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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 95:</i>	
<i>Question of convening a world disarmament conference</i>	
<i>General debate.</i>	113
<i>Organization of the Committee's work.</i>	119

Chairman: Mr. Károly CSATORDAY (Hungary).

AGENDA ITEM 95

Question of convening a world disarmament conference
(A/5992, A/C.1/L.340 and Add.1)

GENERAL DEBATE

1. Mr. BOUATTOURA (Algeria) said that there could be no serious, detailed and exhaustive discussions of the problems of disarmament without the appropriate forum for such discussions—a world disarmament conference at which all States would be represented. Admittedly, some preliminary results had been achieved, for example the Moscow treaty;^{1/} other results, too, such as a treaty on non-proliferation, were possible. However, neither the People's Republic of China nor France had signed the Moscow treaty, and they would not sign a treaty on non-proliferation either if they were not associated in its negotiation. The People's Republic of China was not represented in the United Nations and the Organization had placed itself in a difficult position for discussing disarmament by refusing to restore its legitimate rights to a permanent member of the Security Council. Moreover, at Geneva neither the People's Republic of China nor France participated in the work of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. It would be unrealistic to believe in the possibility of an agreement on disarmament in which those two nuclear Powers were not associated. That was why, in July 1964, some fifty non-aligned countries had put forward the idea of a world disarmament conference open to all countries, including the five nuclear Powers. That would make it unnecessary to continue being satisfied with half-measures, appreciable though they were, and it should be possible to avoid the obstacles to substantial progress in the future. The Committee should therefore immediately initiate the process that would end in the convening of a world disarmament conference, even though the conference should not be expected to work miracles overnight.

^{1/} Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, signed at Moscow on 5 August 1963 (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 480 (1963), No. 6964).

2. It was not the first time that a world disarmament conference was being discussed. The Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo in October 1964, had declared the need for a world conference, and the Disarmament Commission, in its resolution of 11 June 1965,^{2/} had recommended that the General Assembly give urgent consideration at its twentieth session to the convening of such a conference. At that time the Algerian delegation had pointed out the great psychological effect of an initiative that would coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, and International Co-operation Year. It had then considered and it still considered that disarmament could not realistically be regarded as a technical area with which only technicians were competent to deal; it was first and foremost a political problem whose solution depended on political will. In a world shaken by political and military conflicts which were obstructing disarmament, a conference of a universal nature would enable all States to review the problems together and study the political and economic aspects of disarmament, as well as its military aspects. The general debate at the current session of the General Assembly had shown that many delegations shared Algeria's views on that question.

3. Of course, many difficulties had still to be overcome on the road which would lead to a world disarmament conference: the procedure for convening it, the decision as to who would convene it, the problem of its agenda—those were all questions which would have to be discussed and settled beforehand. The five nuclear Powers had a special responsibility in that regard too, since any agreement they reached among themselves would not be binding on the non-nuclear countries, and since the latter would accept and apply disarmament measures only if they had taken part in the discussions on their formulation and the means of implementing them. For its part, the Algerian delegation did not think it necessary immediately to consider in detail the arrangements for convening the conference: no prior conditions should be set. Mention had been made of the role which the non-aligned countries could play in the convening and holding of the conference but there were some, on the other hand, who thought that those countries would not be in the best position to make those arrangements. His delegation would like to know more about the reasons for that view. The most important thing, however, was to want the conference; and Algeria wished to pay a tribute to the Secretary-

^{2/} *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/224.*

General, whose efforts in the cause of disarmament had never slackened. Lastly, Algeria hoped that the conference would be held by 1967 at the latest.

4. Mr. LEKIC (Yugoslavia) said that despite the efforts made since the Second World War, the goal of general and complete disarmament was still far from having been attained. The danger for mankind of self-annihilation was constantly growing but the disarmament process still remained within the framework of declarations which were not being applied. Although certain steps had been taken during the past few years, attempts at disarmament had not gone beyond the experimental stage and had remained isolated. President Tito had pointed out in Moscow on 30 June 1965 that no further measures had followed the signing of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water; the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their production and use had not been banned and the denuclearization of the nuclear Powers had not been started. Mankind was therefore faced with a dilemma: would the world seek security in a constant arms race or would it take steps to halt the arms race, disband military alliances and finally implement general and complete disarmament? The world had reached a turning-point and, as President Kennedy had stated in 1961, mankind must abolish war before war abolished mankind. In order to achieve progress in disarmament, a greater degree of political readiness and realism was needed among all countries, particularly the great Powers. It was becoming increasingly evident that the convening of a world disarmament conference would promote general and complete disarmament. That was precisely why the participants in the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo in 1964, remembering that the idea had been favourably received at their First Conference, held at Belgrade in 1961, had proposed the convening of a world disarmament conference. That proposal had aroused much interest in the Disarmament Commission and at the current session of the General Assembly.

5. A world disarmament conference was a natural and logical completion of the efforts made so far in the General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission, the Eighteen-Nation Committee and various other forums outside the United Nations. His delegation felt that any progress achieved in any one of those bodies would increase the chances of success of a world disarmament conference: the convening of the conference should therefore result in an intensification of their efforts. It was both possible and necessary to make use of all methods that were likely to ensure progress. It was logical therefore also to advocate the convening of specific world conferences to deal with one or more disarmament measures, whenever the time seemed ripe for agreement on a given question. That had been suggested in the Declaration adopted at the Cairo Conference.

6. The success of a world disarmament conference would depend on the degree of readiness of each country, and in particular the great Powers, to contribute to the achievement of concrete and positive results. Constructive initiatives on disarmament,

whatever their origin, would be welcomed by all countries. The conference would not only provide a broad forum for the exchange of views but would also analyse the results achieved, draw appropriate conclusions and determine more effective ways of solving the problem of disarmament. It was to be hoped that the conference itself would try to conclude agreements on concrete questions, the substance of which would have been prepared beforehand in the Eighteen-Nation Committee, the Disarmament Commission or elsewhere.

7. In the light of those considerations, the Yugoslav delegation thought that full support should be given at the current session of the General Assembly to the efforts made to convene a world disarmament conference, in which all countries should be enabled to participate.

8. According to the Charter, the United Nations was required to seek the most appropriate ways of solving the problem of disarmament with a view to maintaining peace and security in the world; it followed that a world disarmament conference would be in the interests of the United Nations and that was precisely why the participants in the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries had raised the question of convening such a conference in the Disarmament Commission and at the current session of the General Assembly. Since, however, the United Nations was not yet universal, and it was imperative for the problem of disarmament to be solved within a global framework, efforts should be directed to ensuring the participation of all countries of the world, whether or not they were represented in the United Nations.

9. The General Assembly should endorse the proposal for the convening of a world disarmament conference. Furthermore, the time had come to examine the administrative and technical preparations required for the conference. In that connexion, the draft resolution before the Committee (A/C.1/L.340 and Add.1) urged that consultations be conducted with all countries for the purpose of establishing a widely representative preparatory committee based on the principle of geographical representation. The preparatory committee would take over all the work connected with the organization of the conference. In that way, there would be no need for the General Assembly to deal with questions of a technical character.

10. The draft resolution before the First Committee was the result of many consultations and the efforts of a large number of delegations. The intention had been to draft a resolution which would be acceptable to the greatest number of countries and possibly to all countries and would at the same time make it possible to continue preparations for a world disarmament conference. His delegation sincerely hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

11. Mr. BARODY (Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation had long remained silent on disarmament questions, including the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. But the great Powers were ceaselessly producing weapons of ever greater destructiveness even while they were prodigal with fair words. Most, if not all, countries had come

to distrust the great Powers, and the United States no longer deceived anyone with its pious declaration that whatever power it possessed would be wielded to save mankind from tyranny and servitude, for the great Powers might succumb to emulation in the event of a conflict between their national interests and those of rival Powers. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Members of the United Nations were calling for a world disarmament conference in the hope that the major Powers would fully realize at last that it would be the acme of folly to settle their differences by resorting to force.

12. If the human species were to be saved from self-destruction, the Members of the United Nations must exert all the joint efforts within their power to avert the final disaster. Nuclear war left no room for hesitation. In the event of a global war, millions of human beings would be annihilated before they even knew what had happened, and woe to the survivor. Today the nuclear Powers prided themselves on their ability to destroy entire cities situated thousands of miles away or to subject whole communities to bacteriological or chemical warfare by merely pressing a button, in the name of democracy or any other ideology that beguiled them. It was fortunate that the monopoly of nuclear weapons was not held by a single Power, for if it were, the United Nations could not even convene an effective world disarmament conference. No one would dispute that the fate of mankind was in the hands of the five great Powers; it therefore behoved the small countries to prevail upon them to save mankind by saving themselves.

13. All previous attempts to achieve general disarmament had been fruitless, for the discussions had always degenerated into duels of oratory between the two most important nuclear Powers. The meetings of the Disarmament Commission held in April, May and June 1965 had been no more than a farce, since they had not been attended by all five nuclear Powers. The only positive result of those meetings had been that the question of convening a world disarmament conference had been placed on the agenda of the General Assembly at its twentieth session. Unfortunately, there had been little change in the situation since June. Unless the nuclear Powers were willing to make a genuine attempt to explore possible areas of agreement as a prelude to the conference, all efforts on the part of the United Nations would be academic. It was possible that some of the nuclear Powers, not having as yet attained parity with the others, were unwilling to participate in a world disarmament conference at the present time. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the balance of power remained an important factor. Accordingly, the whole question of disarmament would not be solved merely by holding a world conference without the fulfilment of certain conditions. First of all, the great Powers must be willing to talk and the United Nations must be able to supplant, in large measure, the balance-of-power system. That did not mean that the idea of convening the conference should be given up. But the terms of reference of a preparatory committee must be spelled out, the resolution adopted must contain clear-cut phraseology which would make

it possible for France and China to negotiate with the other three nuclear Powers, and before any excessive optimism was displayed there must be certainty that the principal parties concerned were willing to negotiate.

14. Thus, when the smaller countries urged, in draft resolution A/C.1/L.340 and Add.1, now before the Committee, that a world disarmament conference should be convened not later than 1967, they were demonstrating their good will and their desire for constructive action, but could they be sure that by 1967 all the nuclear Powers would share those sentiments? Operative paragraph 2 was so vague that it must inevitably be ineffective and even dangerous. History had shown that precision was the beginning of wisdom. For that reason, he believed that the following new paragraph should be added after operative paragraph 1: "Invites the five major nuclear Powers to meet, formally or informally, within the next nine months at any place convenient to them in order to explore possible areas of agreement on world disarmament questions, as a prelude to convening a world disarmament conference." In its present form, operative paragraph 2 presented serious dangers. If a representative preparatory committee were to be established and two of the nuclear Powers were to boycott it, the situation would be the same as in the spring of 1965; any such conference might be used for propaganda purposes in a resumption of the cold war, which was always possible. Operative paragraph 2 was therefore unacceptable. It would be preferable to replace it by a new paragraph 3 which, retaining the spirit of the original paragraph 2, would be worded as follows: "Urges after due consultations among all States that a standing committee be established for the twofold purpose of (a) acting as a liaison between the said five nuclear Powers and lending its good offices to them when required; and (b) taking such steps as may be appropriate, in the event these Powers concur, for convening a world disarmament conference not later than 1967." The amendments he had offered were merely suggestions, but he might put them forward formally at an appropriate time.^{3/}

15. Mr. ADAN (Somalia) said that his Government had supported the Declaration adopted by the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in October 1964 at Cairo, and the resolution adopted by the Disarmament Commission on 11 June 1965; it now supported the draft resolution before the First Committee. Somalia did not expect a world disarmament conference to solve the problem of general and complete disarmament at a single stroke; rather, it regarded the conference as an opportunity for the great Powers and the rest of the world to examine one another's positions and review their own attitudes in the light of the reactions of the other States.

16. A world disarmament conference could help to break the deadlock which had prevailed too long in the Eighteen-Nation Committee. Agreement was near on certain important collateral measures. For

^{3/} The amendments were subsequently circulated in document A/C.1/L.344, dated 19 November 1965.

example, it should be possible to draft a specific agreement on the peaceful uses of outer space, so as to embody in a legal instrument most of the provisions of a previous resolution. It should also be possible to draft an agreement which would go beyond the Antarctica Treaty of 1959 and would confirm once for all the neutralization of that area. It might be, too, that if no draft treaty on the denuclearization of Africa existed by that time, the conference could draw up a draft as a model for other regions to follow. It might also express its views on the crucial issue of inspection, which appeared at present to be the main obstacle to the extension of the test ban to cover underground tests. His Government was also apprehensive about the proliferation even of conventional weapons, which, at least in Africa, had led to the squandering of human and economic resources and to the creation of tension between neighbouring countries.

17. The difficulties involved in convening a world conference were all too evident. Nevertheless, his Government was convinced that all States, including the People's Republic of China, should take part, whatever the formal status of some States might be in the eyes of some others, for a State's interest in survival did not depend on the eccentricities of another State's recognition policies. The General Assembly should therefore perhaps do no more than endorse the proposal of the Cairo Conference and express the conviction that such a conference ought to be held. Possibly it could be held at Geneva. The Assembly might, however, leave the convening of the conference to the non-aligned countries, while making it clear that attendance at such a conference would not imply any recognition or approval of the States, Governments or entities participating at the invitation of the non-aligned countries. His delegation hoped that the idea of convening a world disarmament conference would be supported by the General Assembly.

18. Mr. MBAH (Nigeria) said that a world disarmament conference should be convened at an early date, for every nation had a stake in disarmament. Only from the deliberations of a universal body would it be possible to ascertain the aspirations of mankind, and only in such deliberations could general guidelines be laid down for actual negotiations. During the recent session of the Disarmament Commission the Nigerian representative had stated that every nation had a direct interest in disarmament negotiations and efforts to reduce international tension. All disarmament negotiations would continue to have an air of unreality so long as one or another of the militarily most powerful nations, either by choice or by circumstance, did not take part in them. Nigeria was therefore in favour of the establishment of a fully representative body which would be in keeping with the realities of the existing situation.

19. The problem of disarmament should be tackled on two different planes. The first approach should be deliberative, as in the First Committee, the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission. Secondly, the problem of disarmament should be examined by a smaller committee in which actual negotiations would be conducted and efforts made to reconcile

the disparate views of the principal parties. The relatively brief experience of the Eighteen-Nation Committee showed how useful such a smaller body could be in disarmament negotiations. If the Eighteen-Nation Committee had not produced any tangible agreement, that was due not so much to the procedure applied as to the lack of political will on the part of those principally concerned and, to a lesser degree, to a relatively unpropitious political climate. The Committee could have achieved better results if the principal parties had shown a greater spirit of accommodation and a greater awareness of their responsibilities to mankind.

20. It should be noted that certain countries which were important from the military and political standpoint were not represented in either the large deliberative body or the small negotiating body. Heading that list was the People's Republic of China; and other States, such as the Federal Republic of Germany, should be associated with the disarmament efforts at one stage or another. It was inconceivable that the People's Republic of China should be denied a voice in the disarmament negotiations. Was it really possible to shut out China and its 700 million inhabitants and yet hope for lasting peace? Or was there a readiness to admit that the future of the world had become a collective responsibility from which the People's Republic of China could not be excluded? However that might be, the emergence of China as a nuclear Power was one of the most significant developments of recent times, and it would be unrealistic to expect that significant progress could be made without its participation and co-operation. If the People's Republic of China were occupying its rightful place in the United Nations and in the smaller negotiating committee there would perhaps have been no need to call for a world disarmament conference. Instead, there would have been the relatively easy task of enabling other States which were not Members of the United Nations—the "divided" countries, especially those which were important from the military standpoint—to be associated with the over-all disarmament effort. His delegation sincerely hoped that the day was not far distant when the People's Republic of China would take its rightful place in the international community. Until that occurred, however, a world disarmament conference would appear to offer the only possible solution.

21. It should, however, be recognized that in trying to convene a disarmament conference the Assembly would be confronted with a dilemma. In the first place it would be necessary to associate such an effort with the United Nations; the Organization could hardly be excluded, for in accordance with its Charter it bore the primary responsibility in matters relating to peace, security and disarmament. That was also the view of the participants in the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo in October 1964, who had called for such a conference. Yet any very firm link with the United Nations might well have results other than those desired, for it was doubtful, to say the least, that a great country which had been deliberately kept out of the United Nations would agree to participate in such a conference.

22. A solution to the problem was not to be reached by raising artificial obstacles to the idea of a world disarmament conference. His delegation thought that at the present stage proposals likely to alienate countries whose representation at such a conference was desired should not be made. That conviction, which was shared by the delegations of other non-aligned States, was clearly reflected in the draft resolution before the Committee, of which Nigeria was a sponsor. His delegation hoped that the Committee would recognise the merit of the vagueness of some of its provisions and would approve it unanimously, so that the second stage, that of actually organizing the conference, could be begun.

23. It was time nations stopped deluding mankind with false hopes. The search for universal peace had been going on ever since the first peace conference at The Hague in 1899, yet man continued to be a wolf to his fellow man. Some countries still used war as an instrument of national policy; and in Southern Rhodesia a negligible minority of white settlers was precipitating a threat to international peace and security.

24. Nigeria's support for the United Nations was clear and unconditional and his country would continue to approach world problems from the standpoint of truth and justice.

25. Mr. OTEMA ALLIMADI (Uganda) said that the disarmament issue should be considered solely within its own context, in complete isolation from other considerations, and without recourse to procedural devices such as that used in the voting in the General Assembly that morning (1380th plenary meeting).

26. His delegation was entirely in favour of the idea of convening a world disarmament conference. In conformity with the resolution adopted by the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries meeting at Cairo in October 1964, the Uganda delegation to the Disarmament Commission had supported the idea of convening a world disarmament conference as a matter of urgency. No satisfactory agreement which was binding and universal could be reached without the participation of all the nuclear Powers and all the other countries which were of great military significance but which were not Members of the United Nations.

27. As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.340 and Add.1), his delegation supported it without reservation and wished to place special emphasis on its operative paragraph 2. Among countries not represented in the United Nations there was a very clear tendency to boycott any conference held under the auspices of the United Nations. Every effort should be made to avoid such an eventuality, and it was better to secure the participation of all nuclear Powers in a world disarmament conference than to raise technical obstacles which would result in a waste of time and the failure of that conference. At Cairo the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries had called for the convening of such a conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Later, however, owing to the world situation, a technical difficulty had arisen to which operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution now before the

Committee offered the only possible solution, since it did not completely rule out United Nations participation. It would permit the United Nations to assume the role of organizer, through an agency which in the case in point would be the preparatory committee. The preambular paragraphs also clearly indicated the United Nations involvement. Thus it would be clear that although the United Nations was playing an important part in that it was taking the initiative in convening the conference, that conference could, nevertheless, be organized more or less independently. His delegation was firmly convinced that every effort should be made to ensure the participation of all countries in the disarmament conference; it should be noted in that connexion that there were other countries besides the People's Republic of China which were not Members of the United Nations and which would play an important role in the solution of the disarmament problem.

28. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution would receive unanimous support both in the First Committee and in the General Assembly.

29. Mr. ESCHAUZIER (Netherlands) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the Disarmament Commission's resolution of 11 June 1965 in spite of the fact that it did not entirely meet his country's wishes. Since his delegation had regarded the resolution as being of a procedural nature, it had reserved its position on the substance of the matter until such time as the General Assembly, at its current session, took up the question of convening a world disarmament conference. The views of the Netherlands delegation remained unchanged. It recognized that there existed a widespread desire for the holding of a world conference; and it was prepared to concede that, under certain well defined conditions, such a conference might serve a useful purpose and stimulate a general discussion on disarmament among the greatest possible number of participants. However, a conference of 117 or more States did not seem to the Netherlands to be a suitable negotiating body on concrete measures of disarmament. It should be regarded in the first place as a useful expedient for bringing all the nuclear Powers to the conference table. The Netherlands continued to believe that the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament remained the most appropriate forum for detailed discussion of problems of general disarmament and partial measures. His delegation strongly urged and would like to be assured that neither at the preparatory stage nor during the session of a world conference would the activities of the Eighteen-Nation Committee be slowed down or brought to a stop. That position was reinforced by the fact that the First Committee, less than two weeks earlier, had adopted a resolution requesting the Eighteen-Nation Committee to submit to the General Assembly, at an early date, a report on the results of its work on a treaty to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

30. With regard to the draft resolution, his delegation was happy to note that the continuing interest and responsibility of the United Nations were clearly stated in the first preambular paragraph, and that the representative of Uganda had referred to United

Nations involvement in the matter. The fourth pre-ambular paragraph referred to the adoption of "immediate steps with a view to achieving progress in this field". His delegation understood that reference to be to the most pressing collateral measures, such as a complete test ban, a treaty on non-proliferation, etc. That was entirely in line with the Netherlands view that a world disarmament conference should also give due consideration to such measures as could be agreed upon prior to, and as would facilitate, the achievement of general and complete disarmament. His delegation regretted, however, the absence from the preamble of any guidelines delineating the subject-matter of a world disarmament conference. It continued to think that it would have been better to refer to the principles for multilateral disarmament negotiations agreed on in 1961.^{4/} That suggestion had not been favourably received by the Disarmament Commission; the Netherlands would not press the point, therefore, unless a substantial number of delegations shared its view.

31. Turning next to the operative part, he said that, while paragraph 1 presented no problem, his delegation had serious misgivings about paragraph 2. The text, as it stood, was deliberately vague, for reasons which were abundantly clear. In view of the singularity of the circumstances, the Netherlands was prepared to agree for the time being to the question of the auspices under which a world disarmament conference should take place being left open; such a procedure, however, should constitute an exception and should in no way be regarded as a precedent. While his delegation appreciated the painstaking efforts made to arrive at a tentative compromise, it was reminded by the text of an equation with two unknowns: first, who would establish the preparatory committee? And secondly, what steps would the preparatory committee take for the convening of a world disarmament conference?

32. As to the first question, he suggested that the initiative in establishing a widely representative preparatory committee might be taken by the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, who would form the nucleus around which the final membership would gradually take shape as a result of consultations with all nuclear Powers and invitations extended to a number of selected Governments. The advantage of that procedure was that a symbolic link would be maintained with the Eighteen-Nation Committee without involving the Committee as such or burdening it with a new and heavy task. The membership of the preparatory committee should not exceed twenty-five.

33. As to the second question, namely, the terms of reference of the preparatory committee, a number of pertinent questions ought to be raised; if an answer could not be given to all of them in the course of the current debate, his delegation hoped that they would at least provide useful guidelines and a certain order of priority with regard to the problems which the preparatory committee would have to tackle. The most important question was to whom the invitations would be extended; for the expression "all countries"

raised far more problems than it appeared to solve. The formula permitted the participation of the People's Republic of China, but it also opened up a whole range of problems in connexion with the divided nations, and with countries which were Members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies and those which were not. It would be very helpful if the sponsors of the draft resolution would give the First Committee some clarification on that crucial matter. Finally, there were such problems as the agenda and rules of procedure of the conference and the manner in which it should be financed.

34. The Committee could take a responsible decision on the draft resolution only if some measure of agreement on such questions emerged from its deliberations. At the present very early stage of the debate, the Netherlands delegation was obliged to reserve its position until such time as the implications of the draft resolution had more fully come to light.

35. Mr. PATIÑO (Colombia) said that his delegation had supported the Disarmament Commission resolution on the convening of a world disarmament conference, which had welcomed the proposal approved in 1964 by the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries and recommended that the General Assembly should give urgent consideration to the proposal at its twentieth session. Consequently it also supported the idea of inviting all countries to a world disarmament conference, despite the fact that Colombia did not regard itself as a non-aligned nation, any more than did the other Latin American countries. The Colombian delegation's vote in the General Assembly (1380th plenary meeting) against the adoption of the draft resolution calling for the recognition of the Peking régime as the true spokesman of China was clear evidence that its support, on grounds of principle, for the convening of a world disarmament conference was in no way motivated by any change in its attitude towards that régime. Nor did that support mean that Colombia was unaware that such a conference might be exploited by communism for propaganda purposes, or that the Eighteen-Nation Committee might be able to achieve the same results as such a conference, since progress in disarmament was dependent upon the decisions of the great Powers. The only reason why Colombia supported the proposal for the holding of a world disarmament conference, therefore, was that it believed that through such a conference the pressure of world opinion might achieve results which could probably not be obtained if efforts were pursued solely within the existing institutional framework. The precedent set by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held at Geneva in 1964, should be mentioned in that connexion; the relative success of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was due principally to the fact that the General Assembly had institutionalized it, and the possibility should thus be envisaged that the world disarmament conference would be simply the first of a series of conferences which, after the necessary prolonged efforts, would bring about the achievement of the final objective.

36. Turning to the draft resolution, he said that in the Colombian delegation's view it was not necessary

^{4/} See Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 19, document A/4879.

to reaffirm the Disarmament Commission's resolution of 11 June 1965, since that resolution simply recommended that the Assembly should deal with the question at its current session; it would therefore be logical to replace the word "Reaffirming" by the word "Noting" in the last paragraph of the preamble. While it might make further observations at a later date, the Colombian delegation believed that the draft resolution took due account of the manifold aspects of the problem, and was pleased to congratulate the sponsors on their text. The work of the proposed preparatory committee would be extremely difficult, and one of the hardest problems would be the compilation of the list of countries to be invited. In the Disarmament Commission, it had been decided that all countries should take part, but it was still necessary to determine what was meant by "country", and that was likely to create serious difficulties. For instance, many of the Latin American countries, among them Colombia, as well as countries on other continents, would be unable to accept that description as applying to the part of Germany which was still occupied by the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Colombia for one was ready

to contribute to the preparatory work which was indispensable if the world disarmament conference was to mark the beginning of an era of memorable achievements.

Organization of the Committee's work

37. The CHAIRMAN said that, since the Committee's agenda was extremely heavy and it might well be that circumstances would cause further changes in the dates of meetings, he would request members to inscribe their names as early as possible on the list of speakers and be ready to take the floor when their turn came. It would also help to speed up the work if draft resolutions could be prepared in advance of the Committee's consideration of an item, as had been done in the case of item 95.

38. He proposed that the list of speakers in the general debate on agenda item 95 should be closed on 18 November at the end of the morning meeting.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.