treaty.

(Mr. Kibidi, Zaire)

Those are all pertinent reasons that should prevent the participation of South Africa in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and that should compel all States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.83, which renews the appeal to the Consultative Parties to take urgent measures to exclude the racist apartheid régime from participation in their meetings at the earliest possible date.

On behalf of the Group of African States my delegation is also sponsoring draft resolution A.C.1/43/L.82, which deals with the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities adopted by the States Parties to the Treaty.

The continent of Antarctica, which is the subject of widespread interest, is also the least known. Ninety-nine per cent of its 4 million square kilometres is covered with a layer of ice of some 2 kilometres in thickness. It is the coldest continent, with temperatures as low as minus-88 degrees Centigrade, the highest, with an average altitude of 1800 metres, the driest, with nine annual precipitations averaging only 10 centimetres - and, lastly, the one with the strongest winds, which restrict human activity even more than do the cold or its topography.

The problems of Antarctica were first brought before the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session. Since then, there has been increasing interest in the intentions of the countries that exercise administrative control and plan to maintain their monopoly over the region, whereas the preservation of its ecosystem should be a primary concern of all mankind. The protection of the ecosystem is viewed as one of the foremost priorities of the States Parties to the Treaty. However, we are increasingly beginning to wonder whether the ecosystem will not be altered, thus leading to tragic consequences on a global scale.

(Mr. Kibidi, Zaire)

Indeed, contrary to the commitments clearly defined in the Treaty and its annexes, the practices of certain countries with administrative control over the continent are having negative effects on the ecosystem. Notwithstanding the terms of the Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora, fishing remains for the most part unregulated.

Seismic prospecting for minerals, which various scientific studies have found to be harmful, is continuing, and we note that several countries are authorizing or ignoring the discharging of waste materials by their ships in Antarctic waters, with harmful consequences for the marine environment. During on-site inspections a number of non-governmental organizations, such as Greenpeace, have noted that several bases are disregarding regulations and even common sense, continuing with impunity to discharge waste materials and to conduct operations that disturb the fauna.

The adoption of a régime governing mineral resources was encouraged by the findings of seismic and other research that indicated large deposits of natural resources in Antarctica and its glacial shelf. The United States geological services estimate the mineral reserves of the continental plateau of western Antarctica at 45 billion barrels of oil and 115 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, a third of which are extractable. By its very nature, however, mineral extraction is very harmful to the environment and, in the case of an unexploited region whose ecosystem was untouched by man prior to the twentieth century, any pollutant, even in small quantities, could have tragic consequences. Failure to protect the ecosystem, on the part of the countries exercising administrative control over Antarctica, would be both imprudent and dangerous.

(Mr. Kibidi, Zaire)

That is why, in its resolutions 35/77 of 15 December 1983, 39/152 of 17 December 1984, 40/156 A and B of 16 December 1985 and 41/88 A and B of 30 November 1987, the General Assembly reaffirmed that the management, exploration, exploitation and use of Antarctica must be conducted in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter so as to favour the maintenance of international peace and security and promote international co-operation for the benefit of all mankind.

It is with consternation that the great majority of Member States have learned of the signing of a Convention relating to the regulation of activities to exploit the mineral resources of Antarctica, whereas General Assembly resolutions 41/98 B and 42/46 B called upon the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to impose a moratorium on negotiations concerning a minerals régime until such time as all members of the international community might fully participate in such negotiations.

We have before us a fait accompli, a unilateral action undertaken by a small group of States for selfish purposes, which the international community cannot accept. That is why my delegation, on behalf of the African group, fully subscribes to the provisions of draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.83, which calls on the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties in particular to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to all meetings of the Treaty parties, including consultative meetings.

For all the reasons that we have just explained, we urgently appeal to all States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty to make an effort to put an end to their indifference to the participation of South Africa in the meetings on Antarctica as well as the question of the Convention on the mineral resources of Antarctica, a Convention worked out and signed outside the framework of the United Nations.

Mr. ADAM (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): The international community's interest in the question of Antarctica has been growing, not only because Antarctica is an uninhabited continent that arouses a large degree of scientific and geographic curiosity but also because it is a part of our planet that plays an essential role in weather patterns. It also constitutes a unique scientific environment that has not yet been touched by man or destroyed by the over-exploitation and excessive industrial and economic development, which damage the flora, fauna and human environment, as was the case in other parts of the world.

In addition, Antarctica is rich in unexploited natural resources which are considered non-renewable in other parts of the world.

All those qualities make the continent an important repository for the economic and scientific future of mankind. It must therefore remain the common heritage of mankind and not become an arena for competition between States, which possess the economic and scientific capabilities to reach that continent and thereby impose their claims to sovereignty and to the right to investment and scientific research on the basis of that fait accompli.

On account of those genuine fears and reasons, the question of Antarctica has been on the General Assembly's agenda since its thirty-eighth session in 1983, when the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive study on all questions pertaining to Antarctica, taking full account of the Treaty régime and all other relevant factors.

Thereafter, the General Assembly continued to consider the subject through the First Committee and from the point of view of specific questions, namely:

First, to what extent can the Treaty régime contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, the preservation of the environment, the economic situation and scientific research? The fact that the Treaty is virtually closed to the overwhelming majority of the international community cannot, by its very nature,

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

provide the necessary guarantees for the important matters just raised, although it has so far been successful in keeping Antarctica free of military and nuclear activity.

Secondly, is the Treaty régime sufficient to guarantee Antarctica's exploitation for peaceful purposes only in accordance with the wish of the international community? Does the Treaty guarantee that Antarctica will not be turned into the arena or subject of an international dispute in the future?

Thirdly, are the management, exploitation, exploration and use of Antarctica being conducted in accordance with the principles of the Charter concerning the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of international co-operation for the benefit of mankind as a whole?

Fourthly, we presume that better knowledge of Antarctica is the interests of mankind as a whole. But the current situation concerning the provision of comprehensive information on the continent is not consonant with that, particularly in the light of the General Assembly resolutions dealing specifically with the international community's right to be informed on all aspects of the question of Antarctica and with the United Nations being the repository of such information.

Furthermore, the resolution adopted on the subject at the forty-second session of the General Assembly in its first operative paragraph, requested the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to all meetings of the Treaty parties, including their consultative meetings and the negotiations pertaining to the minerals régime.

We continue to believe that many aspects of the position of the Consultative Parties are unclear, including in particular:

The opening of the Treaty to all States for accession, so as to give the Treaty a true international character, expressing the aims of the international community as whole;

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

The provision of all interested parties, especially the United Nations and its specialized agencies, with all information pertaining to the question of Antarctica;

The participation of the Secretary-General or his representative in all meetings of the Treaty parties - and here we do not mean that he should only be informed selectively of the proceedings of those meetings.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

We must express our deep regret that the Consultative Parties continued their negotiations on a minerals régime for Antarctica and adopted a Convention last June, in spite of the fact that in a resolution last year the General Assembly called upon

"the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to impose a moratorium on the negotiations to establish a minerals régime until such time as all members of the international community can participate fully in such negotiations".

(resolution 42/46 B, para. 3)

Early in my statement I posed a number of questions about the fitness of the current Treaty régime to reflect the purposes and aspirations of the international community concerning the future of Antarctica. I ask now whether the minerals régime signed recently is fit to reflect the purposes and aspirations of the international community on that important aspect of Antarctic activities. The international community, as represented in this Organization, did not participate in the negotiations and the régime therefore remains the exclusive domain of signatory States - with all the resulting positive and negative aspects.

The entire international community has condemned the inhuman apartheid régime of the racist Government of South Africa and its policies against the indigenous population of South Africa. In view of the international community's indignation at these practices, the General Assembly has suspended the racist Government of South Africa from participation in its work. The number of States imposing economic and military embargo measures against South Africa grows daily. In spite of that ever strengthening stand and the repeated appeals of the General Assembly, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties continue to greet with open arms representatives of the racist régime of Pretoria at all their meetings.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

My delegation considers that the call to exclude the Pretoria régime from participation in the meetings of the Consultative Parties is based on the following factors: the need to tighten the noose around the racist régime of South Africa at all levels - regional and international - and in all fields - economic, scientific, military, cultural and sports - with a view to isolating it totally until it bends to the will of the international community and dismantles the apartheid system; the fact that the majority of the international community does not trust the racist régime of South Africa because of its constant deception of international public opinion with respect to the future of the people of South Africa and its efforts to increase its capabilities in the military and nuclear fields without allowing the relevant specialized agencies to carry out inspections; and the fact that by taking such positions the South African régime directly threatens international peace and security in Africa and throughout the world. The international community cannot feel reassured about the future of Antarctica and about its remaining demilitarized and denuclearized so long as racist South Africa continues to be a Consultative Party to the Treaty. Racist South Africa's accession to the minerals régime does not mean that the Pretoria Government is interested in preserving the unique environment and natural resources of Antarctica.

We fully agree with previous speakers on this item on the following points: first, the Antarctic Treaty régime is not consonant with international norms and instruments such as the Convention on the Law of the Sea; secondly, the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities - in whose negotiation the international community, as represented by its organizations, did not participate - is bound to affect world ecological and economic systems. It is unacceptable to the international community that the continent's resources should

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

be monopolized by a small group of States, in a manner similar to that of the Antarctic Treaty itself. We therefore support all calls on the Consultative Parties to cease forthwith ratification of the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities. We agree, thirdly, that the United Nations has proven its effectiveness in the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter, through its multilateral forums. It is therefore incumbent upon us all to endorse participation by the Secretary-General or his representatives in all consultations and meetings on the regulation of Antarctic activities, thereby enabling the Secretary-General to prepare reports that would be a valuable addition to the information about the continent.

We believe it is of especial importance that the question of Antarctica remain on the agenda of the General Assembly; there is a need for further consultations and better understanding among all delegations with a view to reaching consensus instead of persisting in sterile confrontation that does not contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security or the promotion of international co-operation for the benefit of all mankind.

Mr. FENJOR (Bhutan): My delegation, like many others, welcomes the positive developments and increased awareness and concern over the changing environment. In fact, with the prevalence of this favourable global attitude we would have thought the question of Antarctica would have ceased to be an issue. The world is now aware of the ecological and security implications of damage to the fragile ecosystem of Antarctica and the possible disputes arising from the process of extracting and sharing the vast resources of the continent.

The integrated or unified nature of our common environment is unquestionable. For that reason, the issue of the environment must transcend the natural and political boundaries that not only divide us from each other but also influence and orient our national and regional perceptions. We believe that Antarctica has

(Mr. Penjor, Bhutan)

always had a benign influence on the global environment and climate. This has been established through scientific research and historical facts. Recent studies have revealed not only that the influence of the region has been beneficial, but that the undermining of its fragile, pristine ecology would have a devastating impact on the world, leading to a threat to the very survival of life as we know it.

Indeed, some of the tragic and inexplicable environmental phenomena the world has suffered in recent times are, we believe, only the tip of the iceberg, which we may liken to the role of Antarctica, much of which still remains unknown.

From the foregoing, it will be apparent that any disturbance to Antarctica's environment has global implications. It is therefore imperative that all decisions and actions affecting the future of Antarctica be recognized as the common responsibility of all mankind.

(Mr. Penjor, Bhutan)

Although we are a land-locked nation, far removed from the region of Antarctica, we have asked to speak to voice our conviction on the matter and our commitment to assume our shared responsibility as a member of the world family of nations. Indeed, the future of Antarctica is not the responsibility of the surrounding region and the coastal nations alone, nor can such a responsibility be assumed by a few nations which have the technological and economic capabilities to take advantage of its resources.

Having advanced thus far in the expression of my country's concerns, I fear that my delegation is at risk of being misunderstood over its position on the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 and the role played thus far by the Treaty Parties. All the Treaty Parties have to our knowledge striven to adhere to the noble aims and principles of the Treaty, the primary purpose of which is stated to be the preservation of the pristine ecology of this frozen continent and to use it only for peaceful purposes. In fact, we commend the manner in which the Treaty has successfully averted any significant disturbance to the ecology of the continent of Antarctica while having prevented any serious territorial disputes between the Treaty Parties. We also believe that certain Treaty Parties from the developing countries have endeavoured to represent the interest and the concern of those countries that have not been able to subscribe to the Treaty, mainly because of lack of scientific and financial capabilities.

While the role of the Antarctic Treaty has hitherto been positive, we believe that technological advances, deteriorating environmental and climatic conditions and a resurgence of faith in multilateralism have rendered the very nature of the Treaty obsolete. The Treaty suffers from inherent inadequacies; above all, we are convinced that there is truth in the reports of pollution arising from the careless discharge of toxic and other forms of refuse as well as indiscriminate harvesting of marine resources, and that the Treaty will not be able to withstand the disputes

(Mr. Penjor, Bhutan)

that will obviously arise from the assertion of claims on and extraction of its known and unknown natural resources.

We were disturbed by the adoption on 2 June 1988 of the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities, in spite of General Assembly resolutions 41/88 B and 42/46 B, which called for the imposition of a moratorium on negotiations to establish a minerals régime until such time as all members of the international community could fully participate in such negotiations. While the whole world has acknowledged, as have the Treaty Parties, the extremely fragile nature of the region's ecology, it is also clear that the process of extracting any form of the natural resources in the region must necessarily lead to levels of ecological disturbance that its ecosystem will not be able to tolerate. With the Convention we fear the stage has now been set for the gradual and systematic destruction of the continent's ecology and of the harmony that has prevailed among the Treaty Parties.

In conclusion, my delegation fully supports draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.82, which in essence reaffirms our belief that Antarctica is the common heritage of mankind and calls for the need to assume our collective responsibility to ensure that Antarctica remains free from the threat of any harm arising from ignorance or deliberate undermining of its benign role in influencing the global environment, the climate and security.

Mr. CHDHAN (Pakistan): The debates over the past few years on the question of Antarctica have served to underscore the vital importance of the continent, covering an area of approximately 14 million square kilometres. The debates have also highlighted the direct interest of the international community in participating and sharing, in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner, in the scientific exploration and exploitation of the living and mineral resources of that vast expanse of land.

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

Equally, the protection of Antarctica's ecosystems, whose glacial fragility is being increasingly brought home by the recent reports of massive ozone depletion in its atmosphere, is a question whose importance to the international community cannot be over-emphasized.

In raising this issue once again at the United Nations, we are motivated by the sincere desire to focus attention on and to take action on a matter which is of common interest and concern to humankind. Our approach throughout has been to engage in an earnest dialogue that would help diffuse the rigid caste-like exclusivism with which some countries have sought to circumscribe the Antarctic continent. Our sincere efforts to build bridges of understanding have been ignored. Our constructive attitude was disregarded by the adoption in June this year of the Convention on the Regulation of Mineral Resource Activities in Antarctica.

How are we to comprehend the precipitate conclusion of the Convention when we were given to understand that so far there were no indications of any major discovery of mineral resources in sizeable quantities? What we know is that the discrimination built into the Antarctic Treaty has been further accentuated by the regulatory mechanisms and other provisions of the mineral resources Convention.

The international community this year has reason to celebrate the ascendancy of the spirit of peace and co-operation across our planet. Unfortunately, that does not appear to be the case in Antarctica, where the frigidty of positions of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties has generated more concern. The growing process of interdependence for mutual and common benefit cannot be frozen on the fringes of Antarctica for the sake of a few countries.

We are aware that the Antarctic Treaty itself acknowledges the common interest of mankind in Antarctica. The positive aspects of the Antarctic Treaty system

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

cannot be denied. These relate to holding in abeyance the territorial claims of certain States over parts of Antarctica, ensuring the continent's denuclearized status and the exclusion of military rivalry and making possible the pursuit of peaceful co-operation in scientific research.

But the Treaty was concluded at a time when a vast majority of States were still engaged in the arduous struggle of sweeping away the cobwebs of colonialism. In 1959 the Antarctic Treaty may have appeared to be a viable approach. Although the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties may not acknowledge it in the context of Antarctica, the world has significantly changed since then. Differences surfaced in regard to the Treaty about the manner in which the common interest of mankind requires realization in practice in Antarctica.

My delegation would like to reiterate that, given the shortcomings and lacunae of the Antarctic Treaty system, a new international régime for Antarctica must be negotiated among the members of the international community, under the auspices of the United Nations. The fundamental principles which should inspire such a new instrument of a universal character should be: first, Antarctica and its resources are the common heritage of mankind; secondly, it is not subject to appropriation by any State or persons; thirdly, it should be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes; and, fourthly, Antarctica should be open to use by all States, without discrimination, in accordance with the international régime to be established.

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

The scientific and technological disadvantage faced by a majority of the developing countries at this time cannot constitute a sufficient basis for denying them their right to participate as equal partners in the decision-making process governing the affairs of Antarctica. The acknowledged interest of all mankind in Antarctica implies that the international community should be more fully involved in its administration and should share equally in all the benefits derived from scientific, commercial or other activities in Antarctica.

My delegation shares the legitimate concern over the participation of the apartheid régime of South Africa as a full Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty. The international community has clearly pronounced its total opposition to the unacceptable abhorrent practices of apartheid based on racial discrimination. The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties must take urgent measures at the earliest possible date to exclude the racist apartheid régime from participation in their meetings.

At their meeting held in Harare in September 1986, the Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned countries affirmed their conviction that any exploitation of the resources of Antarctica should ensure the maintenance of international peace and security in Antarctica and the protection of its environment and should be for the benefit of all mankind. In that context, they also affirmed that all States Members of the United Nations had a valid interest in such exploitation.

More recently, at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries held in Nicosia in September 1988, the Ministers reaffirmed the principle that the international community was entitled to information concerning all aspects of Antarctica and that the United Nations should be made the central repository of such information. The Ministers also considered that the adoption by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties of a Convention on

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource activities, on 2 June 1988, could make efforts to reach a consensus on the issue at the General Assembly more difficult.

My delegation is conscious of the wide divergence of views in the Committee on the question of Antarctica and related issues. We feel that every effort should be made to avoid confrontation and to adopt a course of action which would facilitate dialogue on this important question, promote a gradual narrowing of differences and lead finally to the emergence of an international consensus on a new and appropriate régime for Antarctica.

Mr. AZIKWE (Nigeria): Since 1982, when the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties started negotiations on a minerals régime for Antarctica, the international community had expressed serious concern regarding the decision of the Treaty Parties to continue with the negotiations. When it became apparent that the Treaty Parties were bent on implementing their decision on the minerals régime dating back to the late 1970s, the General Assembly, at its forty-second session, adopted resolution 42/46 B dated 30 November 1987 calling upon the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to impose a moratorium on negotiations to establish a minerals régime for Antarctica. It is deeply regrettable that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, disregarding the concerns of the international community, proceeded to conclude the negotiations on 2 June 1988, thus establishing the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities. Equally regrettable is the rush to open the Convention for signature within a year, with effect from 25 November 1988.

My delegation's concerns are not only based on the obvious flaws in the Convention itself. Indeed, we are totally opposed to any minerals Convention involving activities in Antarctica. Therefore, our position is that there should

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

be a permanent moratorium on all mineral activities in Antarctica because of the adverse effects such activities would have on the Antarctic eco-system and the entire world

It will be recalled that in its statement on this subject on 11 November 1986, my delegation expressed serious concern about the adverse effects the proposed mineral activities would have on the Antarctic environment.

Although the Treaty Parties seem to have recognized the dangers of any exploration and exploitation of minerals in the virgin continent, they have failed to address a real solution to the problem. Their acknowledgment of significant changes in atmospheric, terrestrial and marine environments, as well as adverse effects on global or regional climate or weather patterns, can be seen in the management procedures envisaged in the Convention. The solution to those complex problems lies in the non-implementation of the minerals régime. The flooding of the global oceans and seas that could result from the disruption of the ice on Antarctica, which accounts for over 90 per cent of global ice, could be avoided by ensuring that the ice does not melt through mineral activities. I therefore call on the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to refrain from signing the minerals régime or Convention.

Permit me therefore to reiterate my delegation's call for the establishment of a United Nations ad hoc committee to examine the whole question of Antarctica and report to the General Assembly taking into account the views expressed by Member States in previous sessions. Similarly, I wish to reiterate our view that efforts should continue to be made to avoid any confrontation on the subject. It is our hope that a consensus resolution will be possible at this session.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Nigeria)

Another serious concern of my delegation regarding the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resources Activities is its relationship with the activities of the International Sea-Bed Authority as envisaged in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea to regulate minerals development in the sea bed beyond national jurisdiction. The unsettled question of claimant and non-claimant States, together with the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities, are in conflict with the requirements of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Although the Convention on mineral resources seeks to define or determine the "geographical continental shelf" in accordance with Article 76 of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, the fundamental question of ownership of Antarctica remains unresolved. The arguments of "claimant" and "flag" States as they may relate to the Convention on mineral resources are untenable. There is no amount of co-operation with the Convention on the Law of the Sea that will make the Convention on mineral resources acceptable. The only acceptable course of action that could be taken by the Treaty Parties would be measures to ensure non-ratification of the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resources Activities.

My delegation has repeatedly questioned the rationale for allowing the racist régime in Pretoria, which has been suspended from the United Nations, to be a member of an organization made up of Member States of the United Nations.

(Mr. Azikwe, Nigeria)

By several resolutions, the Organization has condemned apartheid South Africa for its racist policies. Apartheid has been condemned in several United Nations forums. In the same vein there have been repeated calls on the racist régime to renounce apartheid and to establish a democratic rule based on universal adult suffrage. My delegation will therefore continue to question racist South Africa's participation in the meetings of the Consultative Parties.

Indeed, at its forty-second session the General Assembly again adopted resolution 42/46 A, and an appeal was made to the Treaty parties

'to take urgent measures to exclude the racist apartheid régime of South Africa from participation in the meetings of the Consultative Parties at the earliest possible date"

and to inform the Secretary-General accordingly. My delegation is distressed to note from document A/43/565 that no positive action has been taken by the Treaty parties in that regard. We are more distressed by the maintenance of the arguments adduced by the Treaty parties in document A/42/587. The principle of universality in the United Nations cannot apply to a régime that has been suspended from the world body. Racist South Africa is a pariah, and its present participation in the Antarctic Treaty System needs to be redressed for reasons I have just adduced. We appeal once again to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to take the necessary steps to exclude racist South Africa from participation in the meetings of the Treaty parties.

Mr. COSTELLO (Australia): I address the Committee today on the question of Antarctica on behalf of States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

The agenda item on the question of Antarctica has been considered by the General Assembly for the declared purpose of serving the best interest of Antarctica. But that interest is not served by attacks on the Antarctic Treaty system that is protecting humanity's interest in Antarctica.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

The Treaty system works, and it works well. It has created a unique system of international co-operation in the fields of environmental protection, scientific research and the preservation and conservation of living resources in Antarctica. It has ensured that Antarctica has remained free of political conflict and tension, and it has ensured the complete denuclearization and demilitarization of the area.

Despite claims to the contrary, there has been no substantial effect on the Antarctic environment or living resources as a result of activities undertaken under the Antarctic Treaty. No military or nuclear activity has taken place in Antarctica. No activities detrimental to the interests of the international community have taken place in Antarctica.

On the contrary, the recommendations of Consultative Party meetings under the Treaty and the treaties negotiated under it - the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Seals, the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources and the newly concluded minerals Convention - have built up an effective protection régime for the environment.

The Treaty has developed a legal and juridical system, the Antarctic Treaty system, which is in perfect conformity with international law. As a result of the operation of the Treaty and the Treaty system, Antarctica is the area of the world that best demonstrates the practical realization of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

The Treaty has made a major contribution to international peace by removing the potential for sovereignty disputes among Treaty parties. The Treaty has, in effect, put to one side all disputes about sovereignty.

The Antarctic Treaty and the system it has developed have served humanity well for over a quarter of a century and will continue to do so in the future, as is indicated by the growing participation in it. The Antarctic Treaty is open to all Members of the Organization. The Antarctic Treaty system is not closed. It is not

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

an exclusive club. Since last year's debate Canada has acceded to the Treaty. Any party that undertakes substantial scientific research on the continent will be recognized as having consultative status. In September, Spain and Sweden became Consultative Parties. Other Members of the United Nations, like Peru and Ecuador, are seeking to become Consultative Parties and have submitted a formal notification to that effect in conformity with the Treaty's provisions. Finland has stated its wish to become a Consultative Party.

The Treaty system does not operate in secrecy or isolation. The development of co-operative working relations between the Antarctic Treaty system and other international organizations is increasing every year. Those working relationships have developed into a process of practical co-operation. At the last Consultative Party meeting representatives of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and the World Meteorological Organization were present.

The Antarctic Treaty Parties, however, are not complacent about its success. On the contrary, they are continually engaged in efforts to improve the Antarctic Treaty system. In September of this year, for example, the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals met in London to review the operation of that Convention. A number of decisions and recommendations were made with a view to enhancing its implementation.

We have heard, and will hear, in this debate much criticism of the conclusion this year of the Antarctic minerals Convention. Much of that criticism flows from a misunderstanding of the Convention and the way it will operate. We regret that some of those who have sought to condemn the Convention have attributed motives to the Treaty parties that are quite untrue. The negotiation and conclusion of the minerals Convention was in fact the result of the recognition by the Treaty parties that a separate instrument was needed in the Antarctic Treaty system.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

That recognition was based on the need to protect the Antarctic environment should minerals activities ever occur. The Treaty parties were also concerned that any minerals activity in Antarctica could lead to the resurrection of disputes about sovereignty, which, as I have noted, have been successfully put to one side by the Antarctic Treaty.

It has been said in this debate that the minerals Convention has been concluded with unseemly haste. I wish to record that the formal negotiation of the Convention began in June 1982, following adoption of a recommendation to that effect by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties in July 1981. The formal process of the negotiation of the Convention, therefore, took 7 years. That cannot be regarded, by any reasonable standard, as hasty.

The Convention on minerals ensures that if minerals activities ever take place in Antarctica they will do so within a system that protects the Antarctic from environmental threats and guards against a revival of disputes over sovereignty. It is a matter of disappointment to the Treaty parties that their careful and successful efforts to achieve those aims in the conclusion of the Convention have been assailed as efforts to damage the Antarctic continent, the preservation of which has always been the hallmark and aim of activities under the Antarctic Treaty.

May I expand on several aspects of the Antarctic minerals Convention that have been misunderstood. First, the Convention will not result in a rush to develop minerals in Antarctica. It is most unlikely that extraction of minerals in the Antarctic will take place for the foreseeable future, not least because no exploitable mineral deposits have been identified in Antarctica. Moreover, the Treaty States voluntarily held back on minerals activity in Antarctica while the Convention was negotiated. That voluntary restraint will continue pending timely entry into force of the Convention. Before that can happen, at least 16 States will have to have adhered to the Convention.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

Secondly, the entry into force of the Convention on minerals does not mean that whatever mineral resources are found in Antarctica can automatically be mined. Every precaution will be taken to ensure that minerals exploration and development, should it occur, will be environmentally secure.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

After entry into force of the Convention, minerals exploration and development cannot take place unless a series of positive decisions are taken, beginning with a consensus decision to identify areas for possible activities.

No exploration and development may take place until it is judged, after a comprehensive environmental and technical assessment, to be environmentally safe. It must follow specific criteria and safeguards that are among the most stringent in any international treaty. Antarctica is to remain closed to exploration and development unless a consensus decision is taken to identify a particular area as one in respect of which applications for exploration and development may be lodged.

Thirdly, minerals exploration and development in Antarctica, if it takes place, will be strictly controlled so as to protect the environment.

If minerals exploration and development should occur, there are detailed compliance provisions. Regulatory committees will strictly monitor activities in areas identified for possible mineral exploration and development. There are stringent inspection provisions. Mineral resource activities will be restricted or prohibited in parts of Antarctica of special sensitivity. Anyone undertaking mineral resource activities will be under an unqualified obligation to clean up any damage to the Antarctic environment arising from that activity, and to pay compensation in the event that restoration is not possible.

Further activities may be suspended if they cause or threaten to cause serious harm to the environment and are subject to cancellation if they cannot be adjusted to avoid such harm.

Those provisions were intended not primarily to exact penalties after any damage to the Antarctic environment has occurred. Their main aim is to deter damage to the environment from occurring in the first place.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

Fourthly, the Minerals Convention perpetuates the fundamental principle of the Antarctic Treaty system that the Antarctic should be an area consecrated to peaceful activity. The Convention provides for a comprehensive system for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Fifthly, reference has been made in this debate to the question of qualifications for membership in the Antarctic Mineral Resources Commission that will be established under the Convention. The Minerals Convention is open to any party to the Antarctic Treaty, which itself is open to all Member States of our Organization. Membership of the Commission is not static. Parties to the Convention may become members of the Commission if they meet criteria similar to those of the Treaty itself.

In summary, the Antarctic Minerals Convention has been designed to protect the Antarctic environment to the maximum extent possible and to ensure that any permitted minerals activity takes place on the basis of non-discriminatory access and in a manner that does not cause conflict or discord. Having identified the gap in the Antarctic Treaty system concerning minerals activity and the need for an environmental protection régime should minerals activity ever occur, the Treaty parties have moved to fill it with a Convention that fully protects the interests of humanity in the preservation of the environment and peace of the Antarctic and that is fully consistent with the principles of the United Nations.

The Treaty parties find it difficult to understand and accept that their conscientious effort should have exposed them to the criticism which has been made in this debate.

I will not repeat in detail here the other general points about the Treaty system that were made by my predecessor, Ambassador Woolcott, in previous debates on this issue, but I should like briefly to update them.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

We have pointed before to the extensive information that the Treaty parties have provided to the United Nations on their activities. Most recently, New Zealand has provided to the Secretary-General the Final Act and Final Report of the Fourth Special Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting at which the Antarctic Minerals Convention was adopted. The Statement of the Chairman to the Minerals Convention Negotiations about the conclusion of the Convention has been circulated as a United Nations document.

The Treaty parties will continue to keep the United Nations informed of their deliberations.

The minerals Convention continues its practice of co-operation with the United Nations. It provides for extensive co-operation with international organizations. The Convention provides that the Antarctic Mineral Resources Commission shall co-operate with the United Nations and its relevant specialized agencies. The Convention specifically provides for opportunities for international organizations to express views on the scientific, technical and environmental aspects of Antarctic mineral resources activities. The Advisory Committee is to give advance notice of its meetings for that purpose.

Reference has been made in this debate to the role of non-governmental organizations in the bodies set up by the Convention.

The Convention provides that the Commission may, as appropriate, give observer status in the Commission as well as in its Scientific, Technical and Environmental Advisory Committee to relevant international organizations, specifically including non-governmental organizations.

Previously, we have sought to correct the impression that has been raised again in this debate that the Antarctic Treaty is in some way biased against the interests of the developing countries. That is not the case.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

The Minerals Convention emphasizes the interests of developing countries. In the Preamble and a number of Articles, specific recognition is given to the interests of developing countries. It ensures that there are opportunities for developing countries to participate in minerals activities and guarantees developing country participation in regulatory activities established under the Convention. In addition, the Convention cannot even enter into force unless five of the 16 parties to it are developing countries that are Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. That is, five of the six developing countries that are Consultative Parties to the Treaty must accede to the Convention before it can enter into force.

In addition, the Convention provides for effective participation of developing countries in the institutions to be created by the Minerals Convention, as well as for their participation in the minerals activities themselves should they ever occur.

Much has been said at the current session of the General Assembly about global changes in the environment. Nothing did more to alert humanity to the effects it could be having on that environment than the discovery of the hole in the ozone layer. That discovery was made as a result of 30 years' research in the Antarctic by an individual nation State.

As a result of that discovery and of other threatened changes to our environment, humanity is coming round, somewhat haltingly perhaps, to a belief that it ought to predict possible environmental effects before embarking on action that might adversely affect the environment. The Antarctic Minerals Convention is the first international treaty to make mandatory the exercise of such environmental predictive foresight. Again, the Antarctic Treaty system has led the way and it will become some in our Organization to call into question such exemplary care for environment matters as has been shown by the Antarctic Treaty Parties.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

We will shortly be voting on draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.82.

Once again, consensus on this issue has evaded Members of the United Nations. We remain at all times willing to seek consensus. But the essential thrust of the draft resolution is unacceptable to the Treaty parties. We cannot accept its implied premise that there is something wrong with the Antarctic Treaty system and that it requires renegotiation. The United Nations system and the Antarctic Treaty system are both systems with their own validity. Once that is recognized, there is no reason why co-operative working relationships should not be further developed to the benefit of both systems.

I repeat the concluding words of my predecessor, Ambassador Woolcott, in last years's debate. Neither the vote nor the adoption of the resolution will in our opinion serve humanity's interest in Antarctica nor affect the continued effective operation of the Antarctic Treaty. That can only be done on the basis of international unity which takes into account the achievements and continuing success of the Antarctic Treaty system.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): Five years ago, when the question of Antarctica was first added to the agenda of the First Committee, a number of delegations pronounced themselves on a subject which had previously remained essentially beyond world public attention and interest. Consideration of the item and the debate that ensued rightly focused our attention on the political, juridical, economic and scientific importance of the region and on its wide-ranging and complex ramifications for mankind as a whole. They also evoked an appreciation of the Antarctic Treaty system as a unique mechanism for regulating and promoting scientific co-operation, resource conservation and environmental protection. Member States readily acknowledged the importance of preserving the values of the Treaty while protecting in perpetuity the larger interests of the international community. As a result, a general consensus has emerged on the need to avert strife and conflict over claims of sovereignty on the continent, to preserve Antarctica's denuclearized and demilitarized status, to protect its fragile ecosystem from man-made hazards and to ensure that its exploration and exploitation will be consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter.

However, as we delved further into this issue, there emerged divergences of views and the recognition that in its future development this huge and barely explored continent posed a number of unresolved problems and contained the seeds of potential international discord. It became clear that the present Treaty contained either ambiguities or inherent deficiencies in its structure, scope and decision-making procedures, which have cast doubt on its efficacy in resolving those emerging problems in a manner equitable for the interests of all mankind. Thus, serious misgivings were expressed about the fact that the Treaty conferred special rights and privileges on the Consultative Parties and about its inherently selective and exclusivist nature, as well as about such questions as

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

accountability, equity and the relationship between the Antarctic Treaty system and the United Nations.

Equally disturbing was the posture adopted by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties of remaining ambiguous on the question of the interrelationship between the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Antarctic Treaty concerning any future exploitation of resources in the southern ocean.

Compounding all this is the widely held perception that the régime as now constituted cannot accommodate the interests and concerns of nations that are not Consultative Parties. Indeed, States that are not Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have rarely been allowed to play a meaningful role in the region's institutions, which raises questions about safeguarding the larger interests of mankind.

Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the negotiations on the establishment of a minerals régime. Indeed, the exclusion of the vast majority of States from that endeavour justifiably caused serious misgivings as to the conduct and aims of the Consultative Parties. Our skepticism was all the greater in the face of the assertion by Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties that such a régime was of little consequences allegedly because the mineral deposits were few and because, in any event, their extraction was technologically unfeasible for now. That, however, was not corroborated by the unseemly haste with which the negotiations were concluded last June, presenting us with a fait accompli.

Although paying lip-service to the interests of the international community as a whole and to taking account of the special situation of developing countries, the Convention on mineral resources appears to reject the principle of equitable sharing of resources for all mankind. Mineral activities will be conducted within

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

the framework of the Antarctic Treaty, and only members of the "club" will be allowed to engage in exploration, which rejects the participation and involvement of all developing countries. Exclusion of States not Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties from the institutions of the régime for mineral resources is unacceptable to us, as it is to a large majority of nations.

It is ironic that a part of the world often regarded as a model for international co-operation may turn into a source of international friction. We therefore regret the decision by the Consultative Parties to spurn the General Assembly's call for a moratorium on the negotiations until such time as all members of the international community could participate effectively in the elaboration of a régime. Such actions are incompatible with the wishes expressed by the international community, and constitute a major obstacle to a consensus decision.

Another area of potential contention is the question of the relationship between the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to which more than 150 nations are signatories, and the Antarctic Treaty, as regards sovereignty, jurisdiction and dispute settlement, as well as the role of the International Sea-Bed Authority in any future exploitation of resources in the marine areas of Antarctica. As an archipelagic State, Indonesia attaches importance to the sanctity of the Convention, and will oppose attempts to superimpose the Antarctic Treaty on any of its provisions, as that would erode the authority and inviolability of the Convention as a whole. In that context, some of the areas that need elaboration and clarification are the delimitation of respective jurisdictions, the clarification of legal principles involved, and the question at what point the jurisdiction of the Treaty over maritime resources ends and that of the Sea-Bed Authority begins.

With regard to the deterioration of the atmosphere over Antarctica, satellite observations have confirmed that the ozone layer over that continent plunges to

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

dangerously low levels for about a month every year, setting off a frantic search for a scientific explanation. That phenomenon has become more pronounced in recent years, causing serious concern among scientists, who believe that the Earth's protective layer of ozone is being destroyed more quickly, with potentially disastrous consequences. Measures that may be taken by the Antarctic Treaty nations cannot ensure co-ordinated international action to protect the atmosphere and avert the risks for life on Earth. In fact, an international conference, held at Montreal last year, was able to reach only a limited agreement to freeze and eventually reduce the use of a certain category of chemicals: chlorofluorocarbons.

My delegation regards participation by the outlaw racist régime of South Africa as a Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty as utterly repugnant, and calls for South Africa's exclusion from the meetings of Treaty parties.

In those circumstances, there is an imperative need to strengthen the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty in a manner that would be more equitable with respect to the concerns and interests of all States. This is all the more urgent at a time when the Antarctic régime is at a crossroads.

Given those overriding considerations, the fundamental questions to be answered are these: How can the vast majority of States play a meaningful role in Antarctic activities and fulfil the conditions for becoming Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties without paying the prohibitively high price, which requires substantial scientific programmes and investments to establish a research station on the continent? What are the practical modalities for wider global participation in decision-making on such activities? How can we ensure that the Antarctic Treaty system is in fact operating for the benefit of all mankind, and thereby preserve the stability of the region?

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

The answers we fashion to those questions will carry with them far-reaching implications, not only for the region but also beyond it. Indeed, the dynamic processes under way in the region call for innovative approaches to overcoming the challenges to our shared objectives in Antarctica.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

If our goal is the democratization of the Treaty through greater international co-operation in its functioning, it is essential that we seek viable answers to these core issues. With a view to contributing to our deliberations, my delegation would like to advance some suggestions whose implementation would enhance and safeguard the collective interests of all States in the further exploration and exploitation of Antarctica.

First, non-consultative parties should be accorded a genuine role in decision-making within the framework of the present arrangements. This would increase confidence in the Treaty and thereby strengthen the system as a whole.

Secondly, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties should seek the participation of all relevant United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations in order to encourage their input and to draw upon their expertise. This is particularly relevant with regard to environmental, meteorological and other scientific research, which is increasingly turning to global, interdisciplinary studies requiring co-ordination with international organizations and institutions engaged in similar activities in other parts of the globe. In fact, there is a compelling need for an organic link between those organizations and the activities of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties.

Thirdly, scientists from developing countries should be provided with opportunities to participate in research programmes, including the sharing of expertise as regards specialized equipment and logistical support in setting up their Antarctic programmes. This would go a long way towards removing the aura of exclusivity surrounding the present activities.

Fourthly, a non-exclusive, non-discriminatory and internationally acceptable régime for mineral and other resources should be established. This would provide for an equitable management and sharing of benefits for all mankind, and ensure the maintenance of peace and security in the region.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Fifthly, the United Nations should be allowed to assume its irreplaceable role as the unique multilateral framework for dealing with the complex issues attendant upon the Antarctic. The proposal to invite the Secretary-General to all meetings of the Treaty Parties should be viewed in this context.

My delegation believes that the implementation of those proposals would enhance the credibility of the Antarctic Treaty and the oft-repeated profession of its members that it is indeed an open and transparent system. So far, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have not shown themselves ready to address purposefully the misgivings and concerns of the non-Treaty nations. We therefore hope that they will seriously reassess their policies and contribute towards strengthening the system so as to render it accountable and hence acceptable to the comity of nations.

It is self-evident that flexibility on the part of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties will be a sine qua non for broad international co-operation and thereby ensure the future stability of Antarctica. Such a manifestation should provide tangible proof of their intention to reach consensus, which has eluded us during the past three sessions. Consequently, in expressing our support for draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.82, we urge the Consultative Parties to reconsider their position and to respond positively to the legitimate interests of the international community.

Mr. KOTEVSKI (Yugoslavia): Since we first began to consider the question of Antarctica many delegations have voiced their opinion on various aspects of this important issue. The very fact that it is being considered in our Organization is proof of its global nature. My delegation is deeply convinced that, since Antarctica is significant for the world at large, the interests of the entire international community in it, and the realization and protection of those interests, can best be achieved through the United Nations.

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

The imperative of the present-day world is the strengthening of international co-operation. On the one hand, we must preserve the achievements made so far and build future actions upon them. On the other hand, we must seek to achieve a joint approach to all the challenges we face and search for solutions acceptable to all. On this basis, Yugoslavia considers that the validity of the Antarctic Treaty - the system established in 1959 - is of particular importance, even though it is the product of a smaller number of countries. The provision that Antarctica shall be used for peaceful purposes only and that any measures of a military nature there shall be prohibited is also exceptionally important. In addition, efforts to preserve the exceptionally sensitive ecological system in Antarctica should be supported, as should other provisions that permit its use exclusively for peaceful purposes. In our view, no action by the international community should result in weakening the existing agreements, which have so far withstood the test of time.

However, important aspects of co-operation in Antarctica, such as the question of natural resources, have not been included in the agreement. The fact that the Antarctic Treaty has left aside the question of territorial sovereignty - that is, from the legal point of view, Antarctica is res communis omnium - clearly indicates that there is no international legal basis for the exploitation of natural resources by individual States or groups of States.

In this context it is important to point out that numerous resolutions of the General Assembly, particularly those adopted at the last two sessions, emphasize, inter alia, the need for full information to be given to the Secretary-General by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties on all aspects relating to Antarctica. The resolutions also call for participation by the Secretary-General or his representative in the meetings of the Consultative Parties, including negotiations on a mineral régime, and Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties are requested to

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

impose a moratorium on negotiations to establish this régime. Unfortunately, there has been no adequate reaction to these requests made by the vast majority of the members of the General Assembly.

Moreover, not only have Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties not responded to the requests of the international community, but they have proceeded to adopt, in June this year, without broader consultations, the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities.

In our opinion, such a régime should have been elaborated within the United Nations, no matter when the use of natural resources would be possible - all the more so since Antarctica is invaluable for the whole world, considering its exceptionally great influence on the climate, its abundant flora and fauna and its mineral resources. In this context, we point out the conclusion of the recent Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Nicosia. The Ministers considered that

"this development could make more difficult efforts at a consensus on this issue at the United Nations General Assembly and expressed the hope that all States would resume co-operation on and participation in the United Nations General Assembly debate on this item, with the purpose of coming to an understanding on all aspects concerning Antarctica within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly". (A/43/667, p. 51, para. 183)

We cannot accept exclusiveness in the treatment of these issues. Such an approach cannot be interpreted as other than discrimination in the international community, which is thereby denied the legitimate right to consider and participate in the elaboration of the future legal régime which is important and of interest to the entire international community. The latest practice - the Treaty governing the Moon and outer space and, particularly, the Convention on the Law of the Sea - has

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

shown that on questions of common interest we must seek solutions acceptable to all countries.

My delegation therefore believes that in considering this very sensitive and complex subject we must make further efforts to deepen the constructive dialogue within the United Nations aimed at promoting co-operation in Antarctica and at consolidating all positive aspects of the present régime and bridging the existing differences. Nobody should feel threatened by that - least of all the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties - since our interest is not divisiveness, but, rather, the establishment of a point of convergence and the promotion of closer co-operation between the system established by the Antarctic Treaty on the one hand and the United Nations on the other, in accordance with the long-term interests of the international community as a whole.

The CHAIRMAN: This afternoon we shall hear the rest of the speakers on this item and then take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/43/L.82 and A/C.1/43/L.83.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.