



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ROCHE (Canada)

CONTENTS

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

\*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2 750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

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

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 7C

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

The CHAIRMAN: Members will recall that agenda item 7C was initially included in the General Assembly's agenda at its thirty-eighth session in 1983. Each succeeding session of the General Assembly has been seized of the question of Antarctica, a subject that has become of immense importance in our interdependent world.

At the last session of the General Assembly, delegations considered updated reports A/42/586 and A/42/587 on all aspects of Antarctica in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 41/88 A, B and C. Having done so, the General Assembly at its forty-second session adopted resolutions 42/46 A and B.

In that connection, I would like to draw delegations' attention to reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/43/564 and A/43/565 and its addendum 1, which are presently before the Committee and which address the specific concerns raised in the aforementioned resolutions.

As members of the Committee are well aware, the Antarctic and its ecosystems are increasingly vital to life on this planet. Doubtless, we are only beginning to understand the quintessential character of the region and its potential for the future. The record reflects that the Committee's deliberations have made a positive and helpful contribution to the understanding of that sensitive, complex and multifaceted region.

It is upon that background that our debate on the future of Antarctica should be continued and developed in the interest of all nations. Clearly, co-operation in the region is our common objective, bearing in mind the conviction that

(The Chairman)

Antarctica must forever be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and should not become the scene of international discord.

Above all, it is clear that there is widespread agreement in the international community that Antarctica should be preserved as a demilitarized, denuclearized region, one that will forever be exempt from any kind of military activity and that should retain its character as a zone of peace.

I would hasten to add that the importance of that unique region must also be underscored in terms of environmental factors, its relevance to scientific research and its crucial role in the make-up of atmospheric conditions, particularly as they relate to significant changes in the world's weather patterns.

As we take up the question of Antarctica, I call upon participants in the debate to be guided by a spirit of conciliation and co-operation, in the hope that consensus on the item may be achieved.

## STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AND SECURITY COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs): First, I should like to express my sincere gratitude to you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to address the First Committee on the items with which the Committee will be seized in the following few days.

I will introduce reports of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica as well as on the items relating to international security, namely "Strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region", "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security" and "Comprehensive system of international peace and security".

As you have already indicated, the question of Antarctica was included on the agenda at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly and deliberations held since then have contributed to a greater knowledge and understanding of the unique character of that region. Similarly, the debates on the question helped heighten

(Mr. Safronchuk)

The Political and Security Council Affairs Department will do everything possible to enhance its efforts in rendering the support the Committee needs to fulfil its responsibilities in keeping with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. We must take the new opportunity given to us by the current momentum for peace to consolidate the recent improvements in international relations and to expand the areas of agreement on issues of common concern. In this regard, the Secretary-General underscored in his annual report on the work of the Organization that if opportunities for breakthroughs on a variety of issues are to be seized it is important that we keep in mind the implications of our experience in the efforts to resolve the major political questions on our agenda.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I should like to assure you and the other members of the Committee of the readiness of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs to assist you in your efforts aimed at finding solutions to the important issues of regional and international security which are on the Committee's agenda.

The CHAIRMAN: I want Mr. Safronchuk and the other members of his Department to know how much I look forward to working with them in the successful resolution of the issues now before us.

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA: GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (continued)

Mr. LEWIS (Antigua and Barbuda): Since this is the first occasion on which Antigua and Barbuda has spoken in the First Committee this year, let me congratulate you most heartily, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship. I am most confident that you will continue to guide the deliberations in the Committee with the great skill and fortitude that you have so far exhibited.

Canada and Antigua and Barbuda have many close, deep and significant ties. As a historian by training, I have sincere admiration for the role that Canada has played in regard to our development, even when Antigua and Barbuda was still a

(Mr. Safronchuk)

Similarly, the Committee will consider, under the general item, the sub-item entitled "Need for result-oriented political dialogue to improve the international situation". The proponent of that item called for more efforts to facilitate dialogue and co-operation as a means to help reduce tensions, settle international conflicts peacefully and improve the international climate.

On the agenda of the Committee also figures the item "Comprehensive system of international peace and security", a subject introduced by a group of countries at the forty-first session of the General Assembly. In conformity with resolution 42/93 adopted last year, the Secretary-General has submitted his report on the matter in document A/43/732. In drafting that report, the Political and Security Council Affairs Department drew upon a wide variety of available resources. My colleagues and I held informal consultations with the Chairmen of regional groups and individual delegations with a view to exploring ways and means of organizing an exchange of views on the matter.

(Mr. Safronchuk)

Similarly, in keeping with paragraph 13 of resolution 42/93, a wide range of non-governmental organizations and political and public figures contributed to the development of a dialogue on the ways and means of promoting comprehensive security based on the Charter and within the United Nations framework. The deliberations on this item revealed the existence of differing opinions on how to organize the exchange of views on the issue of comprehensive security. In the light of these considerations, it is hoped that at this session the Committee will reach a greater understanding and wider agreement on this subject. Our Department is ready to carry out any task assigned to it which will be of assistance to Member States.

This year the work of the Committee takes place in a favourable general atmosphere characterized by relaxation of international tensions in the world. The ratification of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty, the improvement in Soviet-American relations and progress made in resolving regional conflicts were largely cited during the general debate of the Assembly and deliberations in this Committee as factors contributing to the improvement of the international situation. These circumstances offer Member States a great opportunity for the consolidation of those achievements and for further progress in the area of regional and international security.

Recent developments - in particular, those relating to the favourable evolution of regional conflicts - have demonstrated that the United Nations is capable of revitalizing and enhancing its role in discharging its main responsibility in the area of international peace and security. The timely award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is a welcome recognition of the fundamental role of the Organization in respect to international peace and security.

(Mr. Safronchuk)

The Political and Security Council Affairs Department will do everything possible to enhance its efforts in rendering the support the Committee needs to fulfil its responsibilities in keeping with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. We must take the new opportunity given to us by the current momentum for peace to consolidate the recent improvements in international relations and to expand the areas of agreement on issues of common concern. In this regard, the Secretary-General underscored in his annual report on the work of the Organization that if opportunities for breakthroughs on a variety of issues are to be seized it is important that we keep in mind the implications of our experience in the efforts to resolve the major political questions on our agenda.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I should like to assure you and the other members of the Committee of the readiness of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs to assist you in your efforts aimed at finding solutions to the important issues of regional and international security which are on the Committee's agenda.

The CHAIRMAN: I want Mr. Safronchuk and the other members of his Department to know how much I look forward to working with them in the successful resolution of the issues now before us.

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA: GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DPAFT RESOLUTIONS (continued)

Mr. LEWIS (Antigua and Barbuda): Since this is the first occasion on which Antigua and Barbuda has spoken in the First Committee this year, let me congratulate you most heartily, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship. I am most confident that you will continue to guide the deliberations in the Committee with the great skill and fortitude that you have so far exhibited.

Canada and Antigua and Barbuda have many close, deep and significant ties. As a historian by training, I have sincere admiration for the role that Canada has played in regard to our development, even when Antigua and Barbuda was still a

(Mr. Lewis, Antigua and Barbuda)

colony. In those days, as the senior Dominion in the British Empire and Commonwealth, your country took a special interest in what were then the British West Indies. Today, in a quiet and most dignified manner, Canada continues to manifest a sensitivity to and understanding of the problems of developing countries, in a manner which manifests true fraternity.

But the topic under discussion is Antarctica, a subject on which there is a grave divergence of opinion between many of the rich and powerful countries of the world and many of those which are not so endowed - and some of which are weak and pusillanimous. Our differences have been such that the United Nations has not been able to produce a consensus resolution on Antarctica since the year the question was first placed on the agenda.

Nevertheless, Antigua and Barbuda, which has been at the forefront on the question of Antarctica since 1983, remains committed to a just and reasonable solution and the attainment of consensus on the subject. Therefore it was with deep regret that we learned of the decision of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to disregard totally and completely General Assembly resolution 42/46 of 30 November 1987 on the question of Antarctica. It is even further regretted that the racist régime of South Africa was allowed to participate in the Consultative Parties' negotiations held in Wellington from 2 May to 2 June 1988.

How can we accept the position posited by some Consultative Party States that the question of Antarctica is not one for the involvement of the United Nations, when, contrary to clear undertakings in the Treaty system, some nations which have administrative control over the continent are less than consistent in their practices? Even though there is supposed to be in existence the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, fishing remains to a great extent remains unregulated. There is also the seismic exploration for minerals, though some scientific studies have shown it to be harmful, and, in complete



(Mr. Lewis, Artigua and Barbuda)

disregard of environmental concerns, many nations permit or ignore casual dumping of waste materials from their ships in Antarctica's waters.

Those harmful practices are most significant, as more is now known about the living resources of Antarctica, as a result of the findings of researchers in a United States National Science Foundation polar study expedition. Cornelius Sullivan, co-leader of the expedition, declared during the first week of October that a vast and previously undiscovered population of tiny plants and animals live in hollowed pores carried through the sea ice that forms annually round Antarctica. The scientists found large and thriving populations of krill grazing on one-celled plants and animals that live in the ice pores. Obviously, the sea ice is a place where, for a minimum expenditure of energy, the krill can avoid predators and live in a rich pastureland.

What was previously known is that during the winter, sea ice freezes to a six-foot thickness and forms a pack extending 1,100 miles from the Antarctic mainland. The total ice formed round the South Pole continent is roughly 11 million square miles, or about three times the area of the United States. Each spring 80 per cent of the ice melts, creating a nutrient-rich layer of water that is filled with small plants and animals.

What was previously unknown, however, is the quantity of life that exists within the ice during the winter months. Scientists have found that the sea ice during that period is not solid, but pocketed with channels in the nature of Swiss cheese. Once the channels are in place they form a reserve for the algae that live in the microscopic spaces between the ice crystals. This recent information makes it imperative that great care be taken to preserve the whole process of the formation and sustenance of life in the area, and to emphasize the extent of the food reserves available for man.

(Mr. Lewis, Antigua and Barbuda)

Antigua and Barbuda reiterates its profound objection to the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities adopted in Wellington on 2 June 1988. We cannot accept the right of a small group of countries to arrogate to themselves the exploitation, and probably the devastation, of a continent, which amply displays the insensitivity and determinism of governing nations. The régime was clearly hastened into existence in the wake of seismic surveys suggesting the existence of large deposits of mineral resources within the ice shelves of the continent.

We have paid much attention to what has been revealed about the minerals régime, and have been reliably informed about the process of regulating the exploitation of minerals. We have read about the plenary Commission with its decision-making States and non-decision-making States and the 10-member Regulatory Committees involved to ensure that the various stages relating to ultimate extraction are properly followed. Admittedly, there is a series of stringent standards, and the Commission has to have enough scientific data to make a decision as to whether or not a country will be allowed to exploit minerals in a given area.

The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have repeatedly told us that all countries can become involved in the whole Antarctic system, and that a few developing countries have joined the system. We are also told that the principle of international participation in minerals development is encouraged, and that if there is excess revenue it could be used for scientific investigation that would be beneficial to all States.

When one analyzes those arguments more closely, it is quite clear that some of the developing countries now listed as Consultative Parties are what we consider to be "almost developed". Most of the non-Consultative and non-party States cannot at the moment envisage when they will be in a position to reach the stage that would

(Mr. Lewis, Antigua and Barbuda)

enable them to explore or carry out substantial activities in the Antarctic region. Thus, most of our States, irrespective of the language used, are effectively debarred from an enterprise dominated by the rich and powerful. And so long as some members of that enterprise still speak of "claims" in regard to Antarctica, the concept of Antarctica as the common heritage of mankind is made to look ludicrous. A representative from one of the non-Consultative Parties has asked why Antarctica cannot be regulated along the lines of the law of the sea. A satisfactory response is still being sought.

The extraction of minerals poses a severe threat to the environment, and we do not consider the despoiling of a continent to be either aesthetically or ecologically responsible. Antarctica, it should be remembered, is mankind's last frontier. Man's intrusion, if not carefully monitored and regulated, can dramatically alter global ocean and weather patterns. That is why it necessitates direct involvement by the United Nations and the fullest co-operation of the Consultative Parties with the Secretary-General or his representative.

It is true that the Consultative Parties have taken steps over the past few years to open up the Treaty system. Yet the need remains for non-Consultative Parties to have a meaningful role in the decision-making process. There is also a need for documents from the Treaty system to be made available to interested nations with experts capable of analyzing and assessing Antarctic undertakings.

From all the above-mentioned items of information on Antarctica it is evident that the United Nations has to be more directly involved in developments in and surrounding the continent. Consequently, irrespective of our geographical size or the number of people statistically shown to be inhabiting our land space, we are entitled to a role in the protection, development and safe exploitation of the resources of Antarctica. We insist upon that right, and were profoundly astonished

(Mr. Lewis, Antigua and Barbuda)

when, during the general debate, one Member State declared that it was linked with Antarctica by sovereignty, history and continuity. The concept of sovereignty in regard to Antarctica is one we cannot understand or consider. Antarctica must remain the heritage of all mankind, and thus we again reiterate our appeal to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to have the Secretary-General or his representative attend all meetings of the Treaty parties.

Antigua and Barbuda is but one of the small voices expressing their concern over the Antarctic issue. A joint approach by developing countries and other countries not members of the consultative group is necessary to achieve positive results. Unless the Consultative Parties broaden representation in the decision-making process, the United Nations will continue to be used as the forum in which non-Consultative Parties can express their concerns and gain support for their position.

Mr. ISMAIL (Malaysia): The question of Antarctica has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for six years now. In our deliberations on this question of concern and interest to the international community, we have underscored the particular significance of the continent for the very survival of mankind and the need for a universally acceptable régime for its management and development. We proceeded from recognition that multilateral approaches to issues of common concern are in the best interest of mankind and can make a valuable contribution to international peace and security. Indeed, recent favourable developments in the international arena have confirmed the validity of that approach towards the resolution of international issues. The trend towards greater involvement by the United Nations bodes well for the future of multilateralism in an increasingly interdependent world.

(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

In placing the question of Antarctica on the agenda of the General Assembly it was not the objective of the delegations of Malaysia and Antigua and Barbuda to seek a confrontation with the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty. This was motivated by the desire to initiate international consideration of all aspects of the issues relating to Antarctica with a view to formulating a universally acceptable framework for international co-operation in that uninhabited continent. As has been apparent in the course of the debates of the past five sessions of the General Assembly, Parties and non-parties to the Treaty proceed from different assumptions and perceptions on the issue.

The non-parties, having closely examined the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty and having found them to be deficient in many respects, have advanced proposals for the management and exploitation of the resources of the continent consistent with contemporary principles and norms, which have been embodied in international instruments pertaining to other questions of such critical importance to the interests of mankind. In so doing, due recognition has been accorded to the achievements of the Antarctic Treaty itself with regard to the preservation of international peace and security, the promotion of scientific research, denuclearization, demilitarization and even protection of the environment, although there must be reservations on that last count.

Our approach has been to build upon such achievements and not to destroy them. We have argued that the conditions and compulsions of 1959 have been overtaken by the march of time, and that the provisions of the Treaty must necessarily be re-examined to take account of, and respond to, subsequent dynamic developments if the Treaty is to enjoy legitimacy and function as an effective instrument for fulfilling its aim of ensuring the peaceful use of Antarctic and preventing the continent from becoming the scene or object of international discord.

(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

Indeed, by remaining unresponsive to the legitimate interests of the international community in this day and age, the Treaty will increasingly be viewed as the source of international discord and dispute over how Antarctica might best be governed and managed in the interests of mankind.

The proposals advanced by non-parties to the Treaty have therefore taken into account the facts of the situation in Antarctica. We believe they are constructive and pragmatic proposals emanating from our endeavours to make the Treaty more responsive to the interests and concerns of the international community and to lay the foundation for an eventual régime in Antarctica with international legitimacy.

The numerous relevant General Assembly resolutions reflect those reasonable and constructive appeals of the international community to the Consultative Parties to be open, non-discriminating, transparent and accountable in their management of Antarctica. Let me recall briefly the various General Assembly resolutions to that effect. In resolution 41/88 A of 4 December 1986, the Assembly requested the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to keep the Secretary-General fully informed on all aspects of the question of Antarctica so that the United Nations could function as the central repository of all such information. While there has been a greater flow of information, the fact remains that such information has been extended to the United Nations on an extremely selective basis and belatedly. The need for comprehensive, up-to-date information on the activities and operations of the Treaty parties is essential for the international community to be kept abreast of developments and to consider the implications of decisions to be made by the Consultative Parties.

In order to induce some degree of accountability of the Treaty parties to the international community the General Assembly, in resolution 42/46 B of

(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

30 November 1987, called upon 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 minerals régime negotiations, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on his evaluations thereon. The thought underlying that request was to enable the Secretary-General to act as a bridge between the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and the non-parties to the Treaty. The Secretary-General, by his participation in and reports on those meetings, would enable the members of the international community to ascertain whether their interests and concerns are being safeguarded by the Treaty parties. The Secretary-General's involvement would facilitate the indirect involvement and participation of the international community in the management of the continent. That appeal for the participation of the representative of the most universal of international organizations in a Treaty that seeks to promote the interests of mankind in Antarctica seems not only logical, but reasonable enough to the non-parties to the Treaty.

With regard to the continued participation of the Pretoria régime, the General Assembly has repeatedly - in resolutions 40/156 C, 41/88 C and 42/46 A - urged the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to exclude the racist régime from participation in meetings of the Consultative Parties. That régime does not represent the majority of South Africa and has been condemned for its abhorrent system of apartheid and brutal suppression and excluded from participation in international institutions. Yet it remains to this day a Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty, an affront to the will of the international community.

In their consideration of this agenda item the non-parties to the Treaty have also addressed the issue of the minerals-development régime being negotiated by the Consultative Parties to the Treaty. In resolution 40/156 B the General Assembly

(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

invited the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to inform the Secretary-General of their negotiations to establish a régime regarding Antarctic minerals. No information was made available to the international community on those negotiations, a question that would have far-reaching consequences for mankind. The negotiations were conducted among those whose qualifications for participation and decision-making were based on criteria established under entirely different requirements in 1959, when the Antarctic Treaty was established. The non-parties to the Treaty have clearly rejected the discriminatory and anachronistic accession requirements of the 1959 Treaty and have, in the General Assembly, been engaged in a search for consensus to proceed with the necessary reform of that régime to meet the current situation.

In the light of those efforts the General Assembly, in resolution 41/88 B, called upon the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to impose a moratorium on negotiations to establish a minerals régime until such time as all members of the international community can participate fully in such negotiations. That call was reiterated in General Assembly resolution 42/46 B.

The repeated appeals of the General Assembly fell on stony ground; the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties not only continued with their closed-door negotiations but adopted a minerals convention in June this year. My delegation must therefore express its deep regret that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have chosen such a course of action, in complete disregard of the expressed will of the international community. The deliberations of the General Assembly this year on this agenda item are taking place under the baleful shadow of the decision by the Consultative Parties to adopt the minerals convention. That decision has made the task of reaching consensus on this agenda item at this session of the Assembly even more difficult.



(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

The apparent rush of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to conclude negotiations and adopt the convention has led us to certain conclusions about the ulterior motives of the Consultative Parties. We are told that the prospect of actual minerals exploitation is still very remote. We are aware that the policy of voluntary restraint on minerals development among the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties is still in place. As for the likelihood of discovering significant deposits of mineral resources, we are told that there is only circumstantial evidence of the occurrence of mineral resources in Antarctica and that the necessary technological know-how to exploit them is still some time away. Even if such resources were technologically exploitable, the financial costs of their exploitation do not make it a viable economic proposition, given the current trends in world prices for those mineral resources.

My delegation views the overwhelming compulsion to adopt the convention as an attempt by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to present the international community with a fait accompli. It is also aimed at arbitrarily enlarging the exclusive rights of the Consultative Parties by widening the scope of the Antarctic Treaty from one that was intended to promote and regulate international co-operation in scientific research and the protection of the environment of the continent to one that confers upon the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties the right to regulate the development of the mineral resources of that continent.

Indeed, the very legality of the convention has been called into question by expert observers, who deem it ultra vires of Article IX of the Antarctic Treaty. The argument that the convention is a conservation instrument is belied by the very structure and mechanisms established by the convention to regulate minerals

(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

activities on the continent. The very title of the convention speaks volumes of its primary purpose and function - it reads like a mining code of conduct.

The questions of minerals development in Antarctica has tremendous implications for international peace and security, world ecology and economy. The continent, the fifth largest, and strategically located, covers some one tenth of the globe, has a fragile ecological system, contains 90 per cent of the world's ice and about 68 per cent of its water reserves, and is rich in marine and possibly mineral resources. The ice sheet of that vast expanse of pristine wilderness exerts a controlling influence on ocean circulation, global weather, climate and food production. Antarctica is therefore of great significance to the international community in terms, inter alia, of international peace and security, environment, economy, scientific research and climate.

A minor disaster in Antarctica could assume major significance in its effects on the world. Mankind is already confronted with the prospect of the alarming consequences of the greenhouse effect and the depletion of the ozone layer. The necessity for multilateral co-operation in meeting those challenges of common concern to mankind is readily recognized by the international community.

(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

It is therefore all the more regrettable that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties should disregard the call of the international community for a moratorium on the minerals negotiations until such time as all members of the international community can fully participate.

My delegation would like to affirm that any exploitation of the resources of Antarctica should ensure the maintenance of international peace and security in the continent, protection of its environment, non-appropriation and conservation of its resources and international management and equitable sharing of the benefits of such exploitation. Any eventual minerals régime in Antarctica in order to have universal validity must be founded on contemporary international principles which have evolved through the democratizing process of international relations and institutions.

The Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities is not founded on such universally accepted principles and therefore cannot gain universal validity and be acceptable to the international community. An examination of the Convention reveals that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have replicated the very deficiencies of the Antarctic Treaty itself in the Convention. It is exclusive and not accountable to the international community. Decision-making powers on all matters relating to prospecting, exploration and exploitation of mineral resources rest with the full members of the Convention. States which are Consultative Parties to the Antarctic treaty are eligible to become full members of the minerals régime. However, States sponsoring Antarctic mineral resources exploitation or development are eligible for membership in the Commission but must first declare the intention to abide by Article IX (1) of the Antarctic Treaty which, in practical terms, means that full membership in the Commission is restricted solely to the consultative members of the Antarctic Treaty. The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties contend that accession is open to

(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

any State but such accession will only confer observer status without any right to participation in the decision-making process of the Convention. Indeed, such accession will not only give legitimacy to the privileged status of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties but will also disenfranchise the observer States of their legitimate rights to decision-making in the management of the continent.

Despite General Assembly resolutions calling for the exclusion of the racist Pretoria régime from participation in the consultative meetings, the minerals Convention confers full membership status on the racist Pretoria régime. My delegation fails to understand this serious and persistent lapse on the part of the Consultative Parties. Many of the parties to the Treaty are uncompromising in their opposition to the inhuman system of apartheid and to the cruel repression of the majority of the black population of South Africa and yet this outcast of the international community is accorded every recognition as an equal partner under the provisions of the Convention.

As for the other aspects of the Convention, I would like to refer to the analysis of the Convention by the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) which states that "The Minerals Convention ... remains a fundamentally flawed document from the standpoint of environmental protection as well as public review and accountability". The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition reflects the views of more than 200 conservation and environmental organizations in 35 countries. Surely this says something about its expertise and credibility.

The minerals Convention now awaits ratification by the Consultative parties and it is the hope of my delegation that serious consideration will be given by the Consultative Parties to the views and concerns of the international community as embodied in the relevant General Assembly resolutions. To proceed to adopt a régime that is unacceptable to the majority of the Members of the United Nations would have serious implications for international peace and security.

(Mr. Ismail, Malaysia)

The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties cannot continue to view Antarctica from the perspective of 29 years ago when they adopted the Treaty. The opportunity for creative innovations to meet the legitimate interests and concerns of members of the international community on mankind's last frontier must be seized. Indeed, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties cannot continue to remain out of synchronization with present-day realities or stem the tide of inevitable change in international affairs. They need to respond to the clear preference of the international community for collective action under the auspices of the United Nations for an open, accountable and equitable framework for Antarctica for the benefit of mankind as a whole. The non-Treaty parties stand ready to do their part in this enterprise and will continue to spare no efforts to work towards a consensus on this issue at the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to remind members that, in accordance with the decision of the Committee, the list of speakers for the general debate and consideration of, and action on draft resolutions under this agenda item, will be closed today, 21 November, at 12 noon. I urge delegations to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible and also urge those delegations wishing to submit draft resolutions under item 70 to make every effort to meet the deadline which is also 12 noon today.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): The General Assembly is taking up the question of Antarctica for the sixth time in as many years. Last year, as on the two previous occasions, the General Assembly failed to achieve consensus on resolutions submitted under this agenda item. At that time, debate on this topic was marked once again by the non-participation of States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty. Therefore, it would not surprise my delegation if such action were to be repeated at this session as well. Such a negative attitude on the part of the Antarctic

(Mr. Rana (Nepal))

Treaty Consultative Parties and, in particular, their rejection of the proposal to designate Antarctica as the "common heritage of mankind" is indeed regrettable.

The ocean and outer space have been so designed. Indeed, this principle facilitated the conclusion of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the outer space Treaty. The concept of Antarctica as the "common heritage of mankind" has been endorsed by the Eighth Summit of the Non-Aligned Countries held at Harar' in 1986 and by the Declaration of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity of 1985.

I should also like to direct the attention of the Committee to the watershed report last year of the World Commission on Environment and Development which grouped Antarctica, along with the oceans and outer space, as mankind's "common concerns". That report stated:

"During the forthcoming period of change, the challenge is to ensure that Antarctica is managed in the interests of all humankind, in a manner that conserves its unique environment, preserves its value for scientific research, and retains its character as a demilitarized, non-nuclear zone of peace."

(A/42/427, para. 83, p. 275)

This year the General Assembly has, for the very first time, included in its agenda, the item entitled "Conservation of climate as part of the common heritage of mankind". My delegation has welcomed this addition and participated in the debate on the item in the General Assembly.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

In the First Committee, my delegation wishes merely to question whether it is fair or logical to deny applying the common heritage principles to Antarctica, given the continent's well-known influence on atmospheric and oceanic circulation and world climate. We hold that it is only by treating Antarctica as the common heritage of mankind rather than as an exclusive preserve of some that the world climate itself can be conserved in the interest of one and all. Only such a course of action, we maintain, will banish forever fears that activities in or around Antarctica would set into motion irreversible and adverse climatic changes affecting the whole world.

My delegation notes with appreciation several positive features of the Antarctic Treaty system. The demilitarization and denuclearization of the strategic, resource-rich but environmentally fragile continent is indeed an important achievement. We are also fully aware of the valuable work done in the area of scientific research and study, including the preservation of marine species.

However, like a great majority of the international community, we do not recognize the validity of any of the territorial claims on Antarctica. To make such claims on principles of proximity is nothing but absurd. The Antarctic Treaty requires the involvement of the entire international community to be effective and meaningful. Only the harmonization of actions in the interests and for the benefit of all mankind can make the Antarctic Treaty equitable and acceptable.

Antarctica probably contains vast on-shore and off-shore resources that could be exploited, to a substantial degree, without endangering its fragile environment. Designation of the continent as a common heritage of mankind would enable the use of a portion of the revenues thus generated for international purposes, such as helping the developing countries, fighting pollution and environmental degradation and funding certain United Nations programmes. We have

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

therefore voiced our concern in the past about the possibility of a minerals régime on Antarctica being finalized and presented as a fait accompli before 1991, when a review of the Antarctic Treaty could be undertaken.

The adoption of the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resources Activities in Wellington last June has proven that our fears were not unfounded. We understand that the Convention remains formally to be signed and ratified by 16 out of 20 Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties before it comes into effect. However, there can now be no doubt regarding the intention of the Antarctic Treaty parties with regard to a moratorium on a minerals régime. My delegation wishes to record its deep regret and profound concern at the mineral resources activities in complete disregard of the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate its strong objection to the continued association of South Africa with the Treaty system. The Pretoria régime's policy of racism and repression at home and aggression and destabilization abroad is in direct contravention of the very principles and purposes of the peaceful and co-operative development of Antarctica. We therefore demand the exclusion of the apartheid régime from the Treaty system without delay.

While supporting the resolution now under consideration, my delegation hopes, as the Chairman pointed out in his introductory remarks earlier, that the deliberation and decision on the item will be marked this year by a spirit of conciliation and co-operation. Such an approach would be in keeping with the universal character of the issue as well as with the positive changes presently taking place on the international scene.

Mr. JAYAS INGHE (Sri Lanka): There is a proverb often referred to in my country. It says that it is quite futile to play a violin to a deaf elephant, since the elephant would not react to the pleasing music. My delegation often



(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

thinks that that is exactly what has happened in the case of our repeated requests to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. The resolutions carrying those requests were reflections of the overwhelming will and determination of a dominant majority of the Member States of the United Nations. They repeatedly requested 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 were able to participate fully in such negotiations. The resolutions requested that the Secretary-General of the United Nations be invited to all meetings of the Antarctic Treaty system and to make the United Nations the repository of all information on Antarctica.

All these requests were based on the principle that the international community is entitled to associate itself fully with events in Antarctica, a continent regarded as a common heritage of mankind and the activities on which will have definite effects on every State on this planet, irrespective of its location or ability to conduct extensive research in order to become an exclusive member of the Antarctic Treaty system, as stipulated by the Consultative Parties.

The overwhelming majority of the international community has repeatedly rejected the idea that the Antarctic should remain the exclusive preserve of only a few States who, because of historical accident, were able to come together as parties to a Treaty in 1959, when most modern States were not even born. That idea of exclusivity is particularly irrelevant in an international system that is predominantly interdependent, intrinsically interwoven with the activities of every member and of all corners of the globe. Our responsibility should be to ensure that Antarctica is managed in the interests of all mankind in a manner that conserves its unique environment, preserves its value for scientific research and retains its character as a demilitarized, non-nuclear zone.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

Those interests can best be served only by the full participation of the international community, not by a few rich and technically advanced countries, self-appointed to determine the future of the continent. Contrary to the majority desire and repeated requests, the Treaty Consultative Parties numbering 18 States members adopted a Convention establishing a minerals régime in Antarctica in June this year. That act, in defiance of the overwhelming will of the international community, is seen by my delegation as a gross violation of international norms and moral conduct and is therefore regarded as null and void. The international legal régime that observes universality does not recognize such action.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

This strong reaction on the part of my delegation and of many others is well founded. Antarctica, which covers one tenth of the surface of the earth, has great significance to the world in terms of international peace and security, the economic environment, scientific research, meteorology, telecommunication and so on.

There has been no permanent human habitation on the continent of Antarctica. There has been no international agreement on any claims of sovereignty over Antarctica. The 18 self-appointed Consultative Parties have on the basis of their scientific expertise given themselves a higher and more decisive status than that enjoyed by the non-Consultative Parties, and the instrumentation to achieve the objectives of the Treaty have been left to be decided upon by the consensus of the Consultative Parties. By no stretch of the imagination can such a Treaty be recognized as fair and universal in character, nor can it be regarded as compatible with its declared objectives of promoting the interest or progress of mankind or furthering the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The powerful status of a few Parties to the Treaty is decided on the basis of ability to conduct scientific research, which is not the only aspect of interest to the international community, which has expressed its utmost concern over Antarctica.

Adoption of the Convention establishing the minerals régime is therefore a matter of the greatest disappointment to the majority of the members of this Committee. The attempt to prevent such a move by a few over the past few years has failed. In spite of our repeated efforts, we have failed even to secure the attendance of the Secretary-General at the meetings of the Treaty Parties. The Secretary-General, although so requested by the General Assembly, has therefore failed to submit any meaningful reports on the activities in Antarctica.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

Those developments are quite contrary to many trends and commitments witnessed in the contemporary world in the conduct of foreign relations. Democratization of global activities, co-operation, interdependence and universal acceptance are some of the parameters which are widely respected and followed in the conduct of foreign relations today. Those commitments are specially respected and applied in extenso, particularly on such matters affecting the destiny of all mankind.

Antarctica is indisputably an area which has a direct link to many aspects of human activity. The Antarctica Treaty system itself has recognized this factor. The right of mankind to enjoy an ecosystem that sustains life and livelihood and contributes to many other activities cannot be denied by a few members of the international community. That is why my delegation held high hopes that the calls to suspend negotiations on the establishment of a minerals régime in Antarctica would be received in a positive manner. However, my delegation and many others have been disappointed. It was the wish of my delegation that the so-called minerals régime would eventually ensure the participation by the entire international community, and that the management of Antarctica would become part of a sustainable development effort by the entire international community.

Even at this stage it is not too late for the Consultative Parties to heed the appeal of the majority of the Members of the United Nations. We call upon them to refrain from ratifying the Convention establishing the minerals régime until such time as full and universal participation is ensured. Failure to do so will continue to be seen as a contravention of the will of the majority of the international community, which would lead to the operation of a fragile system lacking the confidence and endorsement of all mankind. Our experience is that such arrangements have not been able to withstand the pressure of the international

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

community. Nor have they been successful in averting controversies, as they fail to encompass the thinking of a cross-section of human society. The international community is greatly concerned that the Antarctic continent should be brought under a viable and sustainable management system in which the entire international community has a role to play.

My delegation is also deeply perturbed by the continued participation of the racist South African régime in the activities of the Antarctic Treaty system. That régime continues its illegal occupation of Namibia and continues to implement its repressive apartheid policies in South Africa. In view of those discriminatory policies and that outrageous behaviour the majority of this Committee, including my delegation, has repeatedly demanded the expulsion of this régime from the Antarctic Treaty system, without any success. It is the hope of my delegation that the Treaty Parties will implement this demand so that the régime may be taught to live up to accepted civilized standards.

Mr. GBEHD (Ghana): My delegation welcomes yet another opportunity to contribute to the debate on the question of Antarctica, agenda item 70.

This year the First Committee is considering the question of Antarctica against the background of the adoption by the Antarctic Treaty signatories of the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resources Activities on 2 June this year, in Wellington, New Zealand. On Friday, 25 November, the Convention will be opened for signature for one year, after which it will enter into force after the requirements laid down in it have been met.

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

The adoption of the Convention is yet another demonstration of the persistent reluctance of the Antarctic Treaty signatories to co-operate with United Nations Member States outside the Antarctic Treaty system in matters relating to the management of that important part of our planet.

In 1986 and 1987 the General Assembly, it will be recalled, adopted by significant majorities resolutions appealing to 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 could participate in them. In the resolutions the Assembly also urged the Treaty Consultative Parties to exclude the racist régime of South Africa from participation because of that régime's well known practice of apartheid. Those appeals derived from the open and flexible positions of the non-party States, whose overriding objective then and continues to be now a practical search for common ground on the basis of which this important matter could be tackled by the international community. The adoption of the Convention in Wellington in spite of those appeals is therefore most regrettable.

In spite of that uncompromising posture by the Treaty Parties, my delegation, together with other like-minded delegations, will continue to explore all possible avenues for attaining a meeting of minds on the subject.

The question of Antarctica is basically an issue of international conscience. My delegation continues to hold that it is morally indefensible for a few Member States, merely because they are technologically advanced and financially well off, to arrogate to themselves the right to formulate programmes with wide-ranging international implications for the use of a portion of this planet for their own benefit, and to the exclusion of the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations. It is even more puzzling that the few should have maintained this hardened and inflexible attitude for so long merely because the vast majority of

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

the countries outside the Antarctic system are technologically and financially disadvantaged. My delegation and all other delegations which annually address the First Committee on this subject do so with only one objective, namely the pursuit of international justice on the issue of Antarctica.

Yet the minerals Convention adopted on 2 June this year at Wellington fails in several aspects to address major concerns of the non-parties to the Treaty. Although under its provisions developing countries can undertake joint exploration for minerals and although the general public will have available information material about Antarctica, the Convention is essentially a reproduction of the two-tier structure of the 1959 Antarctic Treaty. Membership of the Commission, the Convention's highest institutional decision-making body, for instance, is limited to the original Antarctic Treaty Parties and countries which are engaged in substantial scientific, technical or environmental research in Antarctica. The Antarctic Treaty Parties, in effect, in their burning desire to maintain the status quo, have merely reaffirmed their hallowed tenet that under the Antarctic Treaty system all nations will not enjoy equal standing. The Convention thus perpetuates the restrictive, exclusive and unequal structure of the Antarctic management régime.

Furthermore, membership of its Regulatory Committees - other important organs created under the provisions of the Convention - is reserved for 10 Commission members. Although under the provisions of the Convention any country which is a party to the minerals Convention may be an observer, international and non-governmental organizations are expressly barred from any observer status. Attempts to grant observer status to such organizations were rejected at the negotiations. Another example of the rigid application of the restrictive "club" policy is the requirement that to become a party to the minerals Convention non-parties to the Antarctic Treaty would first have to accede to the Treaty.

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

Although the Special Meeting of Parties has been instituted, purportedly as a gesture to the non-consultative Parties, this is for all practical purposes a powerless body which would be convened only to advise the Commission about the opening of an area to potential minerals activities.

My delegation has yet to examine in detail the impact of the Antarctic minerals Convention on the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, particularly in regard to the negotiations relating to deep-sea mining. However, the indisputable evidence, even granting the limited gesture on the part of the authors of the Convention of 2 June, is that the Antarctic system remains a closed shop. Developing Member States wishing to join the club are free to do so, as we have always been told. The prize available to those developing countries that accede, however, is that they should at best expect no greater status than followers-on.

My delegation continues to believe that given the wide recognition by the international community of the importance of the Antarctic, the management and use of that continent should be conducted, as my delegation has advocated in this Committee in the past, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, to which all of us subscribe, and in the interest of promoting co-operation for the benefit of humanity as a whole. That implies the common-heritage principle, which is supported, after all, by an overwhelming majority of the international community. The common-heritage approach would put an end to the "claims" and counter-claims to sovereignty and would also have the effect of meeting the needs of the overwhelming majority as regards the democratization of the decision-making process of the Antarctic régime. As we have stated here before, the common-heritage approach has been adopted with respect to



(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

outer space, in the 1967 Treaty; to the Moon, in 1979; and to the sea, in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. My delegation, therefore, is at a loss to understand the persistent reluctance of the Antarctic Treaty Parties to agree to the application of that principle in the management of Antarctica.

Perhaps even at this late hour, when they are poised to commence their mining activities, the Antarctic Treaty Parties would wish to ponder available alternative ways of administering Antarctica consistent with the United Nations Charter and present-day realities.

Another area of concern to my delegation is the continued extension of the privileges of Antarctic Treaty membership to the racist régime of South Africa, in spite of General Assembly resolutions calling for its expulsion. We are even more surprised by the double standard so far exhibited by those Consultative and non-consultative Parties which vote in favour of General Assembly resolutions calling for South Africa's expulsion - apparently to maintain a public image of support for the anti-apartheid campaign - but which continue to associate closely with the racist régime in matters concerning Antarctica.

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

To the South African apologists who may wish to know why we advocate the expulsion of the apartheid régime from the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party system, let me say again that racist South Africa is an international pariah whose odious policy of apartheid is not only an affront to humanity but also poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Furthermore, it should be obvious that the vast majority of the South African people who are of the black race will never benefit from the resources of Antarctica because the white minority has illegitimately decreed that it be so.

My delegation would therefore urge the Antarctic Treaty signatories once again to heed the appeals of the majority of the States Members of the United Nations and revise their position on the question of South Africa's continued membership of the Antarctic Treaty group. We do not hate South Africans, white or black; rather, we are seeking to increase pressure on the racist régime by isolating it from the rest of the international community. The continued extension of the privileges of membership only serves to reinforce South Africa's obnoxious commitment to apartheid and its intransigence. We therefore ask for the understanding and co-operation of the Treaty signatories. There is no neutrality in this monstrous injustice. Inaction helps to retain apartheid. Please act now.

In conclusion, allow me to say that the decision by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, now in its third successive year, not to engage in the debate on agenda item 70 is, to say the least, most regrettable. We are aware that it is a Strategy devised by the States Parties to the Treaty with the ultimate objective of having the item deleted from the agenda of the United Nations. The relatively poor attendance at this meeting and the low-level representation here today by certain delegations are designed to convey the impression that speakers are lacking and that general interest on agenda item 70 has waned.

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

My delegation has no particular objection to the desire of the Antarctic Treaty States Parties to speak through an interlocutor. It is, however, my delegation's view that on such an important subject as the question of Antarctica, on which outstanding national differences exist, the deliberate boycott of the debate is in no way helpful to the Organization, since the purpose of the debate is to listen to the various proposals by delegations with a view to finding a common basis for tackling the issue of Antarctica. My delegation would therefore once again urge the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to give serious reconsideration to their position and to resume an active exchange of views on the agenda item. It is only through interaction and the free expression of positions that we can usher democracy into international relations. To avoid the statement of the majority view is thus to retreat from the common weal and to exhibit intellectual dishonesty.

As my delegation pointed out in October, when it had the opportunity to speak in the Committee, the four meetings allotted for consideration of the question of Antarctica, which, for all practical purposes, amount to only two days of debate, do not offer sufficient time to small delegations - who are, invariably, the only speakers on agenda item 70 - to prepare well in order to contribute effectively to the debate. This arrangement, if allowed to continue, will result not only in our having fewer and fewer speakers; it will also tend to play directly into the hands of the lobby of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, which is only too eager to dismiss the debate on this important subject as a sterile annual ritual and, indeed, the delegations that dare to speak on agenda item 70 as no more than little nuisances that can only be tolerated.

My delegation would therefore like to hope that next year further consideration will be given to the allocation and timing of meetings so that every

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

agenda item is allowed a fair meeting period to underscore the fact that no agenda item before the Committee is by any means less important where the objective of the promotion of international peace and security is concerned.

The question of Antarctica will continue to arouse the international conscience so long as arrangements for its management fail to be addressed in a widely accepted manner in the interest of the broader international community. The non-consultative parties, including my delegation, are ready for a return to the consensus approach so that differences can be narrowed and a régime acceptable to all be instituted. To that end, the non-party States have again at the current session gone very far by making an unusual concession in a two-part draft resolution that will later be presented to the Committee for consideration. We hope that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, as an expression of willingness to return to consensus, will offer the necessary co-operation.

Mr. TIONGSON (Philippines): My delegation addresses today the important issue of Antarctica. It is now 30 years since the International Geophysical Year was brought to a close. One of the results of that Year, when scientists from a number of countries came together in a highly profitable programme of research and observation, was the signing of the Antarctic Treaty of 1959.

Since then, we have heard every now and then about that vast continent, generally in areas of scientific and environmental concern. Most recently we have heard of Antarctica with specific reference to the critical issues of the depletion of the ozone layer and of the possible dire consequences of such continuing developments as the melting of the Antarctic polar cap and the rise in sea levels. Such a debate, which is carried on in various public forums and in the media, gives an indication of just how significant the issue is.

(Mr. Tlongson, Philippines)

The debate focuses on the role Antarctica plays in the delicate balance of nature. Yet there is a sub-theme in this spreading public debate, namely, the role Antarctica also plays in international peace and security. We may recall that one reason for the quick negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty was the concern expressed for the region's becoming a possible object of discord, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a site for the emplacement of nuclear weapons and nuclear wastes.

It is acknowledged that the Antarctic Treaty, especially in its first and fifth preambular paragraphs and its first and fifth Articles, has indeed managed to prevent the use of that continent for non-pacific purposes. In keeping that region free of nuclear weapons the Treaty was a precursor of such agreements as the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga.

It must be said, nevertheless, that while the Treaty has many laudable and positive aspects there are also areas that deserve consideration and review by the States Parties to it.

To begin with, we must note that at the time of the conclusion of the Antarctic Treaty the majority of 159 countries represented in the United Nations today would not have been in a position to sign it. Their destinies were still controlled by other nations.

(Mr. Tlongson, Philippines)

In fact, it is an objectionable feature of the Treaty that South Africa - which has been suspended from participation in the General Assembly of the United Nations - continues to participate in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. Considering that country's contiguity to the Antarctic continent, this adds to one of the negative aspects of the Treaty.

In theory, the Antarctic Treaty is open to membership by all nations. Yet one must read the fine print of this agreement, which stipulates that in order to become a Contracting or Consultative Party, an applicant must

"demonstrate its interest in Antarctica by conducting substantial scientific research activity there, such as the establishment of a scientific station or the despatch of a scientific expedition."

The key word here is "substantial". On the one hand, it is the Consultative Parties which determine what substantial means in this context; on the other, given the present economic state of most developing countries, it can hardly be expected that they would be in a position to mount expensive scientific expeditions to that far-flung place.

Even for those which have decided to accede to the Treaty, they have had to accept de facto a scheme in which there is two-tier membership: consultative and non-consultative. If one happens to fall into the latter category, one has to be content with simply being informed about the status of negotiations. Clearly, this is another barrier which, in its subtle or not-so-subtle way, serves to discourage seeking active membership in the Treaty. Those of us who belong to the United Nations system cannot possibly accept such an outmoded, discriminatory approach to what is, after all, an important part of man's common heritage.

(Mr. Tiongson, Philippines)

These are simply preliminary remarks on some aspects which may indicate some weaknesses of the Treaty which, in addition, does not contain a formal termination date and only a mechanism instituting a review of the document in 1991. In any case, it is unlikely that a review would be requested for a treaty based on vested interests as such a review would be likely to produce negative consequences for the treaty itself.

We view with deep regret the fact that, notwithstanding international public opinion, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties proceeded with negotiations and, on 2 June 1988, adopted a Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities. It may be recalled that General Assembly resolutions 41/88 and 42/46 specifically call for the imposition of a moratorium on negotiations to establish a minerals régime until such a time as all members of the international community can fully participate in such negotiations.

Although we are completely against the conclusion of such a minerals régime at this time, we may already point out that it continues the two-tier system of membership embodied in the Antarctic Treaty.

The Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities itself leaves much to be desired. Indeed, it seems to reflect a certain haste borne of a desire to meet some kind of a deadline.

At a time of renewed prestige for the United Nations and of an improved atmosphere for peace and security on the international scene, we would urge the parties to the Antarctic Treaty to demonstrate their confidence in our system by returning to some of the basic ideas embodied in and developed from the United Nations Charter.

One of those is the idea of a common heritage for mankind. The Antarctic, which covers some 10 per cent of the earth's surface, deserves to be regarded as we regard outer space and the seas, as part and parcel of our shared natural

(Mr. Tiongson, Philippines)

inheritance. The Antarctic Treaty can no longer remain outside the United Nations system. While recognizing its virtues, it must also be complemented by measures which reflect the new realities of today and the developments of the last 30 years. We must also look beyond the 1990s to the next century.

We support such immediate measures as calling upon the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to all meetings of the Treaty parties, including their consultative meetings. In turn, we would request the Secretary-General to submit a report on his evaluation thereof to the General Assembly at its next session.

In closing, we would like to express our appreciation to those countries, non-governmental organizations and individuals which have spearheaded the initiative on Antarctica and have worked untiringly to keep this issue alive in the consciousness of the international public.

We also pledge to do what we can in support of this worthy cause.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.