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SIXTH COMMITTEE
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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GOERNER (German Democratic Republic)

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AGENDA ITEM 123: DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF GOOD-NEIGHBOURLINESS BETWEEN STATES

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<u>The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.</u>

AGENDA ITEM 123: DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF GOOD-NEIGHBOURLINESS BETWEEN
STATES (A/39/56-S/16231, A/39/59-S/16241, A/39/60-S/16242, A/39/71-S/16262,
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1.   The CHAIRMAN, introducing the item, reminded the Committee that in
resolution 38/126, the General Assembly had reaffirmed that good-neighbourliness
fully conformed with the purposes of the United Nations; it had deemed it
appropriate, on the basis of the working paper concerning the development and
strengthening of good-neighbourliness between States (A/38/440), as well as other
proposals and ideas submitted by States, and the replies and views of States and
international organizations, to start clarifying and formulating the elements of
good-neighbourliness as part of a process of elaboration of a suitable
international document on the subject. The Assembly had requested the Sixth
Committee to decide, at the thirty-ninth session, on the appropriate framework to
accomplish those tasks.

2.   Mr. DIACONU (Romania) said that in addition to deciding on the appropriate
framework for drafting an international document, the Committee must continue its
discussion on the vast and complex subject of good-neighbourliness in order to go
more deeply into it and hear new ideas and proposals by States concerning its
content and ways and means of strengthening it.

3.   The replies of some 50 States and 20 intergovernmental organizations, as well
as statements made in the Committee, showed the interest aroused by the question of
good-neighbourliness and had widened the basis for studying it. Most inter-State
problems and most disputes arose between neighbouring countries. With the
development of science and technology, however, such problems now involved
countries separated by great distances. Accordingly, even countries without a
common frontier had to co-operate in settling various questions of common interest.

4.   His country's proposal for the inclusion of the item in the agenda had stemmed
from the conviction that the maintenance and extension of friendly relations and
co-operation between neighbouring States and those of the same region represented
the best way of creating a favourable basis for the study and peaceful solution of
any problem, with due regard for the legitimate interests of the parties concerned
and on the basis of the fundamental principles of international law. It also
represented the only way to prevent the emergence of new disputes and the extension
of existing ones.

5.   It was well known that Romania's foreign policy was based above all on strengthening relations of friendship, mutual respect and co-operation with neighbouring countries and those of the same region. That was a fundamental requirement for international peace and security, especially at a time when serious international tension was endangering world peace. Nearly 40 years after the end of the Second World War, confrontations and armed conflicts in different parts of the world were causing extensive loss of life and material damage. That was why his country emphasized the need to stop the armed conflicts and do everything possible to ensure the settlement of inter-State problems through peaceful means.

6.   It was understandable that that increase in international tension should be accompanied by efforts by many countries, especially small and medium-sized countries, to maintain and strengthen good-neighbourliness in their geographical zones. Romania, like other Balkan countries, had for many years worked towards the establishment of a nuclear-free zone of co-operation and good-neighbourliness in the region, as part of the process for establishing security and co-operation in Europe, and had recently proposed to host a new multilateral meeting to continue discussing the proposals submitted at the 1984 Athens meeting.

7.   An interesting development was the concern of the States members of the Contadora Group, with the Central American countries, to settle regional disagreements by peaceful means. Other endeavours with the same objective were being pursued in the Arab Gulf countries, the North African countries and the Andean countries. Bilateral efforts to promote good-neighbourliness were certainly much more numerous, although the principle was not always respected.

8.   The working paper submitted by Romania in 1983 (A/38/440), which was largely based on the replies and positions of States and international organizations, attempted to present coherently the complex nature of good-neighbourly relations between States, as well as the many types of action needed to develop them.

9.   Good-neighbourliness was first of all a juridical concept embodying a set of principles and rules likely to ensure relations of understanding, co-operation and peace between States, as well as the solution, on that basis, of any problems arising between them. Relations between States of the same region were governed primarily by a set of universally applicable principles of international law, such as sovereignty, national independence, equal rights, territorial integrity, non-recourse to the threat or use of force, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs, the right to self-determination, co-operation and mutual advantage, and fulfilment in good faith of the obligations assumed in accordance with international law. Although those principles and rules were the basis for relations between all States, it was of fundamental importance that they should be respected by countries of the same region.

10. Respect for those principles was therefore one of the basic elements of good-neighbourliness, which was incompatible with policies of force and aggression, any efforts to establish spheres of influence and any form of foreign domination. They were expressed in a number of legal rules, which should be strictly respected.

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(Mr. Diaconu, Romania)

11. The development of relations between neighbouring countries had led to the establishment of specific rules, including the obligation for a State not to allow its territory to be used for any hostile act against a neighbouring State or one in the same region, and to refrain from encouraging activities directed against the legitimate Government or institutions of another State. Other rules concerned legitimate activities and co-operation in frontier zones which might affect neighbouring States, as well as the continuous exchange of information, consultations and, if necessary, negotiations between the States concerned.

12. Good-neighbourliness involved an almost unlimited variety of relations, as well as the promotion of co-operation in all fields, taking full advantage of the favourable conditions provided by geographical proximity. It involved resolving on the basis of equality and mutual advantage the numerous problems arising between neighbours, and included regional and subregional co-operation.

13. The activities of international organizations were increasingly important in the strengthening and development of good-neighbourliness, in particular through joint economic development projects, regional and subregional economic development programmes, and the exploitation of shared resources.

14. The time had come to start clarifying and formulating the elements of good-neighbourliness as part of a process of elaboration of a suitable international document on the subject. Good-neighbourliness could make an important contribution to the development of all countries and regions, to the maintenance of international peace and security, and to the development of normal relations of peace, understanding and co-operation throughout the world. With regard to the appropriate framework to accomplish the tasks set forth in General Assembly resolution 38/126, his delegation would prefer a concentrated effort at two or three sessions of an ad hoc committee, but was prepared to consider the possibility of a different framework suited to such tasks and capable of accomplishing them in as short a time as possible.

15. Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said that his country attached great importance to the development and strengthening of good-neighbourliness, which was one of the cardinal principles of its foreign policy. Even though the Charter clearly highlighted good-neighbourliness as one of the fundamental aims of the United Nations, his country still saw ample scope for further elaborating the concept, upon which the security of States largely depended. The wide variety of political, social, economic and cultural systems made it incumbent upon all States to establish good-neighbourly relations based on understanding, equity and justice, without interference in the internal affairs of other States. His Government had therefore proposed, in March 1980, regional co-operation among seven South Asian countries.

16. That region contained about one fifth of the world's population. The seven countries had set up study groups with different terms of reference to explore the possibilities of co-operation in widely different fields, with the objectives of promoting the welfare of the peoples of the region and improving their quality of

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

life; accelerating economic growth, social progress and cultural development; providing the opportunity for individuals to live in dignity and realize their full potential; promoting and strengthening collective self-reliance; strengthening co-operation in international forums on matters of common interest; and co-operating with international and regional organizations with similar aims.

17.   Bangladesh had consistently promoted the cause of peace, security, co-operation and development for the benefit of mankind. It had voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 38/126 because it was convinced that good-neighbourly relations were essential for bringing about a climate of confidence and security among States.

18.   Mr. MBA-ALLO (Gabon) said that ever since its accession to independence in 1960 and above all since Mr. Bongo had become President, Gabon had adopted a foreign policy based above all on dialogue, tolerance, peace and good-neighbourliness. His Government would shortly communicate to the Secretary-General its views and suggestions in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 34/99 and 36/101. The developing countries in particular needed a general atmosphere of peace in order to devote their efforts and national resources to development projects.

19.   The Government welcomed the inclusion of the item in the agenda in view of its policy of maintaining friendly relations not only with its immediate neighbours, but with all States, whatever their political, social or economic systems.

20.   The existence of a number of bilateral good-neighbourliness agreements between various African States, although praiseworthy, could not solve all the complex problems of good-neighbourliness. That was why Gabon was especially in favour of the drafting of an international document governing good-neighbourly relations, which should define the different aspects of neighbourliness and deal with questions related to co-operation, the settlement of disputes, and the movement of people and goods between neighbouring countries. Such a general text would not, however, preclude neighbouring States from concluding their own special bilateral or multilateral agreements.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.