



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela)

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

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I should like at the outset to extend a warm welcome to all delegations participating in the First Committee at the current session. I also take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to all Member States for the honour and privilege they have conferred upon me and my country by electing me as Chairman of this august body. I thank you all most warmly and sincerely for the confidence that you have placed in me.

I should also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador Yves Fortier, Permanent Representative of Canada, for graciously nominating me for the position of Chairman of the First Committee. I request him to kindly convey, on behalf of the Committee and on my own behalf, our sincerest gratitude to my predecessor, Ambassador James Douglas Roche, for the skilful and effective manner in which he presided over our proceedings last year, as well as for his significant contribution to the results achieved by our Committee at the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

(The Chairman)

As I undertake my new responsibilities it is gratifying for me to know that I can count on the co-operation and support of all members of this Committee, as well as on the valuable knowledge, experience and competence of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, Mr. Vasiliy Safronchuk, and the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, and his colleagues in the Secretariat, who will contribute to the successful completion of our work.

For my part, in keeping with the trust you have placed in me I intend to discharge my responsibilities with the firm determination to ensure that our business is conducted efficiently and that our endeavours meet with success.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMEN AND THE RAPPORTEUR

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): Before proceeding to the first item on our agenda, that is, the election of the Committee's Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur, I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 1935th meeting on 22 September 1971, concerning the procedure for the election of officers of the Main Committees. According to the terms of that decision, the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will, therefore, follow that procedure today.

Mr. BAYART (Mongolia): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, most warmly on your unanimous and well-deserved election as Chairman of the First Committee. My delegation is convinced that with your wealth of experience, your knowledge and competence in disarmament and international security matters you will conduct our work in a highly effective manner and that the Committee will achieve substantial results. I assure you, Sir, of my delegation's support and co-operation in this endeavour.

May I take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation and gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Douglas Roche of Canada, for his dedicated service rendered to the Committee last year. In my capacity as one of the Vice-Chairmen I shared his important duties and greatly benefited from his experience and negotiating skills. Let me also express our thanks to the then Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Victor Ratiouk of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Rapporteur Mr. Virgilio Reyes of the Philippines.

I now have pleasure in submitting the candidature of Mr. Mohamed Nabil Fahmy of Egypt for the post of Vice-Chairman. Born in New York in January 1951, Mr. Fahmy graduated from the American University in Cairo in 1974 with the degree of Bachelor of Science in physics and mathematics and then, in 1976, he received a Master of Arts degree in management from the same University. From February 1974 to March 1976 he worked as Political Officer in the Cabinet of the Secretary of the President for External Communications and in the Cabinet of the Vice-President of Egypt. In 1976 Mr. Fahmy joined the Foreign Ministry of his country and until 1978 was the Political Officer in the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. From 1978 to 1982 Mr. Fahmy served at the Egyptian Mission to the United Nations in Geneva and worked as the representative to the Conference on Disarmament, the International Labour

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

Organisation and other specialized agencies. In 1982 Mr. Fahmy returned to his country and began work in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Organizations Department, where his responsibilities included the Middle East, Palestine, disarmament, and peaceful nuclear energy issues. From 1986 until today Mr. Fahmy has served as Counsellor at the Egyptian Mission to the United Nations in New York and he was a member of the Egyptian delegation to the forty-first, forty-second and forty-third sessions of the General Assembly and representative to the First and Special Political Committees. He was also a member of the Egyptian delegation to numerous General Assembly sessions and intergovernmental conferences, particularly meetings on international security, disarmament and nuclear issues and the Middle East, and the Second and Third Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, Rapporteur of the Committee on Principles, the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and negotiations on the second disengagement agreement between Egypt and Israel.

Bearing in mind all those superb qualifications I believe that Mr. Fahmy is well qualified to be a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee and I therefore nominate him for election to that post.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Mongolia for the nomination of Mr. Mohamed Nabil Fahmy of Egypt to the post of Vice-Chairman. I thank him also for his kind remarks addressed to me. I wish to convey to him the Committee's appreciation for his invaluable contribution to the work of the Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman during last year's session. I would also take this opportunity to underscore the excellent work he did as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament.

There being no other nomination I shall take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and in keeping with established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the vote by secret ballot and to declare Mr. Mohamed Nabil Fahmy elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Mohamed Nabil Fahmy (Egypt) was elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. OGRYZKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): I have asked to speak to put forward a candidate for the post of Vice-Chairman, but first of all I should like to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your election to the high and responsible post of Chairman of the First Committee and to wish you every success in the carrying out of your complex tasks during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I express the hope that under your guidance and with the active and positive participation of all members of the Committee, we shall be able by the end of the session to register progress in the First Committee's multilateral efforts aimed at the implementation of concrete disarmament measures.

While expressing our best wishes for your success, I am convinced also that many members of the Committee are still mindful of the example set by your

(Mr. Oaryzko, Ukrainian SSR)

predecessor, Mr. Douglas Roche, who during the previous session clearly proved that sincere and firm adherence to the cause of disarmament could be crowned with success even in situations that seem to be without issue. I should like the representative of Canada in our Committee to be so kind as to transmit the general feeling of gratitude and enthusiasm felt, I am sure, by many members of the First Committee who had the pleasure of working under the guidance of Ambassador Roche, a tireless fighter for disarmament with a view to strengthening general security. Thanks to his efforts, many important resolutions were adopted by consensus.

The present session, as you quite justly noted, Mr. Chairman, is starting in much more propitious circumstances. We must take full advantage of the opportunities offered by these conditions to ensure greater security at a lower level of armaments.

Even in a year of bumper crops, one has to work hard to achieve results. In order not to let this chance slip away, we must all work long and hard, combining our efforts under your leadership, Sir, and that of the Bureau headed by you.

I have the honour to nominate for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Counsel of the Permanent Mission of Iran at the United Nations Office in Geneva, Mr. Hassan Mashhadi.

Mr. Mashhadi has for many years taken part in the consideration of questions relating to freeing the international community from the burden of excessive armaments. Our delegation, like others in the First Committee, often had occasion to co-operate with Mr. Mashhadi, who since 1986 has headed the delegation of Iran in the First Committee. I am convinced that you, Mr. Chairman, also had an opportunity of co-operating with Mr. Mashhadi in Geneva during the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Mr. Mashhadi has taken part in its activities since

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1985. In the recent past, he has been Chairman of the Geneva Disarmament Conference and Chairman of its Group of 21, and he took part in the work of the international conference on chemical weapons in January this year in Paris.

Mr. Mashhadi's previous diplomatic activities and our experience in personal contacts with him assure us that our colleague fully possesses the energy of youth, the mature experience of the active participant in multilateral diplomatic processes, and devoted adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

I consider that the candidacy of Mr. Mashhadi fully meets the different and complex requirements for members of the Bureau. I have the privilege of taking this opportunity to ask all members of the First Committee to support the proposal for the election of Mr. Hassan Mashhadi as Vice-Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic for the nomination of Mr. Hassan Mashhadi of the Islamic Republic of Iran for election to the post of Vice-Chairman. I should like to thank him also for the kind words he addressed to me. I should like him to convey the Committee's appreciation of the outstanding contribution of Ambassador Victor Batiouk to the work of the Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman during the forty-third session.

Since there is no other nomination, I shall take it that in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and in keeping with established practice, the Committee once again wishes to dispense with the vote by secret ballot and to declare Mr. Hassan Mashhadi elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Hassan Mashhadi (Islamic Republic of Iran) was elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to express to the two Vice-Chairmen my sincere and warmest congratulations on the well-deserved honour that has been conferred upon them and assure them that they shall enjoy my complete confidence and co-operation as we endeavour jointly to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to us.

Mr. REYES (Philippines) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all I should like to express the Philippine delegation's most sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. In view of the long-standing friendship and fraternity between our two countries, you may be assured of our complete support in the discharge of your responsibilities as Chairman. I wish also to congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen on their election. Lastly, I wish to express my best wishes to the Secretariat and in particular to Mr. Kheradi, whose assistance is of great value to our work.

In my capacity as Rapporteur of the Committee at the forty-third session of the General Assembly and following a well-established tradition, it is my honour and privilege to nominate Mr. Dimitrios Platis, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations in New York, as Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Born in 1956, Mr. Platis attended the University of Athens, where he obtained his degree in political sciences in 1978 and a degree in law in 1980. He was Attaché in 1981 and Third Secretary in 1983. In the latter post he served in the diplomatic cabinet of the President of the Republic. In February 1986 he was promoted to Second Secretary in the Department of International Economic Agencies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In August 1987 he was assigned to the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, where he now works on disarmament affairs and Legal Committee affairs. In 1988 he was promoted to the post of First Secretary.

(Mr. Reyes, Philippines)

From 1985 to 1987 he participated as a member in meetings of international economic agencies such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and also in the preparation and final adoption of the agreement against maritime terrorism which took place in Rome and London under the supervision of the International Maritime Organization. In addition to his native language, Mr. Platis speaks English, French and Italian. Bearing all of these qualifications in mind, I would ask the representatives unanimously to accept the candidature of Mr. Platis as Rapporteur of the First Committee and to place in him their complete confidence for their work that will be assigned to him.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Philippines for the nomination of Mr. Dimitrios Platis to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee.

I should also like to thank him for the kind words he addressed to me. I am certain that I am expressing the sentiments of the entire membership of the Committee when I offer our thanks to him for the task he so ably performed as Rapporteur at the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

The representative of the Philippines has nominated Mr. Platis to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. As there are no other nominations, I shall take it that the Committee wishes as before to dispense with the vote by secret ballot and to declare Mr. Platis elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Dimitrios Platis (Greece) was elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to express my warmest congratulations to the representative of Greece upon his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee. I invite him now to take the place reserved for him at the podium.

(The Chairman)

I wish to draw the attention of members of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

"Congratulations to the Officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session - or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation - after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

I would like to request that this rule be respected and that it be applied today and from now on. I should be personally grateful to representatives if they would dispense with the customary congratulatory words at the beginning of their statements.

I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, who will speak on behalf of Ambassador James Douglas Roche, Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-third session of the General Assembly:

Mrs. MASON (Canada): At the outset I wish not only to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming our chairmanship but also to thank you, both personally for your kind words of welcome and on behalf of Ambassador Roche, whose privilege it was to serve as Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

As we all know, Ambassador Taylhardat is currently Venezuela's Ambassador to the Office of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in Geneva. He is also Venezuela's representative to the Conference on Disarmament, where he has served with great distinction for more than ten years. In addition, he has accumulated considerable expertise in multilateral negotiations through his participation at more than 20 regular and special sessions of the General Assembly and in many other bodies such as the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and a number of multilateral conferences. He has also served his country in a variety of other

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diplomatic positions, including those of Ambassador to Haiti, Cuba and the European Economic Community. He is also a highly respected scholar in law and international relations. As Ambassador Fortier noted on 19 September last, when he had the honour to nominate Ambassador Tavhardat for the position of Chairman of the First Committee, it is our deep conviction that Ambassador Tavhardat brings an outstanding combination of experience and talent to this important position.

In this, my first statement in the Committee, I shall not present the kind of detailed report on the work that was carried out here last year which the retiring Chairman traditionally delivers. I was not present and I do not think it would be appropriate for me to attempt to do so in Ambassador Roche's place. Nevertheless, there are a few comments that I would like to make at this meeting.

First of all, please be assured of my own readiness and that of the Canadian delegation to provide you, Mr. Chairman, with all possible assistance and co-operation as you fulfil your important mandate.

I also wish sincerely to congratulate Mr. Mohamed Nabil Fahmy of Egypt and Mr. Hassan Mashhadi of the Islamic Republic of Iran on their election as Vice-Chairmen. Similarly, I congratulate Mr. Dimitrios Platis of Greece, who has been elected Rapporteur of our Committee.

I would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Ambassador Roche, to express his gratitude to all the members of the Committee for their active participation in, and substantial contributions to, its work and deliberations at the forty-third session. Their co-operation proved particularly effective in helping him, as Chairman, achieve at least some of those objectives which, in his first substantive statement last year, he set out as targets, based on the intensive preparatory consultations that he had held earlier with many of the individual representatives of Member States.

(Mrs. Mason, Canada)

I know Ambassador Roche would also wish me to express his great appreciation for the assistance which he received from members of the United Nations Secretariat and, in particular, the Committee Secretary, Mr. Kheradi, for the very able way in which he aided Ambassador Roche in his functions as Chairman. All Mr. Kheradi's Secretariat colleagues joined him in providing the valuable assistance and unfailing co-operation without which it would not have been possible for Ambassador Roche to chair the Committee effectively. I should also add that I shall be very pleased to convey to Ambassador Roche the kind words of praise and thanks that have been extended to him here today.

This year the First Committee is beginning its work in an atmosphere once again imbued with hope, one in which past confrontation continues to give way to dialogue, and in which concerted actions in a number of forums are leading to specific improvements in world security.

We can draw encouragement from the continuing negotiations between the two super-Powers in the field of the reduction of nuclear strategic arms, and in other areas as well. Moreover, the concrete and verifiable agreements concluded in 1986 among the 35 participants in the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, have now led to the current negotiations in Vienna on conventional force reductions and further confidence- and security-building measures.

The continuing progress being achieved by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament especially in the field of chemical weapons, is also to be welcomed. We are now closer than ever to the development of a convention banning chemical weapons. The two special conferences held this year, that in Paris in January and that more recently in Canberra, have had, and will have, an extremely important and positive

(Mrs. Mason, Canada)

impact in this work. Our thanks are due to France and to Australia for their important contributions.

During the forty-fourth session the First Committee will again be taking up what we all recognize as complex issues relating to disarmament and international security.

(Mrs. Mason, Canada)

Once again we must make every possible effort to carry out this task constructively, so as to further our shared objective of the eventual achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. In this process Canada will continue, as in past years, to work for realistic approaches to arms control and disarmament issues which complement and build on related developments in other forums, keeping in mind in particular the desirability of achieving consensus wherever possible. Canada was especially gratified by the spirit of co-operation from all regional groups which Ambassador Roche, as Chairman, experienced at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, and we hope that a similar business-like atmosphere and willingness to compromise will prevail under your guidance, Mr. Chairman.

By the time the work of the General Assembly at its forty-third session had closed, the First Committee had not only adopted 74 resolutions and 1 decision, but it had also agreed on a strong letter reaffirming its support for the work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the need for it to have adequate staff to enable it to carry out properly its increasingly heavy responsibilities. Of the resolutions that were adopted in this Committee last year, 29 were by consensus, a further significant advance over the forty-second session of the General Assembly, and one which represented a continuing improvement in our ability to harmonize our viewpoints.

I mention this fact, in particular, because it was one of Canada's objectives, as Chair of the First Committee last year, to achieve agreement on texts to the greatest extent possible. Another of our objectives was to reduce the number of competing resolutions on certain of our topics, either through merger or by the withdrawal of alternative versions, wherever that was possible. In that light, Ambassador Roche had, with general agreement, made changes in the methods of work of the Committee so as to allow somewhat more time for consultations and

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negotiations. We very much hope that, as our Chairman at this session, you will continue the efforts to rationalize our work, so that we may be able to make the most productive use of our time here in New York.

In closing, let me again pledge our fullest co-operation and assistance, Mr. Chairman, in the fulfilment of your mandate.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the officers of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, I thank the representative of Canada, Ambassador Peggy Mason, for her kind and generous words addressed to the Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and myself. It is a source of great satisfaction to me that she has pledged her delegation's continuous co-operation and support to the officers of the Committee in the performance of our duties.

I now call upon the representative of Egypt, Mr. Mohamed Nabil Fahmy, who has been elected as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the First Committee.

Mr. FAHMY (Egypt): First of all, I would like to express my gratitude, and that of my country, to the members of the First Committee for having elected me Vice-Chairman of this Committee upon the gracious nomination of Ambassador Bayart of Mongolia, whose kind words are sincerely and warmly appreciated. I interpret the support you have shown by this action as a reaffirmation of your faith in Egypt's commitment to disarmament, and this will no doubt encourage us to carry out our efforts with renewed vigour and determination.

The international community is today in a state of transition, from decades of confrontation and conflict to a future which will, we hope, be characterized by dialogue, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and international co-operation. Any period of transition is difficult, particularly one in which change is so manifest, widespread, and concurrent throughout many different regions in the world, with their diverse cultures, interests and concerns. In these circumstances, the challenges before us here and the responsibilities of the First Committee during

(Mr. Fahmy, Egypt)

this session loom larger, inasmuch as they have a great bearing on the success of the world community's efforts to plan for a future in which peace, prosperity and equality prevail. The positions taken here, and the results of our work will no doubt be an indication of whether we are truly committed to co-operating and working together, a commitment which we believe is a prerequisite for the success of our endeavours.

With these increased responsibilities, Mr. Chairman, my delegation is particularly pleased to see you presiding over our Committee. Your country's long-standing commitment to the work of this Organization, and your extensive personal experience in both multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, including the specific areas of international security and disarmament, are widely recognized and appreciated. On a personal note, I would add that I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with you for almost a decade, and I am honoured to do so now again.

I would also like to convey my congratulations to Mr. Hassan Mashhadi of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to Mr. Dimitris Platis of Greece - both of whom I have worked with and have known quite well over the past few years - on their election to the posts of Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of this Committee, respectively. I shall work diligently with you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, with the guidance of Under-Secretary-General Vasilii Safronchuk, and Under-Secretary-General Akashi, and of course with the assistance of our very able Secretary, Mr. Kheradi, in order to make our proceedings as efficient and successful as possible.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of Egypt, Vice-Chairman of the First Committee, for his kind words addressed to me,

(The Chairman)

and I fully reciprocate those sentiments. I am very grateful that I can count on his valuable assistance and co-operation in the work that lies ahead of us.

I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Hassan Mashhadi, who has also been elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

Mr. MASHHADI (Islamic Republic of Iran): The questions dealt with in the First Committee are among the most important, affecting as they do the very existence of mankind. I therefore deem it a great honour to be elected as Vice-Chairman of this Committee. I would like to thank the members of the First Committee who elected me upon the kind nomination by the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Mr. Vladimir Oaryzko, to this high position. I am very grateful for the confidence placed in the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and I would like to assure all members that I shall do everything in my power to contribute to the successful and fruitful discussion of matters pertaining to disarmament and international security allocated to our Committee at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you warmly on your election to this valuable and commendable post. It gives me great pleasure to see you chairing our work in this Committee. Your professional and personal qualities, as well as your wealth of experience and knowledge of the subject of our work, have made you an excellent candidate for this post. You have ably led the Venezuelan delegation in the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva in the past and in 1988 I had the pleasure of working under your wise guidance in the Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I would also like to congratulate you on your new high post in the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to wish you every success, although your old colleagues in Geneva will all miss you.

(Mr. Mashhadi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate Brother Mohamed Nabil Fahmy of Egypt on his election as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Dimitrios Platis of Greece as Rapporteur of the Committee. I am sure that with the assistance of all we will be able to make the work of this First Committee a success at a time when new international developments in the field of disarmament and the relaxation of tensions are encouraging.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Vice-Chairman of the First Committee, for his kind remarks addressed to me. I look forward sincerely to his valuable assistance and co-operation in the discharge of my duties.

I now call on the representative of Greece, Mr. Dimitrios Platis, the Committee's Rapporteur.

Mr. PLATIS (Greece), Rapporteur of the First Committee: Permit me at the outset, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on your well-deserved unanimous election to preside over the First Committee. My country and I, personally, are sure that you will ably lead the work of the Committee this year. I congratulate the newly elected Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, Mr. Mohamed Nabil Fahmy of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Mr. Hassan Mashhadi of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I should also like to thank Mr. Virgilio Reyes, my predecessor as Rapporteur of the First Committee at the forty-third session, whose remarkable efforts greatly enhanced the Committee's work last year.

For my part, I wish only to express here my gratitude to the members of the First Committee for electing me to this post on the nomination of my predecessor, Mr. Reyes. I am looking forward to co-operating with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the members of the Secretariat - who have already ably demonstrated their skills and will, I am sure, continue to demonstrate them - in promoting the Committee's work and in representing my country, whose efforts with regard to disarmament are well known.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the Rapporteur for his statement and for his generous remarks addressed to me and the other officers of the Committee. I am sure that I express not only my own feelings but also those of all the members of the Committee when I say that we are certain that with his close co-operation the work of the Committee will be successful.

(The Chairman)

Having elected the officers, the Committee has concluded its consideration of the first item on its agenda, the election of officers.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.1/44/1, A/C.1/44/3)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I draw the attention of delegations to document A/C.1/44/1, of 22 September 1989, containing a letter of the same date addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly informing me that the General Assembly, at its third plenary meeting, had decided to allocate 26 items to the First Committee for its consideration, namely, agenda items 49 to 73 and 151.

Before I proceed to give a fuller account of the programme of work and timetable proposed, I would like to provide some preliminary comments for the Committee's consideration.

As members are all aware, in accordance with precedent I have undertaken consultations, first in Geneva and later here in New York, with individual delegations and groups of delegations to facilitate an agreement on the programme of work and timetable, albeit on an ad referendum basis. It may perhaps also be pertinent to mention that, although the purpose and scope of my discussions were mainly to cover the organizational aspects, some attention was also focused on substantive issues. I should add that this has indeed proved to be of great assistance in enabling me to put certain matters in proper perspective at the outset as we proceed to plan and organize our task at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Members will also recall that according to established practice the First Committee begins its substantive work only after the conclusion of the general debate in the plenary Assembly. Furthermore, the General Assembly, at its third meeting, on 20 September 1989, decided, on the General Committee's recommendation, that in view of the financial problems still being faced by the Organization, in

(The Chairman)

the context of the process of renewal and reform that is under way and in the light of the practice at recent sessions no closing date should be decided upon at this time and every effort should be made to curtail to the maximum extent possible the duration of the forty-fourth session. Taking this into account and on the basis of what the President of the General Assembly has indicated as a target date for completion of the work of the Main Committees, we should organize our programme in such a way as to complete the work of the First Committee by 30 November.

The time-frame within which the First Committee will need to complete its very substantial work, namely, the period extending from 16 October to 30 November, has emerged logically and rather inevitably from the developments and considerations to which I have just referred. The First Committee will thus have at its disposal a maximum of 66 meetings to consider the agenda items before it. I would like to point out that last year the Committee, out of 64 meetings available to it, utilized a total of 59 meetings. Accordingly, I think that if we make a concerted and sincere effort to utilize our time in an effective and efficient manner we can surely accomplish our task without any undue difficulties. Furthermore, should the need arise for additional time for meetings we could consider utilizing Thursday, 23 November, which is an official United Nations holiday.

Having said that, and taking into account the current financial situation of the United Nations, I express the hope that every effort will also be made to avoid the necessity for any weekend or night meetings, since that would defeat the very purpose of trying to encapsulate the Committee's proceedings in a shorter period.

Turning now to the specifics of our organizational work, I wish to inform members that, based on the extensive consultations held to date, I have prepared the proposed programme of work and timetable (A/C.1/44/3), which I hope the Committee will be in a position to approve today. In arriving at this proposal

(The Chairman)

I have been guided by past practice and precedents that have evolved during recent years, which I believe have stood the First Committee in good stead and have enabled it to conduct its work in a smooth and efficient manner.

Accordingly, members will observe that the consideration of items is divided into three phases: namely, first, the disarmament items, that is, agenda items 49 to 69 and 151; next, the item entitled "Question of Antarctica", which is agenda item 70, and, finally, the international security items, namely, agenda items 71, 72 and 73.

(The Chairman)

As far as the programme of work regarding disarmament agenda items is concerned, owing to the large number of items and the complexity of the issues involved there is a further demarcation into specific stages separating the general debate from the consideration and action on draft resolutions under those items. In addition, as in the past, precise deadlines have been introduced with respect to the submission of draft resolutions under all the three groupings. Here it may be pertinent to mention that, wherever possible, I have set deadlines at as early a stage as feasible in order to allow sufficient time for delegations to undertake the necessary consultations before the Committee proceeds to take action upon the draft resolutions concerned.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the Committee would first take up the agenda items relating to disarmament - agenda items 49 to 69 and 151. With respect to those items, I propose that the Committee conduct a general debate utilizing 26 meetings from 16 October to 1 November on all disarmament agenda items, during which delegations may also speak on any specific issues under the disarmament items if they so choose. Subsequently, the Committee would move on to the consideration of and action on draft resolutions on disarmament items from 2 to 17 November, devoting 24 meetings to that purpose.

I believe that the time set aside for that phase of our work retains the useful innovation introduced last year by my predecessor of increasing the time available for consideration and action on draft resolutions by some 25 per cent. This year too, the timetable provides sufficient opportunity for delegations to consider the draft resolutions as well as to undertake the necessary consultations and endeavour finally to adopt texts that reflect the largest possible degree of consensus.

(The Chairman)

The deadline for submission of draft resolutions on disarmament items would be Monday, 30 October 1989 at 6 p.m., and it is my intention to request your co-operation in adhering strictly to that deadline. Delegations are strongly encouraged to submit and introduce their draft resolutions as early as possible, even during the period of the general debate. Furthermore, it is imperative that delegations submit those draft resolutions that could entail programme budget implications as early as possible in order to enable the Committee to take action upon them with a view to meeting the mandatory deadline required for their submission to the Fifth Committee.

I would like to add that it is my intention to retain the voting procedure of grouping draft resolutions by clusters, and I shall present specific proposals concerning this in due course.

After the conclusion of the consideration of all disarmament agenda items, the Committee will take up agenda item 70, entitled "Question of Antarctica". The Committee will devote six meetings from 20 to 22 November to the general debate and consideration of and action on any draft resolution under that item. That constitutes two additional meetings this year in contrast to the number of meetings allocated to the item last year.

The deadline for submission of any draft resolutions under that item will be Monday, 20 November at 12 noon.

Finally, during the period 24 to 30 November, the Committee will take up the remaining agenda items - items 71, 72 and 73 - related to international security. A total of 10 meetings will be available for the general debate, consideration of and action on draft resolutions under these agenda items. Once again, I believe that, based on previous experience, the time allocated to the consideration of those agenda items would also enable delegations to have the necessary time at their disposal to hold consultations prior to acting upon them.

(The Chairman)

The deadline for submission of draft resolutions on international security items would be Tuesday, 28 November at 6 p.m. I should like to remind members once again that it is absolutely necessary to meet the deadline set for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions that may have programme budget implications.

Based on the proposed programme of work and timetable that I have just outlined, the First Committee should be able to dispose of all the agenda items allocated to it within the time frame to which I have referred.

I should also like to emphasize that this programme of work and timetable are based on the assumption that a due degree of flexibility will be exercised in its implementation, so that the time and resources available to us can be utilized in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

I hope that this programme of work, which was arrived at after due consultation and following past precedents, meets with members' approval.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee adopts the programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/44/3.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly affecting the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in General Assembly decision 34/401. In that connection, I should like to say that the efficient utilization of conference resources has long been a major concern of the General Assembly, as well as of us all.

In keeping with the decision of the General Assembly, and in order to utilize fully the time and facilities made available to us, I should like to have members co-operation in convening the meetings of the First Committee at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. sharp, and I shall similarly endeavour to adjourn the meetings at 1 p.m. and

(The Chairman)

6 p.m. respectively. I also wish to make an appeal to representatives inscribed to address the Committee at any given meeting to ensure their timely presence at the relevant meeting. I cannot emphasize too strongly the utmost importance of the need for punctuality in the interest of achieving economies for the Organization. It is my conviction that such a policy will enable us to avoid the unnecessary extension of meetings or the need to hold any night or weekend meetings.

At the same time, I wish to point out that I shall convene meetings of the Committee only if there are sufficient numbers of speakers inscribed to address the Committee. I believe that as a general rule we should have no less than four speakers for any particular meeting, for the optimal utilization of the time and resources available to us, which would also obviate the need to adjourn our meetings early, for lack of speakers.

(The Chairman)

At this juncture, I call on the Secretary to explain in greater detail certain matters pertaining to the smooth functioning of the First Committee.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I shall attempt to amplify a few of the points to which you, Mr. Chairman, have referred.

I should like to draw the attention of representatives to the fact that the General Assembly has decided to depart, during this session again, from the rule that a quarter of the members must be present before a meeting of a Main Committee may be declared open and debate permitted to proceed. The Assembly made that recommendation on the understanding that such a departure from the rules did not involve any permanent change in the relevant provisions of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure, pertaining to the opening of meetings, whereby a majority of members must be present for any decision to be taken.

As is indicated in the programme of work, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament agenda items will be closed on Tuesday, 17 October. Some delegations have already indicated their intention to participate in the general debate, and the Secretariat has taken note of those requests. All delegations are requested to inscribe their names on the list of speakers at their earliest convenience - if possible, even today - to enable the Committee to utilize fully the facilities made available to it.

As you, Mr. Chairman, have said, members are requested to submit draft resolutions as far in advance as is feasible in order to provide sufficient time for consultations. That would also facilitate the Secretariat's task of processing the drafts in a timely manner. I request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions and amendments and the names of sponsors thereof should be submitted to the Secretariat in writing, to ensure accuracy and avoid any possible misunderstanding. Requests for the use of conference rooms for Group meetings

(Mr. Kheradi)

should also be submitted in writing as early as possible, so that the necessary arrangements may be made in time.

I should like to draw the attention of all members to document A/C.1/44/INF/1, which has been issued today. It lists, for the purpose of information and ready reference, all documents before the First Committee issued as of 12 October 1989. The list will be updated as appropriate.

Delegations are requested to provide to the conference officers a minimum of 30 copies of all prepared statements, for conference-servicing purposes.

In conclusion, I assure you, Mr. Chairman, the other officers of the Committee, and all representatives of the full co-operation of the Secretariat of the First Committee as we proceed, under the leadership of the Under-Secretaries-General, to contribute to what we hope will be the successful outcome of our work.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I thank the Secretary of the Committee for his explanation and for his pledge of complete co-operation.

I should like to say a few words about what has been referred to as the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. In a sense, a great deal has already been done towards rationalization. I refer to the very smooth and efficient procedures that have characterized our work in the past. This has enabled the Committee invariably to complete its difficult work within the time allotted to it. We are also aware of the large number of agenda items considered by the Committee and of the number of resolutions adopted.

In view of this and related issues, the Committee, over the years, especially since 1984, has attempted to address the question of a further rationalization of its work. In this respect, we are all very grateful to successive Chairmen who

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have pursued the issue. Documents on this subject, including documents A/C.1/39/9 and A/C.1/43/9, have been submitted to the Committee. In this respect, I intend to see that the useful work is continued at this session. I shall try to do so within an appropriate framework, including, wherever necessary, consultations with individuals and Groups. I shall try to keep the Committee informed of the results of my consultations.

I should like to make a sincere appeal to all delegations. Until such time as certain procedures to rationalize the Committee's work have been developed and adopted, will they please do all in their power to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of our work? Of course, this appeal is without prejudice to the right of any delegation to make proposals it considers necessary.

In view of the importance and complexity of the task that lies ahead of us, that every opportunity must be taken for consultation and co-operation. Hence, with the assistance of the other officers of the Committee and of all delegations concerned, I shall bend every effort to see to it that the Committee's work is conducted systematically and efficiently so that our endeavours may have a successful outcome. In this context, I assure delegations that I shall be available at all times for any consultations that might help to broaden areas of agreement with respect to draft resolutions. It is my intention to encourage such consultations as early in our work as possible.

In accordance with the wish expressed by various delegations of the countries members of the Conference on Disarmament, I intend to convene an informal meeting of the First Committee for consultations - for information purposes - about the stage that has been reached in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the draft convention on the elimination of chemical weapons. I believe that such consultations are of special importance at a time when it appears that those

(The Chairman)

negotiations will result in the rapid evolution of events. The purpose of the consultations is to enable States Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Conference on Disarmament, and, therefore, do not participate directly in the negotiations there, to familiarize themselves with the current state of the negotiations.

(The Chairman)

It is therefore my intention, as I have said, to convene an informal meeting of the First Committee, perhaps in the last week of October. I am not yet in a position to set a specific date, because the date will in fact depend on the list of speakers, which is still open; it will be closed only next Monday. Once we know exactly what the situation is with respect to the list of speakers, I shall be able to propose a date for that special meeting of the Committee to inform delegations of the state of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

It is also my intention to hold consultations on other items. I shall first consult with other officers of the Committee and delegations concerned. In due course I shall be making specific proposals to the Committee in this respect.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.